



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 138 • NUMBER 101 • 2nd SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 13, 2003
Part A

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

Prayers

• (1010)
[English]

PRIVILEGE

FIREARMS ACT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville on May 1, 2003, concerning the transfer of control of the firearms centre and the transfer of the ministerial powers, duties and functions for the Firearms Act from the Minister of Justice to the Solicitor General.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville for raising this issue as well as the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for his intervention in the matter.

In his argument, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville raised a concern about the fact that ministerial responsibility for administering the Firearms Act was transferred by means of an order in council dated April 14, 2003, pursuant to the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act, the PSRTDA. He pointed out that section 2 of the Firearms Act specifically defines “Federal Minister” as the Minister of Justice. The hon. member maintained that the transfer of responsibility for the Firearms Act and the firearms centre to the Solicitor General requires an amendment to the Firearms Act and cannot be done by way of order in council. In other words, the government must introduce a bill and have it go through all legislative steps in Parliament in order to effect the transfer of ministerial responsibility. He charged that the government's having proceeded otherwise constituted a contempt of this House and a breach of his privileges as a member.

[Translation]

In responding to the charges on May 1 and May 2, 2003, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader stated that the authority to make such a transfer is vested in the government through the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act. He cited several cases where the act has been invoked, including the 1993 reorganization where four new government departments were created, and more recently, transfers of responsibility from one minister to another for the Pest Control Products Act in 2000 and the Royal Canadian Mint Act in 2002.

I have now reviewed all the facts related to this matter and wish to make the following observations.

I have examined the cases cited by the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and in particular the two instances related to the transfer of responsibilities under the Pest Control Products Act and the Royal Canadian Mint Act.

In the case of the transfer of responsibility for the Pest Control Products Act, the order in council transferring responsibility to the Minister of Health from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food was made on October 19, 2000 and was recorded in the *Canada Gazette* on November 8, 2000. Ministerial responsibility for the Royal Canadian Mint was transferred to the Minister of Transport from the Minister of State, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations on August 6, 2002 and was recorded in the August 28, 2002 edition of the *Gazette*.

In both those instances we can see that responsibility was transferred by order in council from one Minister of the Crown, specifically named in the act, to another Minister of the Crown, and the registrations of these order in council transfers were officially recorded in the *Canada Gazette*.

Thus, the government argues that to transfer responsibility for the Firearms Act and the related firearms centre created by that act from one minister to another is not unprecedented. The government clearly holds the view that it has the legal authority to make such transfers through the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act.

[Translation]

The matter raised by the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville goes to the validity of an order-in-council transferring a responsibility, which was originally conferred by a statute. It is well known that the government cannot amend legislation by way of regulation for, in the language of the hon. member, it is understood that a subordinate legal instrument cannot be used to amend a superior legal instrument.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville argues that the government has used a subordinate act, in this case the PSRTDA, to amend a superior act, the Firearms Act. The Chair would see the hon. member's argument turning not on the relationship between these two acts, but on the difference between superior and subordinate instruments in the hierarchy of legal instruments, that is, between the superior statute and the subordinate order in council. However, this is an argument on a matter of law, not a procedural issue and, as such, it would be for the courts, not for your Speaker, to decide.

As my predecessors and I have pointed out in many previous rulings where legal interpretation is an issue, it is not within the Speaker's authority to rule or decide on points of law.

[Translation]

The point is well put on pages 219 and 220 of *House of Commons Practice and Procedure and Practice*:

—while speakers must take the Constitution and statutes into account when preparing a ruling, numerous Speakers have explained that it is not up to the Speaker to rule on the “constitutionality” or “legality” of measures before the House.

[English]

It is clear that it is not your Speaker who might rule on the legality of the government's decision to transfer responsibility for the Firearms Act from one cabinet minister to another. That is a matter for the courts to decide. I must examine instead the hon. member's argument from a purely procedural perspective. What privilege has been breached by this action?

The hon. member appears to be asserting that the government, by transferring responsibility for the Firearms Act from one minister to another, has shown contempt for the House. After an exhaustive search of our precedents, I am unable to find a case where any Speaker has ruled that a government, in the exercise of a regulatory power conferred upon it by statute, has been found to have breached the privileges of the House. Accordingly, I am unable to find a breach of the privileges of this House or of the hon. member.

I must note, however, that the order in council under the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act by which the firearms centre was transferred from the justice portfolio to that of Solicitor General is a statutory instrument. As such, Standing Order 108(4)(b) applies and the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations is involved. Standing Order 108(4)(b) refers to section 19 of the Statutory Instruments Act, which in turn says that every statutory instrument shall stand referred to the committee.

The order in council the hon. member complains of is therefore inherently part of the review and indeed the scrutiny work of the committee and I invite him to pursue the matter with his usual vigour before that committee.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1015)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

STATUTORY PROGRAM EVALUATION ACT

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-435, an act to provide for evaluations of statutory programs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce my private member's bill calling for the regular periodic examination of statutory programs. I know that the Minister of Finance introduced a policy to have the review of non-statutory programs on a five year cycle when he introduced the budget back in February, but my bill calls for a 10 year review of statutory programs. This is where I believe we can find efficiencies, productivity and savings of taxpayers' money in the tens of millions if not billions of dollars, so I certainly recommend the bill to the House.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

PETITIONS

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by a number of my constituents. The petitioners are asking Parliament to refuse to pass Bill C-250 or any similar bill that would repress freedom of religion or speech. They are also asking us to defend the historical legal definition of marriage and to override any court decision that infringes upon the freedoms of religion.

HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians who are concerned about the state of health care in Canada today. The petitioners acknowledge that the Romanow commission presented a report that is in line with the values of Canadians and reflects the overwhelming desire of Canadians to keep our health care system public and equally accessible to all Canadians. The petitioners call upon the government to see the Romanow commission as a blueprint, to implement Romanow's blueprint for sustaining the future of health care and to adopt all the recommendations that would require our system to preserve itself in the non-profit, public sector arena.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2003

The House resumed from May 12 consideration of Bill C-28, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 18, 2003, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last night, when I had the floor, I was going to talk about softwood lumber, but unfortunately, I ran out of time.

What I wanted to say about the softwood lumber issue is that the budget contained nothing to deal with the crisis. HRDC's plan for workers affected by the softwood lumber crisis has been condemned by everyone. The measures that have been announced to help these workers are utterly inadequate, as you know.

Certain ministers promised a second stage for the softwood lumber assistance program. The budget contains no funding for this stage, as though the government had forgotten its promises. Are there many people who are surprised that the federal government is forgetting its promises?

Many people are disappointed. Their needs are still not being met because the provinces are not receiving the resources they need from the federal government to meet these needs.

The list of significant measures not mentioned in this budget is a long one. There is no reduction in the excise tax on gasoline; no reduction of the GST per litre of gasoline; no further decrease in income taxes; no appreciable short-term improvement in the RRSP contribution ceiling; no increase in the pension adjustment amount; nothing in the budget for senior citizens; no substantial reduction in employment insurance contributions; no improvement in old age security pensions; no provision to recover taxes on hidden salaries; no tax deduction for volunteer work; and no additional deduction for charitable donations.

The federal government has no respect for the elected representatives in Quebec and the provinces, who are making their constituents' needs known loud and clear. And it has no respect for municipal representatives, nor the citizens who are living in a state of crisis the government itself has created, such as the fishers, for example.

At present, the fishers of the Lower North Shore are occupying the offices of MAPAQ, which is the department of agriculture, fisheries and nutrition, and of Economic Development Canada, since the government has plunged these workers, these fishers, into an unprecedented crisis. It is not their fault; it is the fault of the government and of the Minister of Fisheries, who did not plan ahead. In the five years the seal population has been left unmanaged, it has risen from 1.8 million to 7 million.

I will close by saying that we are very disappointed. Decisions must be made, and they must be made now.

• (1020)

[*English*]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the budget implementation act and the dismal record that the government has had for the almost 10 years that I have been in the House.

I watched as, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the government has kind of stayed the course and allowed the rising tide of economic growth that in Canada was by the virtue of the good management of Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States who got the North American and western economy really growing during the 1990s. The government sat and watched the money roll into the coffers, and the budget balanced.

It was not the good management of the Liberal government that balanced the books. It was the fact that the economic policies emanating from Washington provided the spillover to our economic growth. Revenues rose and the budget balanced. It was a magic formula for the government.

However what we really need is leadership. There has been no leadership on the economic portfolio in the country in the 10 years I have been in the House.

Spending continues to rise even though the government said it would cut spending. It is now up to \$175 billion a year. While it is spending that kind of money, it has only been able to find a couple of billion dollars for our military resources. We know the military hardware is falling apart and falling out of the sky. Can the government get its mind around new helicopters? It says no, that there is no money for new helicopters.

The government has no priorities. We had the opportunity to stand with the western world and defend it in the last month or so but because a few of our men were sent over to Afghanistan the Prime Minister said that there was nobody else available. The government sent off the ships with our only helicopter on board and one day out at sea it lifted off the deck and fell back down, and that was the end of that escapade.

Unfortunately, our military and Canadians are embarrassed about the state of our military and yet the Liberals have a great big fight about how they can demonstrate buying new helicopters without admitting that they were wrong in 1993 to cut the helicopter program. The spending has no notion of trying to focus spending on what is best for Canada.

We have new programs being announced basically just before elections to buy votes. On the two days before the election was called in the year 2000, the minister of finance at the time, the member for LaSalle—Émard, stood up and introduced the heating fuel rebate. It was an emergency at the time and the government said that it had to get the money into the hands of Canadians because they could not afford to pay their heating fuel bills. That program cost us \$1.4 billion.

Government Orders

Some people said that was a good program because it helped Canadians. However the Auditor General pointed out that, by the government's own criteria, of those who were entitled and needed the money only \$400 million went to the people who needed it and \$1 billion went to people who did not need it. That of course, as we know, included some people in the graveyards, in prisons and in seniors homes where they were not paying utility bills. All those people were getting tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money when the government just spread it right across the land because it was election time.

Not only that, but 90,000 Canadians who needed the money, by the government's own criteria, did not receive a dime. It was a billion dollars wasted and 90,000 Canadians did not receive it when they should have received it. The government said that it was good policy.

•(1025)

We are now in the year 2003. What did we hear at the public accounts committee yesterday? Long after the price of the bills have come down again and long after the 90,000 people who needed the money have paid their bills, the government told the public accounts committee that it wanted to pay out another \$13 million to another 86,000 Canadians to help them to pay for the high heating fuel bill that they had in the year 2000. We expect the government will be back next year, in the year 2004, to tell us that it will be handing out money to people who do not need it to pay their utility bills for the year 2000.

Is that good management? I do not think it is good management. I cannot understand why the government feels it can use taxpayer money in this way, just spread it across the land and say that the Liberal government is good.

The Liberal government is not good. It has no focus and no direction. There is no "follow me to the promised land because I can see prosperity at the end of the line". No. The government just muddles along, taxes the people until they start to squeak and then it eases off a little bit. It then spreads the money around to anybody and everybody it can find who might use the money, and buy Liberal popularity.

We think of the HRDC billion dollar boondoggle. It does not matter if there is an application on file. It does not matter if people qualify or meet the rules, the government just sends them a cheque, preferably this week rather than next week because the sooner they get it the sooner they will be happy.

We know about the \$1 billion for the gun registry. We were told it would be a \$2 million program and it is at \$1 billion and counting. It would not be so bad if the government had just underestimated the costs, if it is possible to underestimate the cost of \$2 million instead of \$1 billion. Do members know what we found out, again at the public accounts committee hearings? A large part of the \$1 billion cost, somewhere in the region of \$500 million, was invested, wasted, on computer programming because the government had no plan for handling the computer programs to maintain the administration of the program.

The government went through 1,200 revisions of the computer program. The computer programmers were busy writing away, stopping and starting again because they had a new vision. They

would start on the new vision, write away and then stop, throw it in the garbage and start a new plan. The value of that work went straight into the trash can and provided zero benefit to Canadians.

Unfortunately that is due to the leadership we have received from the government and the member for LaSalle—Énard who was the minister of finance for a number of years and who now wants to lead the entire party. While we know what he is opposed to, we really do not know what he would be supporting should he ever take over the Prime Minister's job. Canadians should be quite alarmed by that because while he would dump the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs' bill to bring in some accountability to our native peoples, perhaps change the Kyoto agreement and a few other things he has talked about, we have no vision from the former minister of finance who sat in his seat for eight or nine years and allowed spending to increase and did not bring any focus to the finances of the country. We are apprehensive about where the country is going under the Liberal leadership.

I wish I had more time. I could go on and on, perhaps at great length, about the problems that we see, but I will hold my fire for another day.

•(1030)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-28, the budget implementation act, and to recommend to members in the Chamber the importance of the amendments before the House today.

I want the House to know that with respect to Bill C-28 the New Democratic Party took the process very seriously and made a number of amendments. We recommended those amendments to the House in order to make the budget a better document and ensure that budget 2003 reflected the priorities of Canadians.

As the House will know, from previous speeches on the bill, many members in the Chamber do not believe that the government of the day has truly reflected the priorities of Canadians or done everything in its power to ensure that the pressing needs and concerns of Canadians were addressed in the budget. This is at a time when surplus revenues are significant and when Canadians have a clear sense that social reinvestment is the order of the day and must be the priority for government action.

We have commented before on the budget and have indicated that there were some drops in the bucket that have made the situation better but that they did not actually amount to much when dealing with the poverty facing children, the housing conditions facing our aboriginal people on reserves, the juggling act of working women trying to provide for their children and ensuring quality day care, or when it comes to unemployed workers who are desperately trying to find some security at a time of great flux in the labour force today.

Today we are recommending that the government do more to invest in those priorities of Canadians. We are recommending that the government do that by deferring its tax cut agenda and putting on hold its plans to give tax breaks to big business and wealthy Canadians at a time when there are so many pressing social needs.

Government Orders

I want to quickly reference four or five of those pressing needs. The number one priority of Canadians is health care. We know the budget makes an attempt at reversing a decade of cuts to health care. We know the Liberals today have recognized the errors of their ways and are attempting to deal with a situation that they themselves caused. We acknowledge that there is some additional support for health care in the budget.

However the amount falls far short of what is required and falls far short of what has been recommended by the Liberal appointed commission on health care. Let us not forget that the proposals before us today leave a Romanow gap of some \$5.1 billion, money that could have gone to ensure that provincial governments are equipped and able to deal with growing waiting lists, with a demand for community based primary care delivery systems and for action finally on the long awaited, long overdue promised national home care and pharmacare plans.

The first priority of Canadians is health care. The government has failed in that regard by refusing to use all resources at hand to backfill from those years of cuts and from the devastation wreaked upon this system going back to 1995 with the famous budget introduced and engineered by the member for LaSalle—Émard.

The second priority has to do with child care and meeting the needs of working women and families everywhere in our society today. I am glad the Minister responsible for the Status of Women is here. I hope to hear from her in this debate because I think it is acknowledged that while the budget makes a tiny step in terms of meeting a promise that has been the longest running one in the history of Canadian politics for a national day care program, this is not a national day care program.

• (1035)

Working women today, families everywhere, are still struggling to find appropriate licensed, quality, non-profit child care for their children. There is no question that when it comes to women's search for equality and the barriers and obstacles to their full participation in the labour force today, the number one priority is quality child care. The government has failed to ensure resources available to it, through the surplus which has been generated and through deferral around these tax breaks for big corporations and the wealthy in Canada. This would have gone a long way to address that issue.

Third, is the question of living conditions for aboriginal peoples and the state of housing on reserves across the country. The government should be embarrassed by the findings of the Auditor General's report which clearly indicated that many members of our first nations communities were living in third world conditions and in deplorable housing conditions. The government has failed to address that long overdue concern in today's budget.

It should also be embarrassing for the government to have to deal with a United Nations envoy which toured first nations communities in Canada and which reported on the deplorable conditions. It must be an eye opener for the government to know that UN officials, touring in Canada, have expressed shock, dismay, surprise and horror that a country as rich and wealthy as Canada has allowed these horrible living and working conditions to continue.

Finally, let me mention the issue of women in general and comment on the United Nations committee report overseeing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It should be an eye opener as well for the government to recognize that Canada is falling far short of its obligations under that convention and that in fact previous cuts to social programs and inaction by the government over the last 10 years have had a devastating impact on women and their families.

The result is that Canada falls far short of basic obligations under a UN convention requiring the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Surely, at a time of considerable budget flexibility and significant surplus, the government could find it within its powers to address the concerns of families, of discrimination against women, of children living in poverty and of first nations communities living in third world conditions. This is what we should be about today, and it is the obligation of government to address those concerns.

Today we present one recommendation to make that possible. We call on the government to scrap its proposals to give a tax break to wealthy individuals and big business, which it is doing by way of recommended changes to the RRSP contribution limit and by way of the changes to the capital tax. We are talking about one to two billion dollars in revenue that could be applied to the social priorities of Canadians, to the primary objective of reinvesting in the social fabric of the country and to ensuring that we as a collective, as a House of Commons, once and for all take on the challenge of the human deficit and the social debt in the country.

That is our recommendation today. We hope there is a receptivity to those notions and that members of the House will support our amendments.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, whenever a budget is brought down, we have to keep repeating the same thing over and over because it seems to me that the government is turning a deaf ear, it is not listening. I think that this budget illustrates the extent of the fiscal imbalance.

Since the Liberals took office, Ottawa's revenues have increased by 50%, from \$123 billion in 1993-94 to \$185 billion in 2003-04.

If there is one thing to remember about budget 2003, it is that the federal government's revenues are disproportionate to its needs. The government is rolling in surpluses. It is collecting far too much in taxes. The Bloc Québécois estimates that, in spite of an 11% increase in spending—an enormous increase—Ottawa will still end up with a \$14.7 billion surplus over the next years. This goes to show the extent of the fiscal imbalance. As stated previously, only Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta will be deficit-free next year. Every other province will have a deficit.

Government Orders

The federal spending power is another consequence of the fiscal imbalance. Ottawa cannot resist spending its surpluses in various areas that fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and of the provinces. The federal government thinks nothing of establishing organizations or new programs in education, child welfare or health care. Ottawa will be spending \$4.5 billion over the next three years in these areas, thereby causing an administrative dispute with Quebec and the provinces. The bottom line is that the government is wasting money.

Then there are the people who were left out of this budget. Let us say that the regions dependent on softwood lumber, self-employed workers and farm producers—who do not exist as far as the federal government is concerned—the aboriginal people, the unemployed and those workers who pay into the EI fund have been forgotten in this budget.

Finally, I should mention the middle income taxpayers, who are completely forgotten. The federal government preferred to announce an increase in the RRSP limit, which affects merely 1.5% of the taxpayers in Quebec, that is, those reporting an average income of \$150,000 or more.

The Minister of Finance has been boasting of transparency, but he has still underestimated the surplus by close to \$8 billion. He has announced a balanced employment insurance fund, but the federal government is once again going to be digging into the three million dollar annual surplus. Finally, he has created trusts and foundations that are beyond the control of the public and parliamentarians.

Since 1998, the budget for defence has increased by 53%. By comparison, federal transfer payments for post-secondary education have dropped more than 30% since 1996. Where, in your opinion, do Quebecers place their priorities: defence or education?

In addition, there is a new accounting method for government assets. The federal government has altered its bookkeeping methods, and from now on the method used will be full-accrual accounting. This change of method impacts on the government's bottom line.

The minister's budget forecasts are \$9.4 billion for 2002-03 and \$8.8 for 2003-04. The government has also kept a cushion of \$3 billion for 2002-03 and \$4 billion for 2003-04, which makes a total surplus for the next two years of \$25 billion plus.

The Minister of Finance has not responded to the demands of the people of Quebec and of Canada. Prebudget consultations by the Bloc Québécois led to our calling for the government to do the following: gradually correct fiscal imbalance and transfer \$9.5 billion over two years to the provinces in the form of tax points or GST revenues; reduce premium rates and broaden the rules for eligibility for employment insurance, something that is very important today with all that is going on in the fisheries, softwood lumber and elsewhere; create a new infrastructure program; support the wind-power industry; abolish the special 1.5 cent per litre gas tax; abolish the airport security tax; cut several billion dollars annually from government spending by abolishing useless programs, waste and tax havens that make no contribution whatsoever to economic growth.

As far as resolving fiscal imbalance is concerned, the Séguin commission had unanimous support in Quebec. There is a fiscal imbalance and it must be corrected. To that end, we asked the federal

government to transfer to the Government of Quebec and the governments of the other provinces an additional taxation capacity that would enable them to invest where the need is greatest.

We are asking for a further transfer of tax points or additional tax room of \$4.5 billion in 2002-03 and \$5 billion in 2003-04.

● (1045)

The various measures taken in the 2003 budget do nothing to reduce the financial pressure on the provinces. We can conclude by saying this: the government has announced insufficient additional investments in sectors where the needs are blatant, such as health, and has distributed the funds to programs and agencies that encroach on provincial jurisdictions.

Visibly, the federal government has no intention of resolving the fiscal imbalance. Creating new agencies, new programs, and new bodies will only perpetuate the status quo in intergovernmental financial relations, or make matters worse. The needs of citizens are always poorly met, because the provinces do not receive adequate resources from the federal government in order to be able to respond to the needs of the people.

Let us now turn to the people who have been left out of this budget. A self-sustaining employment insurance fund must be created. Unions and employers are exasperated by the misuse of EI funds. They support the Bloc's call for a self-sustaining EI fund, so that the government will stop robbing the fund, and so that contribution rates will be set by those who pay into the fund, both employees and employers.

The Bloc Québécois had hoped the Liberal government would create a self-sustaining fund before the former Minister of Finance returned. However, the current Minister of Finance's budget did not establish a self-sustaining EI fund and announced a delay of almost two years for establishing a new mechanism for setting premiums. The program may ring up a surplus of \$3 billion over the next fiscal year, and the Minister of Finance has been promising to balance EI spending and premiums in the following years.

Let us talk about abolishing the gasoline tax. The government introduced a special tax of 1.5 cents per litre to bring down the deficit. Now that deficits are a thing of the past, why does the government not abolish this tax, or turn it over to the provinces for infrastructure spending? That would be a very good idea.

On the issue of infrastructure funding, the Bloc Québécois had asked that enough money be provided for Quebec to proceed with needed infrastructure projects. We had asked for substantial, long-term commitments. The increases in infrastructure funding are not enough. On top of that, the government has been slow in turning over the amounts needed.

The budget contained an additional investment of \$3 billion over ten years. This investment is broken down as follows: \$2 billion more for the strategic infrastructure fund. The fund is going from \$2 billion to \$4 billion, with \$1 billion for municipal infrastructure over ten years.

Government Orders

One billion dollars is not a lot. One hundred million dollars per year for all of Quebec and Canada is not very much.

Who has been overlooked? Women. Despite additional money for the national child tax benefit and for day care spaces, which have an indirect effect on women's lives, there were relatively few real measures to help women directly in this budget.

For example, the budget makes no mention of the federal government's intention to negotiate with the Quebec government to reach an agreement on clawbacks of employment insurance premiums, which would allow the creation of the Quebec parental insurance program or RAP. This new program would replace and improve the federal employment insurance program's maternity and parental leave. More people would be eligible, such as women who are self-employed or seasonal workers, and the benefits would be better, with an income replacement rate of up to 75%. Conditions for women having children would be greatly improved and simplified.

Furthermore, the budget contains no tax or other measures for the elderly, such as annuities or old age pensions. However, this group's income continues to decline, and since women represent over half of this group, they are the ones who will suffer most.

As for aboriginals, they get very little from the Minister of Finance's budget. Since the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples tabled its voluminous report, the federal government has been slow to respond, instead of taking immediate action.

It is the same story for seniors. There is nothing in the budget for seniors.

With regard to softwood lumber, Human Resources Development Canada's plan for workers hit by the softwood lumber crisis has been strongly criticized by all sides, with many claiming that the measures announced to assist these workers were clearly insufficient. I agree; there was proof of that this week and in previous weeks.

Some ministers have promised a second phase in the assistance program for workers in the softwood lumber industry. However, the budget makes no mention of funding for phase two. It is as if the federal government had forgotten its promises; its representatives are doing even worse, they have lost their memory.

Then there are travellers and airports. Nothing has changed. There is a \$12 tax. Perhaps the government should eliminate it. This means that the government's budget does not really reflect the needs of people in Quebec and Canada.

• (1050)

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is the second time I rise to speak on the budget for 2003-04.

In February, when I first spoke on the budget, I reacted mildly. But as time goes by and I examine the budget, I realize that, as my colleague, the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane, said, this is a budget of illusions, and it is unrealistic.

With the arrival of the new Minister of Finance, who was allegedly in the race for the leadership of the Liberal Party at the time, I would have expected money to be spent on the real priorities of Canadians. For years now, the people have been telling this government what their priorities are. With this budget, the candidate

for the leadership of the Liberal Party did no better than the former Minister of Finance, the hon. member for LaSalle—Énard.

In this budget, I note that the priorities with respect to urgently required investments were ignored, whether in infrastructure or other areas.

After this budget was tabled, the president of the Coalition pour le maintien des infrastructures stratégiques, the mayor of Laval, said that the government would have had to invest \$15 billion over the next 10 years to upgrade municipal infrastructure. Instead, what does the budget propose? Two billion dollars for the whole of Canada over the next 10 years. For Quebec, this means \$200 million for the next 10 years.

Moreover, the federal government wants to go over the heads of the provinces and deal directly with the municipalities, instead of developing projects and signing agreements as in the past, infrastructure agreements between the Government of Canada, Quebec and the municipalities. At present, while offering a meagre \$200 million, it expects to deal directly with the municipalities. Clearly, the mayors of municipalities are not fooled, even though the need is great.

It is all fine and well to say that money is being put into health care, but we have sewer and water systems that need to be refitted in our municipalities. Hon. members know how important this is. Just think of what happened in Ontario, when they had problems with the sewers and water.

Also, in my region, the Canadian government is always saying, "We are looking after the regions". I am the Bloc Québécois critic for regional development. I have looked at the budget for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec. Reading that budget, I saw that for fiscal 2003-04, in a budget that reflects the reality of the regions, there is a \$52 million cut. I asked myself some questions. I said, "How can the Minister responsible for the regions of Quebec accept this?" I notice that was cut out of the speech. He had better not try to tell us he is looking after the regions.

In addition, this budget has succeeded in showing us the extent of the fiscal imbalance. Words fail us, in this regard. I believe all the provinces of Canada supported the Séguin report in Quebec and agreed that there truly is a fiscal imbalance in Canada. The Government of Canada is making an enormous tax grab and leaving crumbs for the provinces. What is it doing with all that tax money?

• (1055)

Instead of returning tax points to the provinces, it invades jurisdictions where it does not belong. It creates new programs and after three years, it waltzes off, leaving the provinces to deal with the new programs. The provinces are starving on the meagre supply of money being returned by the federal government.

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The situation today is serious. It is said that the Minister of Finance is going across Canada to talk to people and ask them, "What should I include in my budget?" I do not know who he has met. In my riding, I meet real people, persons with disabilities. There is no fiscal measure to help these people out with a disability tax credit. On the contrary, the government is restricting access to this credit. One has to be bedridden, incapacitated, incapable of dressing and feeding oneself, in order to be eligible for this tax credit.

I would also like to mention the issue my hon. friend from Champlain has spoken about a great deal over the last two years, the guaranteed income supplement for seniors. For nine years, the government has been depriving a huge number of old people of this income supplement. There are no plans to reimburse these people for the amounts they have not received over the past nine years.

Seniors often come to my riding office and ask me, "When is the government going to give us a decent income? When are they going to see that we seniors can live decently without constantly having to go without? When are they going to start to understand that we cannot live a decent life on \$14,000? When are they going to set a reasonable income level for seniors of \$30,000?" Seniors are the ones who have developed Canada, but now they are getting no recognition for it".

Then there is all the issue of women and of employment insurance. Nothing has been done about the self-employed, whereas we know that 16% of the Canadian population is currently self-employed, with no access to employment insurance. This marginalizes a large number of workers.

This government thinks it has met people's expectations. As members know, there is going to be a new leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, and I do not think that leader will go along with this budget, particularly when the majority of its measures are spread out over the next 10 years. It is hard to budget ahead when it is one's personal budget, and in this case it is a matter of spreading out over 10 years measures that do not even have any connection to reality. Imagine all the things that will occur down the line. This budget has made no provision for the future.

I am very disappointed with this new Minister of Finance. I am very disappointed with this government, which is pocketing staggering surpluses and doing nothing for seniors, workers, the softwood lumber workers or to change the employment insurance legislation. Last week, the Secretary of State responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec even admitted that the EI fund with its \$44 billion surplus no longer existed. Presto, it was gone.

This government is truly a master of illusions. It is a government that digs into the pockets of the public and tells them, "Hand it over, and I will do what I want with it". No, I will never support that kind of vision of a country. I will never believe this government's claims that it is listening to people. I will be voting against this budget.

• (1100)

[English]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the budget implementation bill. I want to talk about a couple of specific areas. First, and my

colleague from the Bloc has already mentioned the disability tax credit. Second, I want to talk about the Canadian Air Transportation Security Authority and its funding through this budget. Third, I also want to discuss the funding of the Canadian television fund. We will see a number of those affected by the cuts within that program here today on the Hill as they raise issues. These are issues that affect each and every one of us as Canadians.

I want to start with the Canadian Air Transportation Security Authority which was a new program within the Canadian government in the last couple of years to deal with the issue of air transportation security. Air transportation security was supposed to deal with all transportation security but mostly air. It was a new authority that the government was going to fund through a new tax. The new GST from the Liberal government is a security tax that passengers have to pay when travelling by air.

As a New Democrat and a good number of Canadians, we have a real issue with this. That any one sector should have to pay for its security is like asking people who have their houses broken into to now pay for RCMP services. For that matter, people who have a murder or something even more dastardly happen in relation to their lives and then have to pay for the services of the RCMP to be there for further protection just does not seem acceptable in Canada.

However, the government forged ahead on the air transportation security tax preying on the hardship and fear that people had in relation to 9/11. It brought in this transportation security tax of \$24 per travelling passenger. It broke it up into varying areas. For one way travel people got charged so much; coming back people got charged so much, and on top of that they had to pay GST. Talk about a real slap in the face for society. People were not only paying for their security, but they were being taxed on paying for that security as well. I guess it was not an essential service or the government thought it was totally acceptable to pay GST on essential services.

It brought in the security tax and a new authority, the Canadian Air Transportation Security Authority, to look after it. There have been numerous concerns raised that the security tax was part of an impact that was taking place on the air industry. The air industry was suffering greatly because of 9/11 and today there are issues related to SARS. There are just a whole conglomerate of reasons, but the air transportation security tax was part of it. The government brought in this new authority which was going to be funded from the tax.

The other day at the transport committee we heard witnesses from this authority with regard to the votes that they would need passed under this budget to get their funding. The minister said numerous times that anything related to the air transportation security association, and I am choosing names for it because I was so upset the other day about their whole attitude, anything related to CATSA should be referred to that authority. There is money coming out of the budget for it because there is no separate fund for this tax.

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On top of that, this air transportation security tax being collected from passengers goes into the general revenue fund, that black hole where the Government of Canada has pension funds, the EI fund and now the air transportation security tax as well.

The minister told us numerous times to ask CATSA. CATSA witnesses came before us the other day. What did they say to us in committee when we questioned them on one of their expenditures? We did not ask what kind of security it had at Toronto International Airport. We did not ask what equipment was purchased. The question was, "How much had it paid for a contract with this company?" We did not ask what exactly was being delved into in that contract. We did not ask for the specifics.

• (1105)

We asked how much money was paid for that contract. In relation to all the situations the government is dealing with and the questions about the contracts it has become involved with and the patronage and issues of the government handing out contracts, it was a fair question. What did CATSA say? "We cannot tell you because of national security". Imagine that. CATSA could not tell us how much it paid for that contract because of security issues. It is right in the act and how could members of Parliament want CATSA to break a legislative act?

If that is not the most ridiculous statement I have ever heard. Committee members were frustrated. Our committee was responding to a position that the Auditor General had taken with parliamentarians in telling us that we have to question what is happening with taxpayers' dollars. We have to ask where the money is going in the different programs. As good members of Parliament we are doing what we have been asked to do, to follow through on accountability of government dollars and we were told "We cannot tell you unless the minister says so".

The minister should stand before us in the House and account. If nobody can speak on his behalf without his permission, there is no point holding hands at the committee. The minister should be in the House to account for that. That is the issue on the transportation security tax.

I want to mention the disability tax credit. There is an impression out there that the government wants to give that disabled people should not get the disability tax credit unless they are literally crawling on the ground, and if they are crawling on the ground and they can still get food in their mouth, they probably should not get the disability tax credit.

Quite frankly, does anybody say to businesses when businesses have the tax deduction for their employees "We are sorry but you have made this much money so you do not need that tax credit or tax deduction"? Does anybody say to businesses that they cannot claim their executive boxes at hockey games or anything like that? No, there is no problem, but what is being said to the disabled? They have to get something signed by a doctor saying that they cannot do certain things or they will not get the disability tax credit.

It is unacceptable. The government's priorities are out of whack. Its attitude toward ordinary Canadians, and in a good many cases the most vulnerable of Canadians, is just not acceptable. The issue of the tax credit needs to be dealt with. We need to make sure that what

minuscule amount of dollars the disabled are able to get as a credit should be there for them. It must be recognized that there are additional costs to being disabled and that Canadians see that and are saying it is okay to give the disabled a tax credit, the same as a good number of Canadians believe it is okay that when someone is working it is okay to claim child care as a tax credit. That is acceptable to Canadians.

The third issue I want to talk about is the unconscionable attack on Canadian programming. The government's lack of vision to bring this country together, to build industries that show us what it is like to be Canadian is unacceptable. It must represent those people who have given so much of their lives as actors, directors and producers to bring that programming to us each and every day of our lives on television and radio. The \$25 million cut to the Canadian television fund is having dramatic consequences on our country and on that industry.

The lobbying group is here today and I ask members of Parliament to listen very clearly. The government needs to be taken to task. It needs to put back the dollars that are needed to support that industry, and make the legislative changes needed at the CRTC level to ensure that we have a program in Canada to support the upcoming producers, directors and actors. We do not want to import America, the U.S. We want something that is Canadian. We want young people growing up and viewing Canada through the eyes of Canadians.

We had that as young people. I would challenge any of us here, maybe the youngest of the young here in the House of Commons. We have seen great programming over the years: Don Messer, Tommy Hunter, *Street Legal*, and *Da Vinci's Inquest*. There is wonderful Canadian programming.

Mr. Calder: The Beachcombers.

Ms. Bev Desjarlais: The Beachcombers. There are wonderful actors and actresses. We are proud of them. What does the government do to show its pride in Canadians in that industry? It cut \$25 million from their programming. It is not acceptable.

• (1110)

I am out of time, but I hope a number of other members also take the opportunity to bring up that issue.

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I thought the member's speech was excellent. Obviously she ran out of time. I was wondering if you could seek unanimous consent to have her continue.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Unfortunately, the member, should have continued.

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Mr. Speaker, this morning, I will not necessarily be talking about the budget, which we are debating. Instead, I am going to talk about an amendment brought forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Drummond, which seeks to delete clause 64 on page 56 of the bill. This amendment reads as follows:

That Bill C-28 be amended by deleting Clause 64.

Everyone wants to know why clause 64 should be deleted.

It is due to a long-standing problem between school boards across the country and the Department of Finance. The school boards are entitled to claim 100% of input tax credits for student transportation under the Excise Tax Act, with respect to the goods and services tax and the harmonized sales tax, as they apply to school boards and the student transportation services they provide. This credit has existed for years.

The former Minister of Finance—now the frontrunner in the Liberal leadership race, I am talking about the member for LaSalle—Émard—decided to take this 100% credit and unilaterally cut it to 68%. Finally, the school boards protested by going to court.

On October 17, 2001, the Commission scolaire des Chênes won, unanimously, a ruling entitling Canadian school boards to 100% deductions. This deduction was authorized for all 415 school boards in the country, including the 72 in Quebec, 88 in Saskatchewan, 72 in Ontario, 7 in Nova Scotia, 60 in British Columbia and so on. So, all Canadian school boards were affected.

In a newspaper article on March 20, 2002, Gary Shaddock, president of the Canadian School Boards' Association, stated that this decision would cost approximately \$150 million. This means that Canada would try to find a \$150 million surplus within the school boards' budgets. This would have created a \$150 million shortfall across the country.

Mr. Shaddock said:

The total financial impact for the federal government is not huge...but the impact for boards is significant.

In this same article, Mr. Shaddock states that the former Minister of Finance—and the new one, because this is in the new Minister of Finance's budget—was trying to sidestep a legal decision requiring that the federal government provide a 100% credit and that stated that government policy must not set aside court decisions.

That is exactly what clause 64 tries to do. The budget tells judges, "You did your job more or less well, and we do not like it. That is that".

I would like to talk briefly about school boards in Quebec. André Caron, president of the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec, said recently that this was an abuse of the law and power.

• (1115)

By acting this way, the federal government will deprive Quebec school boards of significant financial resources used to organize busing for 650 students daily.

The fédération estimates the cost of the problem to be under \$30 million. What kind of effect will this \$30 million shortfall for Quebec's school boards have? They will have to increase school

taxes for all parents of students in Quebec if they want to continue to provide an adequate busing system.

This is another method used by the federal government. It is pilfering millions of dollars from school boards, the EI fund, and everywhere. To do what? Perhaps to help out their friends and cronies. I do not know.

In closing, I have a letter from a large Montreal law firm, Stikeman Elliott. It is signed by a person whom I believe is a friend of yours, or someone you know quite well, the hon. Marc Lalonde, former Minister of Finance under the Trudeau government. He, too, is opposed to clause 64 in the budget, saying that it is unacceptable. I will read a few lines from Mr. Lalonde's letter. The former Minister of Finance, the member for LaSalle—Émard, said this:

However, the proposed amendment will not affect any case that has already been decided by the Federal Court.

That is what the then Minister of Finance, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, said in a release dated December 31, 2001, during the holiday break, so that nobody would notice. That is what he said, and it caused an uproar.

Mr. Lalonde had anticipated that reaction. Here is what he wrote the former Minister of Finance:

A man with your political experience can imagine the reaction of those school boards alienated in this matter.

I realize I have only two minutes remaining, and I think I will be able to complete my remarks. Here is another excerpt from Marc Lalonde's letter.

Once a final judgment had been handed down by the courts, every case thereafter should have been settled on the same basis. However, your department's legislative proposal would retroactively reverse such an arrangement. Needless to say that our clients feel that the Department of Finance is taking the attitude, "Heads, I win; tails, you lose".

This is what Marc Lalonde wrote. I did not write these words. Marc Lalonde, a former Minister of Finance, did. I think that both the current Minister of Finance and his predecessor, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, should have paid attention.

Members can see why I am asking that the amendment put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Drummondville, be accepted and that clause 64 be deleted.

I thank the House for this opportunity to speak on an issue dear to my heart, which concerns students throughout Canada.

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this important debate on the budget implementation act, and to pay tribute initially to my colleague, the new finance spokesperson for the federal New Democrat caucus, the member for Winnipeg—North Centre, who has spoken eloquently on our perspective as New Democrats about the many shortcomings in the budget.

We put this in the context of a decade in which the federal Liberal government cut, hacked and slashed, not just to the bone but beyond, into some of the most basic programs of concern to Canadians. I want to give just a couple of examples of that.

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I represent a constituency in British Columbia, the constituency of Burnaby—Douglas, in which we are proud to have a good number of co-op housing projects. In fact we have over 1,000 families who live in co-op housing. When the federal Liberals were elected in 1993, one of the first things the minister of finance did, who is now a candidate for the leadership of the Liberal Party and who is travelling across the country talking about what a great prime minister he will be, was to cut, eliminate and wipe out funding for co-op and social housing in Canada. It was absolutely shameful.

We had just come out of nine years of Conservative government, and I had the honour of representing Burnaby during those nine years. Even the Conservatives did not dare to wipe out and eliminate federal funding for co-op housing. The Liberal government did that. Now the Liberals say that we are back in the era of surpluses. Now that we have this era of surpluses and they have been able to find millions and millions of dollars in tax cuts for some of the wealthiest Canadians, how much money has the Liberal government found for co-op housing in the last budget? Not one cent, not a penny of funding for co-op housing, even though it has found money for its friends in the big corporations, for the wealthiest citizens in the country. I say shame on the former minister of finance, on the current Minister of Finance and on our Liberal government. They obviously do not care about access to affordable housing and to co-op housing.

Another concern which has been raised on many occasions by the former health critic of the federal New Democrats and by me, my colleagues and our new leader, Jack Layton, is the shortchanging of the Liberal government in implementing the vitally important recommendations of the Romanow commission on the future of health care.

Roy Romanow spent a year and a half travelling across Canada, consulting with Canadians, collecting the best possible evidence on how to save our public health care system. He came to the conclusion that not only did we have to make some major changes in how we delivered health care, including for example the provision of diagnostic services specifically under the provisions of the Canada Health Act, but he was also very clear about the harsh impact of the cuts by the former minister of finance on the quality of health care across this country.

Once again, we saw the former minister of finance slashing funding for public health care, downloading onto the provinces and territories. One would have hoped that the current Minister of Finance would have responded to the recommendations of Roy Romanow. Instead the Liberals fell far short in their response. They left a huge gap, as the first ministers pointed out in their accord, a gap which my colleague from Winnipeg—North Centre calls the Romanow gap, between what was needed, as identified as critically important by Roy Romanow as he travelled across the country, and what the Liberals actually delivered.

To ensure the long term sustainability of public health care, Romanow had agreed with us as New Democrats that the federal share of public health financing ought to be returned as quickly as possible to 25%. I pause here to say that 25% is not a radical or revolutionary target. It was not that many years ago when the federal government was committed to 50%, to half the costs of our medicare system.

• (1125)

Roy Romanow has suggested that we at least move up to 25%. He urged that be done over a three year time frame. What has the Liberal government respond to that important recommendation? Instead of returning to 25%, the Liberal budget, which we are now debating, raises the federal contribution to only 20%. Even then, it is not after three years; it is after five years. Basically there is a shortfall of some \$5 billion. That is the Romanow gap, \$5 billion of funding that is desperately needed to strengthen and improve the quality of our public health care system. The Liberal government, which is awash in surpluses and which can find money for tax cuts, cannot find money to fund the basic needs of our health care system.

The Liberals have created another gap in the budget. It is what we call the Romanow accountability gap, because there is a lack of clarity with respect to the numbers on health. We do not know for example whether the money that has already committed, the \$13.2 billion committed to improving health care under the 2000 health accord, is old money, new money, new old money or old new money. Nobody really knows.

There is also the issue of the tax points and transfers to the provinces and so on. On that Romanow was very clear. He said that transfers to the provinces should be completely on a cash basis. There should be no more of this jiggery-pokery of tax points.

One of the greatest threats to public health care is the decision by the Liberal government to allow profits to grow even higher within an increasingly privatized public health care system. One of the real concerns we have raised over and over again in the House, raised by my colleague, my predecessor as the health critic who is now our finance critic, the member for Halifax, and also by our national leader, is the grave threat to medicare, to public health care, as a result of the growing impact of private for profit care. Yet the Liberals are absolutely silent on this. There is not a single means of ensuring that the new money which goes into health care under the provisions of the recently signed first ministers health accord will not be going into private for profit delivery.

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As the Canadian Health Coalition and many others, including the New Democrat premiers of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have pointed out clearly, that is a grave threat to our medicare. It is a double whammy in a sense. As the federal Liberals seriously underfund public health care and allow the growth of private for profit health care, there will be growing pressure from the Canadian public who see the waiting lines in some cases getting longer because of federal cuts in funding. The pressure will be of course that if we cannot deliver within the public system, maybe, as the Canadian Alliance suggests, we should be move to a kind of two tier American style health care system. New Democrats will stand here and fight and fight against any move toward that kind of regressive two tier health care system.

The budget we are debating today, in a number of very important ways, moves us further down that very dangerous road which would lead to an erosion of our public health care system.

There are many other concerns as well in terms of the budget and shortfalls in funding. The whole issue of crime prevention, for example, is one that is of great concern in my community of Burnaby. I have had the privilege of meeting with a number of community policing groups. They have pointed out that, as a result of some significant cuts in funding in the crime prevention area, public safety is in some areas being jeopardized. The funding for crime prevention and for commercial crime has gone down as well.

We still do not have adequate funding from the federal government for public transit and a return of some of those hundreds of millions of dollars that we as British Columbians pour into the federal coffers on the one hand, yet we do not see a penny coming back to British Columbia to support public transit.

You are signaling that my time is coming to an end, Mr. Speaker, and I am just getting started. I know the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore will rise to give us a stirring defence of the budget, and I look forward with great interest to her comments.

• (1130)

As New Democrats we say the budget falls far short in some of the most critical areas including health care, foreign aid, housing, the environment and of course a number of other areas such as culture.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too am very pleased to have the opportunity today to participate in the debate on the budget implementation act. I think it is clear, as the name implies, that we are talking about what the government does to put its money where its mouth is.

One has to be very concerned, even when the government mouths from time to time some progressive thoughts and talks about being concerned about the future of Canadians and the future of the country, whether it backs it up with the kind of concrete resources that would translate those expressions of progressive thought into something concrete for the benefit of Canadians and the future of our great country.

As the House knows, many of my colleagues have already spoken. Most recently the member for Burnaby—Douglas, the finance critic from Winnipeg and many other of my colleagues have spoken specifically about some of the gaps, some of the severe shortfalls between words and resources.

I would like today to not so much speak about some of those areas where the disastrous effect of a budget has failed to have a sensible set of priorities. This is quite evident to Canadians where the negative adverse impact for example of the shortfall in health funding has been a major priority for Canadians and continues to be a problem in the budget we are now debating.

We know the government has perfected the art of bringing out statistics that show there is a such and such percentage increase when it comes to health funding. Of course what the government does not say is the base on which that percentage increase is calculated is a disastrously low, a base that was struck by the government in its massive unilateral unprecedented cuts to health funding in the country. Therefore a great deception goes on in the numbers game, in the representation of increases from what was such a disastrously low base. It really means nothing until we look at how it plays itself out in the health care system.

That is concrete and felt in a very direct way by a lot of Canadians. That is why so many have mobilized so widely to try to close the Romanow gap as it has come to be called.

Similarly, in co-op housing, we have a situation in which the government says that it is concerned about homelessness. Every once in a while it trots out a cameo appearance of desperately struggling community based organizations that are trying to address the homelessness problem. They come together to sign an agreement to deal with the very crisis ridden situation of homeless people on the streets. However when it comes to investing in affordable housing that would begin to solve the problem, the money is not there. It clearly is not there in this budget and has not been there with this government from day one.

In the few minutes I have available, I briefly want to speak about three areas in which the budget falls very short of what is needed, the effects of which are not so immediately measurable but of which are every bit as problematic, as disastrous and devastating in their impact. They do not affect all Canadians in the way health care funding does but they absolutely affect Canada as a community and as a nation in terms of who we want to be. They really go to the question of what is the soul of Canada, which does not seem to concern the government very much.

The first is in the area of the disability tax credit. We have had much debate on this in the House. The NDP has worked actively in collaboration with organizations and individuals living with disabilities to try to get the government to understand that the restrictive definition of what constitutes a disability and what determines eligibility for the disability tax credit has caused immense hardship in the lives of a great many Canadians.

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•(1135)

It has to be one of the most meanspirited, short-sighted things that the government has launched. There are a lot of others on that list as well, but to go after the most vulnerable of Canadians for whom just meeting the daily requirements of getting through life is demanding and requires Herculean motivation and commitment on the part of people, for the government to say, "Let us save money by creating new, stricter criteria for eligibility for the disability tax credit" has to be just obscene.

We still have the government mouthing words about being concerned and reviewing the situation, but the fact remains that people who were receiving tiny supplements, and that is what we are talking about, tiny supplements, to an already very inadequate monthly and annual income find themselves even more short-changed and more short-handed when it comes to paying for their daily needs, never mind beginning to be able to pay for some of the costs associated with the disabilities with which people are living.

The second falls into an area that may be even less immediately evident to a lot of Canadians. I want to take us back very briefly to post-9/11 when I introduced a motion in the House in collaboration with a great many Canadians who were concerned already about the signs of how the government was going to respond.

We argued that there needed to be resources placed in fighting the racial discrimination and the religious bigotry that was already evidencing itself in our Canadian family. It was absolutely un-Canadian in terms of the racial profiling that began to affect not just the lives of people crossing borders but of little children in the school ground. There was an alarming, disturbing outburst, a rash, an epidemic of anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic sentiment beginning to come to the fore in this country. This remains a very serious problem.

I have to say when it comes to any evidence that the government has really put its money where its mouth is after saying it is concerned about this that what the government has done instead of allocating resources to do genuine community building, to genuinely increase public awareness and sensitization to this problem, is that it has simply expressed its concern and turned its back on this problem that has grown.

In fact, what the government has done is even worse than that. It is not immediately measurable in the budget we are looking at because there is no budget allocation. The government has made the problem worse by introducing one piece of legislation after another that essentially sanctions the quashing of civil liberties, that essentially creates in the public mind that greater security somehow results from curbing the freedoms, rights and the liberties of Canadians.

Whose rights and liberties end up being quashed most severely? The very Canadians who are most evidently discriminated against in the first place and need the understanding, support and protection of having their rights and liberties safeguarded. The government, by virtue of not allocating the necessary resources for public education and community sensitization, has simply made the problem worse.

Finally, I know I have only a minute or two left, so let me say on this very day that it seems to me important that the government take note that increasing numbers of Canadians are very alarmed that it is

necessary for the artistic community, particularly those artists who are involved in theatre and in the film industry, to come to this place, to come to Parliament Hill to say for the love of God why can the government not understand that the very soul of Canada, that who we are, who we aspire to be, what matters to us as Canadians is represented best and most dramatically by the voices and the actions of the creative community, of the arts and culture community?

What do we have happening? Not only are a great many jobs being driven out of existence, not only is a whole industry under assault in terms of the film industry and the related cultural industries, but we have a situation where the ability of Canadians to hear themselves, their voices and their aspirations expressed through the creative energy of the artistic community is being quashed.

•(1140)

I am going to say on this occasion that I hope the government is listening and will understand what the members of ACTRA, the film industry, are saying when they say not to kill an important part of the Canadian soul as well as an industry by the slashing of \$25 million and to get beyond that to understand that it is about the investment of dollars but also about overhauling CRTC changes that have similarly curbed, quashed and silenced the voices of hope and aspiration in our society through the artistic and cultural community.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 13. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The vote on the motion is deferred. The next question is on Motion No. 14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

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And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 15.

The next question is on Motion No. 17. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 18. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 18 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 19.

[*English*]

The votes are deferred until later this day following question period.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY ACT, 2002

The House resumed from May 9 consideration of Bill C-17, an act to amend certain Acts of Canada, and to enact measures for implementing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, in order to enhance public safety, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of Motion No. 6.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Surrey Central to

address Motion No. 6 at report stage consideration of Bill C-17, an act to amend certain acts of Canada and to enact measures for implementing the biological and toxin weapons convention in order to enhance public safety, otherwise also known as the public safety act.

Like its predecessors, Bills C-42 and C-55 of the last session, Bill C-17 is an omnibus bill that amends or introduces nearly two dozen acts within the jurisdiction of nearly a dozen federal departments or agencies.

Motion No. 6 is very interesting. It takes the interim orders philosophy in Bill C-17 and ensures that will be included in the Pest Control Products Act in the event of that act getting royal assent before Bill C-17 does. Let us think about this. The Pest Control Products Act was written without interim orders and now the government is so concerned that it has modified Bill C-17 to apply to a bill to be passed in the future. It is fascinating.

In many cases, in the place of specific provisions designed to reassure the travelling public and the public in general, the bill gives four ministers the authority to issue interim orders. A very significant portion of Bill C-17 deals with interim orders. Ten parts of the bill amend various statutes to provide a new or expanded power permitting the responsible minister to make interim orders in situations where immediate action is required. Essentially, the thinking from the government behind interim orders is "trust me". In other words, it is saying, "Give me various undefined powers and when there's an emergency, trust me to do the right thing". That is what the minister will say.

First, we cannot forget that the very same government that has taken over 19 months to react to September 11 is the one now saying "trust me". Second, we should not overlook the fact that if the government really knew what it was doing, it would have clearly defined both its responsibilities and its powers. In the United States, the U.S. aviation and transportation security act was drafted just 10 days after September 11. However, even then, while a shocked America pondered the unthinkable crisis that had just happened, American legislators knew that "trust me" was not going to cut it with the American public.

The U.S. aviation and transportation security act is specific. It delegates powers but it also assigns responsibilities. It contains deadlines. It specifies the amount of money that may be spent on particular initiatives. It sets management objectives and requires regular evaluations as well as audits. It is very specific, not vague like the legislation that we are debating.

There is a clear understanding of who does what why, when, and with what authority. Checks and balances are present. The U.S. aviation and transportation security act is a planned, strategic response by a superpower to a defined threat.

In Canada Bill C-17 uses interim orders while the U.S. uses specifics. The interim orders all follow a similar pattern. They allow a minister, under certain circumstances, to make an order that would normally have to be made by the governor in council. Thus, when the chips are down and cabinet cannot meet, an interim order lets a cabinet minister take actions that would normally need cabinet approval.

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● (1150)

In most cases in Bill C-17 the interim order must be published in the *Canada Gazette* within 23 days, must be approved by cabinet within 14 days, and expire at the end of the year. Similarly, an interim order must be tabled in Parliament within 15 days after it has been made.

Members from the Canadian Alliance, the Bloc, and the NDP tried to propose constructive amendments to Bill C-17 regarding interim orders when it was referred to the special legislative committee. In the case of 14 Canadian Alliance amendments put forward by our transportation critic, who has done a very good job, each was motivated by the spirit of the Emergencies Act. Its preamble reads, in part:

WHEREAS the safety and security of the individual, the protection of the values of the body politic and the preservation of the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the state are fundamental obligations of government;

AND WHEREAS the fulfilment of those obligations in Canada may be seriously threatened by a national emergency and, in order to ensure safety and security during such an emergency, the Governor in Council should be authorized, subject to the supervision of Parliament, to take special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times;

We therefore thought the standard of parliamentary scrutiny, laid down in the Emergencies Act, might be applicable to the type of situations in which interim orders might be made under Bill C-17. Subsection 61(1) of the Emergencies Act reads:

Subject to subsection (2), every order or regulation made by the Governor in Council pursuant to this Act shall be laid before each House of Parliament within two sitting days after it is made.

Subsection 61(2) reads:

Where an order or regulation made pursuant to this Act is exempted from publication in the *Canada Gazette* by regulations made under the Statutory Instruments Act, the order or regulation, in lieu of being laid before each House of Parliament as required by subsection (1), shall be referred to the Parliamentary Review Committee within two days after it is made or, if the Committee is not then designated or established, within the first two days after it is designated or established.

Each of the 14 amendments was motivated by the same philosophy: if during an emergency, the government can subject orders and regulations to parliamentary scrutiny within two sitting days after they are made, there is no reason why a lower standard should apply to Bill C-17. The Canadian Alliance was not alone in this thinking. A similar philosophy was advanced by the NDP and the Bloc.

It is my hope that the three parties might be able to agree on a common approach so that a higher level of parliamentary scrutiny may be offered to interim orders made by a government that wants us to trust it 20 months after September 11. However, the Liberal desire to escape parliamentary scrutiny appears intractable. Rather than agree to any new restrictions on interim orders, the only interim orders amendment that the Liberal members proposed in committee was the addition of clause 111.1 so that the interim orders would be included in the Pest Control Products Act.

In conclusion, the widespread use of interim orders is troubling. The government's reliance on interim orders shows that even 20 months after September 11 the Liberals are still unable to provide Canadians with the legislation to combat terrorism at home and abroad. Delegating broad powers into the hands of single ministers is

a dangerous trend. The committee stage version of Bill C-17 is an improvement over Bill C-42 as first presented 17 months ago, but more changes, particularly in the area of increased parliamentary scrutiny, are required.

● (1155)

Canadians were prepared to sacrifice their liberties for the promise of increased scrutiny and security in the aftermath of September 11. That feeling has faded in the intervening year and a half. For this reason, the government would be wise to carefully consider increased parliamentary scrutiny on the same level as the Emergencies Act if it wants opposition parties to support Bill C-17.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that I have spoken on this bill. Nor is this the first time that the Bloc Québécois has spoken on this bill.

We have been quite good sports about this bill. We followed it at each stage. We spoke at second reading, we also participated in the special legislative committee that you presided over. Today, it is a pleasure to express our opinion again, because we think that we have much to contribute to this debate.

This bill is the result of other bills. There were several substantial amendments. Initially, it was called Bill C-55. Then it became Bill C-42, and it is now Bill C-17. So, this bill has evolved.

It is clear that the attempts, in the form of Bills C-55, C-42 and now C-17, resulted from the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York. Canada said that it would increase security to a certain extent. Provisions were put forward in the bill and were debated by the various parties in the House, and particularly in committee.

There is one other thing we have often heard in this House, which is that we must not interfere with the liberties of Canadians and Quebecers so much that the people will say that the terrorists had won. We have agreed to slightly increased security, but we have not agreed to let the RCMP or CSIS intrude on the privacy of ordinary citizens. That is why we have been closely involved in this debate.

There were three main subjects of special concern to us in the bill. There was, for one, the military zones. I remember when the bill was first made public, the Bloc Québécois strongly opposed the creation of controlled access military zones.

At the time, there was a question of having a controlled access military zone wherever there was some military infrastructure. The example of Quebec City was often used. There are military installations in the Port of Quebec and we did not think there were limits. The military zone could be extended to the entire lower town and Quebec's parliamentary precinct. Thus, there were major problems.

On this, the Bloc can claim a victory, because we were the first to object to the military zones. In Bill C-17, the entire issue of military zones has been dropped. For us, that is definitely a victory.

Government Orders

Still, that does not mean we are now in favour of Bill C-17. There are other aspects of this bill on which we have expressed our disagreement and on which we have tried to present amendments to the legislative committee which you chaired. Unfortunately, our amendments to the bill were defeated.

There is one point we are particularly interested in, and that is interim orders. An interim order means that any minister of the crown can decide on an action to be taken without informing Parliament. What we are also looking at is the evolution of these interim orders, because they were already mentioned in Bills C-42 and C-55.

We are especially opposed because these orders are not subject to a charter test beforehand. For us, this is very serious. A cabinet minister can issue an interim order and does not have to check whether or not it passes the test of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For us, that is a major problem. We see that the government has tried to make changes in this case, particularly on the duration of the order in council. In Bill C-42, the order ceased to be in effect after 90 days. In Bill C-55, it was down to 45 days. In the version of Bill C-17 now before us, we are at 14 days.

In addition, there is a requirement to table the interim order in Parliament. In Bill C-42, this was not mentioned. In the next two versions of the bill, there is a 15-day deadline. We see there has been some evolution.

• (1200)

The major problem, however, is still compliance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Normally, when someone turns up with an interim order, Privy Council can say "We will have a look at the interim order and decide whether it passes the charter test".

The fact that this is not made part of the procedure is a real problem. Any minister of the Crown can announce, tomorrow, next week, once the act is in force, "I am issuing an interim order because I deem the situation to be urgent. As for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that is not a problem, because I do not have to comply with it".

The minister in question cannot be accused of acting in bad faith. This may be a concern for him, but he is not obliged to comply with Privy Council, and this poses a serious problem for us.

The third aspect that has been problematical for us from the start relates to the whole business of exchanging information on air travellers. We know that even the Privacy Commissioner has had a number of negative comments to make on this aspect of the bill. Once again, in committee we tried to modify the provisions of the bill that we are looking at today, in order to ensure some degree of privacy for Canadians.

I was not particularly satisfied with the responses we got from the RCMP and CSIS on their ability to gather information on me when I was flying and then pass it around as they pleased. There were two things that particularly bothered us. The RCMP could use personal information on all air passengers for the purpose of seeking out individuals who are subject to a warrant for any offence punishable by imprisonment for five years or more.

The government was somewhat sensitive to our position on this. It made one step toward improvement, but to our minds did not go far enough. It wanted to have this information passed on to a law enforcement officer, but this was still a problem for us because it was up to the RCMP to determine whether or not to refer. It is one and the same thing whether the RCMP or a law enforcement officer makes the arrest based on information provided by the RCMP. In our opinion, it comes down to the same thing. As a result, the privacy of airline passengers is being violated, and this is of major concern to us.

As for information sharing, the other aspect that concerned us was the fact that this information was being retained. We were not reassured with respect to the relevance of retaining this information for the length of time laid out in the bill. We tried to speed up the process, to have this information destroyed sooner. Unfortunately, every motion that we moved to do so was defeated in committee.

I would like to quote from parts of the press release issued by the privacy commissioner, Mr. Radwanski. He is very concerned. Not much has changed since his press release. Since I have two minutes left, I will quote him. He believes there is:

—only minimal and unsatisfactory change, in the replacement legislation, Bill C-17.

The commissioner also said that:

The provision in question, section 4.82 of both bills, would give the RCMP and CSIS unrestricted access to the personal information held by airlines about all Canadian air travellers on domestic as well as international flights.

That is what I explained earlier. We agree with the position of the privacy commissioner. He is worried, and I quote him:

that the RCMP would also be expressly empowered to use this information to seek out persons wanted on warrants for Criminal Code offences that have nothing to do with terrorism, transportation security or national security.

Finally, he says that the changes proposed are an insult to the intelligence of Canadians.

The changes that have been made in this provision in the new bill do nothing to address the fundamental issues of principle that are at stake.

In conclusion, we are nevertheless proud to have won on the whole issue of military zones, which are almost completely erased from the new bill. Unfortunately, we believe that the government has not done enough on the issue of interim orders issued by ministers and protecting the privacy of all travellers. In fact, changes were made that do not go nearly far enough to protect the privacy of travellers.

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• (1205)

[English]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-17, the public safety act, which has gone through a number of morphs over the course of a couple of years. Surprisingly enough even after 9/11 a couple of years ago, we have survived without the bill being in place. Canadians and those participating in that experience on that day did a fantastic job. They were not blocked in any way, shape or form by individuals or different government departments or different organizations. I have yet to hear anyone who objected to what happened. People did not raise concerns over having their rights infringed upon. However, that has not been the case with this bill.

I am sure the member who chaired the committee on Bill C-17 will reflect that the witnesses we heard from the government side, the department side and the police associations felt it was quite okay to infringe on the privacy and civil liberties of Canadians. Pretty much every other person who appeared, all very knowledgeable, respected people in their fields, Ken Rubin, former minister of the crown Warren Allmand, Clayton Ruby, representatives of different civil liberties organizations, representatives of bar associations from Quebec, B.C. and throughout the country, strongly voiced their concerns. This was not some whimsical idea that this was not a worry. They voiced their concerns about the infringements on the basic civil liberties and privacy rights of Canadians.

Those people did not do it whimsically. They did not say they did not agree with putting in place ways of addressing terrorism but there was a general feeling that what is in place already will do the job. Within the bill there are numerous other departments that come into question. There are issues related to the National Energy Board, the Canada Shipping Act, the Food and Drugs Act, biological and toxic weapons, Navigable Waters Protection Act. There are a number of different departments that are tied into it and no one objected, saying in the event of terrorism we have to be able to respond. No one objected to that.

The strongest objections were in the area of protection of the rights of ordinary Canadians. We are not talking about protecting the rights of criminals and terrorists. We talked about Canadians on the street having the basic right of not having a police intervention with them for something as simple as walking down the street or boarding a plane, simply because they are boarding a plane. It was an issue of privacy and civil liberties.

I want to read a couple of comments to give some background as to why there was such concern. Privacy Commissioner George Radwanski said:

It is in fact, of the various concerns you have heard and will hear as a committee, probably the easiest to fix, because it has absolutely no bearing whatsoever on either transportation security or national security against terrorism, which of course are the objects of this bill.

That is very important because numerous times what we heard appeared not to be an issue related to national security or the object of the bill which was transportation security.

And yet, it is also a concern that is crucially important because of the precedents the provision in question would set and the doors it would open, which are of grave concern from a privacy point of view.

I want to emphasize this because of the attitude that if we have nothing to hide, we should not worry about it.

I want to emphasize, in addressing this issue, as I emphasized in my annual report, which was made public last week, that since September 11, I have not once objected to a single actual anti-terrorism measure.

Nor has anybody else in this country.

I regard it as of course unthinkable that, as Privacy Commissioner, I would for a moment seek to stand in the way of any measures that are genuinely and legitimately necessary to protect Canadians against terrorism. I have not done so and I would not do so.

• (1210)

That is the Privacy Commissioner. I emphasize that I believe that is the position of each and every one of us in Canada.

But the provision in question, as I say, is not related to anti-terrorism or transportation security. Rather it is something slipped into this bill that really is quite unrelated to its purposes. What I am referring to are the aspects of proposed under section 4.82 of the bill, and specifically proposed subsection 4.82(11), which empowers RCMP officers examining passenger data, even on flights entirely within Canada, to notify local authorities to take appropriate steps to effect an arrest if they happen to identify anyone who is wanted on a warrant for any of a wide number of Criminal Code offences completely unrelated to either terrorism or transportation security.

The bill, which the government flaunted and I believe preyed upon the fear people had after 9/11, is not being used to address transportation security or anti-terrorism. It somehow wants police forces and other agencies throughout the country to use it for reasons other than what the government says was its mandate in the bill. That is unconscionable.

Mr. Radwanski went on to say:

My difficulty with this, let me stress, has nothing to do with trying to protect criminals, and in fact sorting out this provision would in no way protect criminals. The difficulty, rather, is that it opens the door for the first time in a completely inappropriate, and in this instance unnecessary, way to mandatory self-identification to the state, to the police, for general law enforcement purposes.

When I came to the House I never thought there would ever be an issue in Canada of the police coming up to me and saying "I want to see your identification. Do you have a reason for being here?" I think each and every one of us believes we have the right to be somewhere and that we do not have to answer as to why we are there. If we have not committed a criminal act we should not have to indicate that to anyone.

As a result of this bill and as a result of some of the other measures that have been put in place in Canada, I felt that there was an infringement on my privacy and my rights for no good reason. It scared me. At one point I heard from the Muslim Lawyers Association. I tried to put myself in the position of someone of Muslim ancestry at a time when we were dealing with the whole issue of 9/11, and I felt even more insecure and even more infringed upon as a Canadian. As a white Canadian one would not be targeted the way some other racial groups are.

Government Orders

My riding has a large aboriginal population. Over the years I have seen aboriginal people in Canada targeted with jokes and comments. We know historically that things have happened to different groups of people, but we all need to be honest. It does not usually happen to the white population, and that is because most of us are the white population. The worst case scenarios may never happen to us. As a result we lose sight of the fact that those groups to whom the worst case scenarios will happen have every right and reason to have even more concerns about the bill than we have.

I cannot believe I only have one minute left to speak to this issue. It is a very important issue relating to the privacy rights and civil liberties of Canadians. The Privacy Commissioner listed one real concern and I have given it here. Those same types of comments came from other people who were here representing the lawyers groups and the bar associations. We could all make comments about lawyers in general, but I think we all truly believe in our hearts that they represent the best interests of Canadians within the judicial system. No one was saying that they were going to protect criminals over the rights of others. That is not it. It is that we want to protect all people in Canada from an infringement upon their privacy and their civil liberties.

● (1215)

There is no need for a number of sections of the bill. I quite frankly do not believe the bill has to be in place. I recognize that the government wanted to make some changes which is fine, but on issues related to privacy and civil liberties, they are not acceptable. For that reason alone the bill should not be accepted unless there are further safeguards put in place to protect the civil liberties and privacy of Canadians.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-17. There has been a lot of worthwhile debate on the subject already.

I will begin by reiterating what the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough said in an earlier debate on this matter:

Obviously the obligation on any government is to govern with balance and integrity to ensure that people's interests are being protected, and certainly the obligation is to ensure that there is a degree of scrutiny over its actions. My greatest concern, and I think it is the concern of many who have already spoken, is that the bill backs away from that fundamental principle, that tenet of justice that says there has to be accountability, that there have to be consequences for actions taken.

I have listened to part of the debate today and those words, albeit slightly changed, have been repeated by just about every member who has spoken to the bill. The member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough went on to say:

I would suggest that this type of legislation can be a convenient tool for government to concentrate more power, more state control, and that state control can impact very negatively on civil rights or liberties. In effect, this type of decision taken could last a year. It is fair to say that this type of power could be described as power for the sake of power in many instances. I think that Canadians feel more cynical and even apathetic to the point of not participating in the democratic process when they see this type of power being exercised.

The comments of the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, the member for Churchill and other members who spoke to the bill indicate that people are extremely concerned and worried that too much power is being put into government hands with too little accountability. Surely as defenders of the democratic process, as representatives of Canadians, it is our job to make sure there is some

accountability for possible government excess in any type of legislation that is passed.

The bill touches on 20 different government departments. It amends over 20 acts. This subject, probably more than any other subject that could be raised in the House, is an issue of trust by the citizens of Canada of the Government of Canada. What we see sorely lacking here is any degree or level of trust on behalf of the citizenry.

The bill will affect many acts. Among them is the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Implementation Act which is there in order to enhance public safety. Part I of the bill is there supposedly to enhance public safety. Part 1 amends the Aeronautics Act. Part 2 amends the screening point in the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act and will include emergency directions made under the Aeronautics Act. It also permits the authority to enter into agreements with operators of designated aerodromes respecting the sharing of policing costs.

We have opened up the bill and that is just one part of it. Almost every single act that is being affected here could be a stand-alone piece of legislation.

● (1220)

This is the third resurrection of the bill. It is way too complex and way too confusing to be rammed through the House of Commons. We will affect the Criminal Code, Citizenship and Immigration Act, Department of Health, Explosives Act, Export and Import Permits Act, Food and Drugs Act, and Hazardous Products Act. There is little that we deal with as a government that will not be affected. Anything that remotely affects Canadians is covered under this particular omnibus bill.

The list goes on: Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Marine Transportation Security Act, National Defence Act, National Emergency Act, Navigable Waters Protection Act, and Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act. I wonder about these supposed security zones and these supposed methods to limit possible terrorist activity in money laundering. Will these also affect the government? Will they affect everyone in Canada? Are we targeting a certain group? Will we use excessive and perhaps abusive powers on ordinary citizens who quite frankly do not need big brother staring over their shoulder? Is this a proposed act that could possibly be open for abuse?

Most people would say that most acts could be open for abuse, but the more complicated and broad, and far-reaching the proposed act is, the more potential there is to be open to abuse.

Government Orders

Part 17 particularly bothers me. It would amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act to permit the collection and the use of personal information for reasons of national security. What personal information are we talking about here? We can get that personal information now. I am not a lawyer, but if a police force wants personal information it can get a permit from a judge to wiretap, to eavesdrop, to take pictures, or to even invade the privacy of a person's home to look for illegal or illicit materials.

Everything that is asked for in the bill to my knowledge is already out there, with a system of checks and balances in place to ensure that this power would not be abused. The difficulty with Bill C-17 is that I do not see that same set of checks and balances in place to ensure that the civil liberties of Canadians would be protected. I do not see assurances that the privacy rights that we all take for granted would be protected, that when we get on a bus or an airplane someone is not going to be following our VISA card purchases for that ticket, and that what type of a meal we ordered would not be known. This is incidental information that I suppose may be important to certain law enforcement agencies for certain reasons.

However, all that information can already be obtained. The government can go to a judge and present its case, get a search warrant or a permit to eavesdrop, to tap a person's telephone, and try to find out if a person is carrying out an illegal activity. I have little faith that the government of the day is responsible enough to have the type of wide ranging powers that it is asking for under this bill.

●(1225)

Without trying to sound like I am fearmongering, I do not trust the government to use it judiciously or wisely. It is a serious step and precedent in the wrong direction.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate on Bill C-17. As my colleagues who have spoken previously to this bill have made very clear in their comments, this is an omnibus bill that is divided into 19 separate parts, cuts across at least 20 areas of departmental responsibility and amends close to two dozen pieces of legislation in every domain from transportation, including aviation, airport security and shipping, to industry, energy matters and public health.

There are aspects of the omnibus bill that we find supportable. We think there are reasonable kinds of protections and precautions that are being put in place to provide increased security to Canadians. However, we also find that on balance this is a piece of legislation that we simply cannot support. Therefore, we will be voting against this legislation.

There are elements of the legislation that we support, like the anti-terrorist money laundering provision and the new criminal offences for bomb threats and hoaxes. This cannot be tolerated and we support the provisions to provide for stronger sanctions. We agree with the implementation of international conventions on biological weapons, small arms and explosives trafficking. We would like to see the government stand tall and firm to push ahead on the meaningful disarmament of everything from small arms to landmines.

We are worried about the fact that the government seems increasingly willing to turn its back on important courageous and

pioneering work that has been carried out by government departments with great results and real success, and instead capitulate to the agenda of our neighbours to the south, namely the Bush agenda.

We want to applaud the government's willingness to specifically address the need to be even more proactive in these measures. We have no hesitation about making clear our support for those measures. However, in our view the interim order provisions that are contained in this bill, which are complex and voluminous, are not supportable. They go far beyond what is required for national security or what is reasonable. Together with the so-called new military security zones they may have potentially the opposite effect from the supposed stated intention of this legislation, which is to provide increased security for Canadians in a turbulent and troubled world.

They absolutely cross the line of what is permissible in a democratic society. It is a line that we should never be willing to cross to give the government and individual ministers astounding amounts of arbitrary power. There is a theoretical concern about the possibility of those excessive powers being used to suppress the fundamental rights of citizens with little or no accountability for their actions. Unfortunately, we have already begun to see, from similar pieces of legislation, similar draconian measures put into practice by the government, and precisely that kind of arbitrariness and unaccountability that this particular legislation arouses.

●(1230)

This abandonment of the central notion of security being about the safeguarding of important civil liberties and human rights is what is most frightening. It is not just this particular piece of legislation, but the government's reaction in general to the call, the pressure, and the hysteria that flows across the border about the need to take increased security measures.

Whatever happened to the government's understanding? Because there was an understanding that was lauded and applauded by this corner of the House that security had to be understood in terms of genuine human security. That does not begin with the trampling of civil rights and liberties, but with taking extraordinary caution and appropriate measures to safeguard and protect those rights.

This is not a theoretical concern. The basis for the concern has been reinforced by two informative and instructive meetings held in my office in the last 24 hours. Yesterday I had a meeting with a member of the Canadian Jewish community who was speaking out strongly and expressing his concerns about the rash of anti-Semitism that had been unleashed in this country post-September 11.

Earlier this morning I had the opportunity, during the budget implementation debate, to express concern about the mouthing of concern that we heard from members on the government side regarding the already evident outbreak of anti-Muslim sentiment and anti-Semitism directed at Jewish Canadians. The government refused to back up those expressions of concern with the appropriate resources needed to strengthen the safeguards and to provide the protections for Canadians wherever this kind of racial hatred and religious bigotry reared its head.

Government Orders

In fact, we have had a rash of so-called security legislation from the government that in effect institutionalized what has become the trampling of rights of the very people, the victims of discrimination, racial profiling, hatred and bigotry, who most need the protection. In fact, they are the ones first in line to be discriminated against. Here we go again with Bill C-17. It is a piece of legislation that simply repeats that misguided response to the so-called security measures.

The second meeting that I found extremely informative and powerful took place in my office this morning with representatives, volunteers, and grassroots activists from the Canadian Arab community. They are here on Parliament Hill today to express their concern about the government's response to September 11. They are pleading for members of the government to understand.

That is why this legislation is so important. They are pleading for the government to understand that the manner in which the government has responded to September 11 has literally left a great many Canadians reeling, including members of the Arab and Muslim community. I quote directly from the appeal that was made by those Canadian Arab members with whom I met this morning.

September 11 and its aftermath have left Arab and Muslim Canadians reeling with sentiments of anxiety, fear, alienation, marginalization, betrayal, and disillusionment. There have been many causes for this: Key among them is what would, by Canadian standards, easily qualify as an excessive, overzealous security agenda.

This is one such piece of legislation that reflects that excessive, overzealous security agenda—

● (1235)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in the New Democratic Party today to register our strongest possible objections to Bill C-17.

The House will have heard from a number of my colleagues, including our transportation critic, the member for Churchill, who has taken the lead for our caucus on the bill and has put on the record our general and overwhelming concerns with respect to the legislation.

Again this morning the House heard that we were so concerned about the bill that we would like to see the government pull it and begin again. This is the third attempt at an anti-terrorism security legislative proposal. Three times the government has come forward with a proposition that is untenable. Three times the government has come forward with a bill that intrudes incredibly into the lives of individuals' daily living situations, which is a basic infringement on the right of privacy. Three times the government has been told that it is wrong, that it is untenable, that it is unacceptable, that it is not part of the Canadian tradition and that it is not in keeping with our approach to balancing security concerns with individual rights and freedoms.

Three times the government has come back with unacceptable legislation. We say that three times and the government is out. The bill should be rejected and taken off the agenda, and the government should start again.

If we have not said it loudly and clearly enough today in debate, let us go back to some of the experts who have commented on the legislation. I would like to refer to Ken Rubin who, as members will

know, is an expert in the areas of freedom of information, privacy rights and in balancing the powers of government in terms of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. On February 3, in an article that appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*, Ken Rubin said the following:

The federal government's third try at a Public Safety Act is the most intrusive attack on Canadians' privacy put before Parliament since the War Measures Act.

Those are strong words but they are strong words backed up by facts. Those are strong words that must be taken into account by the government. Surely the government is as concerned as other Canadians with the need to provide balance and perspective, and to ensure that our age long tradition of upholding the rights and freedoms of Canadians is carried on. Surely the government is concerned that the legacy it leaves for future generations is one of balance. Yes, we need to protect Canadians in the face of terrorist threats and attacks, but at the same time we need to recognize that we have an obligation to protect the privacy of Canadians and the rights and freedoms for which we have fought long and hard.

I urge the government today to take heed of those words and to listen more to what Ken Rubin has to say. In that same article he said:

Bill C-17—now in second reading before a special parliamentary committee—has been criticized for its proposal to create an airline passenger data base with more than one intended purpose.

Instead of officials just checking airline manifests for suspicious passengers who fit the profile of terrorists, the bill's drafters want to do more. They would allow CSIS, Canada's intelligence agency, and the RCMP to use the airline information collected to combat terrorism, to catch criminals with outstanding offences carrying a jail penalty of five years or more.

The author of this article goes on to call upon Parliament to put things in perspective and to realize that its fundamental role and responsibility is the protection of that balance and to ensure that government legislation does not cross the line and pervade people's lives to the point where fundamental rights and freedoms are taken away.

● (1240)

The privacy commissioner expressed those same sentiments when he appeared before the committee on February 10. He had some very important words for the government. We had hoped the Liberal members of the committee had heard those words and had taken them into account and would have brought forward a recommendation today whereby this bill would either be fundamentally changed to reflect those concerns or a recommendation that it be scrapped and that the government start again.

This is what Mr. Radwanski had to say on February 10. He said:

As I said in my annual report, recently tabled, in Canada today the fundamental human right of privacy is under unprecedented assault. A series of government initiatives, either under way or being contemplated, threatens to cut the heart out of privacy as we know it. We are at risk of losing privacy rights we have long taken for granted. These government initiatives grew out of a call for increased security after September 11, and anti-terrorism is their purported rationale.

Yes, we are here today to deal with an appropriate legislative response in the face of the terrorist attacks and, in particular, in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attack. We are all interested in doing that.

We also know that we have a responsibility to ensure that the legislation that is passed today endures over time and protects Canadians from an unfair intrusion into their daily lives. We have had some time since September 11 to examine Bill C-17 in greater depth and with cooler heads to see what lasting impact it could have on Canadian society.

We also have had time to see how the added security powers exercised by the government since September 11 have impacted in practice on Canadian society and to hear from many groups that have particular expertise in this area.

As with the bills preceding Bill C-17, we have to acknowledge that the legislation before us today goes beyond simply responding in a rational, reasonable way to the terrorist attacks of September 11. It crosses the line and enters into that area where fundamental freedoms are at risk.

We say to the government today that the bill goes too far. The major concern we have with it is its impact on our right to privacy and our right to be treated equally before the law, irrespective of race, religion or where our families originated.

We also have the issues of parliamentary oversight and accountability, the cornerstones of our democratic system of government.

Let me go back and elaborate a bit more on the issue Ken Rubin touched on, the question of airline security and the sharing of passenger information.

The privacy commissioner was very explicit in his comments before the parliamentary committee that it was not the anti-terrorism aspect of the information sharing that was of concern. He showed us that the bill went beyond that, that it would intrude into our traditional protection of privacy and limitations on the state's right to access our personal information. The commissioner warned us about creating the power for officials to go on fishing expeditions for Canadians who may show up in law enforcement databanks but who have nothing to do with security or terrorism.

If we are going to change our fundamental approach to law enforcement we should be having a debate that includes our rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, rather than going through the back door of an omnibus bill.

There is much more to be said but I am sure my colleagues will continue to speak to this very important issue. I would suggest that the government acknowledge the importance of drastically altering the bill. I would suggest that it look at some of the 50 amendments proposed by the New Democratic Party at the committee and, if not, to agree to withdraw the bill and start again in the interests of balancing security with the need to uphold rights and freedoms of Canadians.

• (1245)

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to participate in the debate on Bill C-17, recognizing, as my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre pointed out, that this is the government's third attempt to push legislation through the House that would pose a profound threat to some of the most basic civil liberties and the privacy of Canadians.

Government Orders

We know that the previous legislation introduced in November 2001 was Bill C-42. That bill was met with a huge amount of opposition, including from New Democrats. The government tried again in the spring of 2002 with Bill C-55.

Each time the government has introduced and reintroduced the legislation, it has taken a little off the edges perhaps, reduced the scope of the legislation and changed the time limit a bit, but it has not recognized the concerns of Canadians that the bill is an assault on some of the most basic and fundamental rights and freedoms and that privacy rights are at the heart of that concern.

I want to pay tribute to my colleague from Churchill, the federal New Democrat transport critic, who has done such an effective job, both in the committee and across the country, in helping to make Canadians more aware of what the dangers are of this bill.

It is not just this legislation. I think we have to look at this legislation in the context of a broader package of bills that the government has brought forward in the aftermath of September 11. Prime among those bills was Bill C-36, the so-called anti-terrorism legislation, which was far in excess of what was needed to respond to the genuine concerns in terms of fighting against terrorism.

Clearly that was a profoundly and fundamentally flawed bill that introduced unprecedented new powers. This bill, Bill C-17, is in much the same light.

The committee that studied Bill C-17 heard extensive evidence from a range of witnesses from across Canada. My colleagues who spoke earlier in the debate highlighted some of the points that were made. I would note for example the very compelling and eloquent evidence of the representatives of the Coalition of Muslim Organizations of Canada who pointed out that they were already concerned that members of their community were being targeted by law enforcement officers and others, and by border control officers both in Canada and in the United States, in the aftermath of September 11.

Certainly I, as a member of Parliament for Burnaby—Douglas, have heard from a number of constituents who were born in the Middle East, perhaps in Syria, in Iraq, in Iran or in other countries, who travelled to Canada, perhaps in some cases as young people, as children, and yet who have been treated in the most degrading and humiliating manner, being subjected to fingerprinting, photographing, treated basically as criminals. These people's only offence was that they happened to have been born in one of those countries.

That kind of racial profiling is totally unacceptable and yet Bill C-17 would open up the possibility for that to be expanded on a wide scale. That has been pointed out, as I said, by the Coalition of Muslim Organizations, both in its evidence to the committee and in the brief it submitted to the committee. Its brief particularly noted that the act would give sweeping discretion and authority to the Minister of Transport and to the heads of CSIS and the RCMP for significant abuses of power.

One of the greatest dangers of the bill is that there is a total lack of any effective parliamentary oversight. If we as parliamentarians were to vote for the legislation, we would be giving carte blanche to the Minister of Transport and to the heads of CSIS and the RCMP to exercise these very sweeping new powers.

Government Orders

The people from the Arab Canadian community, the Muslim community in particular who already have been targeted post-September 11, have rightly raised grave concerns about the impact this sweeping discretion in the bill would have. It would allow law enforcement agencies to basically go on fishing expeditions and violate the privacy of Canadians.

Parliament has agreed to the appointment of a privacy commissioner whose responsibility will be to report back to Parliament when there are attacks on the privacy rights of Canadians.

• (1250)

Privacy Commissioner George Radwanski appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport just a couple of months ago and said that the bill was a very dangerous piece of legislation. He put it in the context of other legislation and other powers that had already been passed. He noted for example the database of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, what he called its big brother passenger database.

George Radwanski talked about the bill now before the House. He said:

Bill C-17, the Public Safety Act, will introduce a requirement that we, in effect, identify ourselves to the police when we travel. What I'm referring to here is the fact that when you board a flight these days, even a domestic flight, you have to show photo ID to the airline to confirm your identity.

The bill would make all passenger information available to CSIS and the RCMP, and it is not just about fighting terrorism. The legislation explicitly makes it clear that it goes far beyond that. It permits the RCMP to basically scan passenger information to seek a whole range of information that has nothing whatsoever to do with terrorism.

What this amounts to in effect, as Radwanski points out, is self-identification to the police by law-abiding Canadian citizens. As he asked, why not when we took train, a bus, rent a car or checked into a hotel? Once this dangerous principle is accepted, the police in effect are being given powers that I believe are both unconstitutional and violate squarely the provisions of the Charter of Rights.

One of the most respected constitutional lawyers in Canada, Clayton Ruby, appeared before the committee studying Bill C-17 and made that very point. He made the point that the bill was totally lacking in any meaningful safeguards. He said:

So you've taken a narrow kernel of constitutionality...and it may or may not be wise...Wisdom is not my concern here, but constitutionality is. The idea that you can take that information and pass it on, without time limits, without restraints, for general law enforcement purposes...

That is not terrorism but general law enforcement purposes. He went on to say:

—is simply unheard of in this country. We have never done it. Perhaps more importantly, free countries just generally do not do it. Democracies generally do not do this.

Yet, the Liberal government, first in Bill C-42, then in Bill C-55 and now in Bill C-17 is insisting that it take on those sweeping and dangerous new powers.

My colleague for Winnipeg North Centre made reference to Ken Rubin and his evidence before the committee. Certainly Ken Rubin is one of the most knowledgeable when it comes to issues of

protection of privacy and respect for the fundamental human rights and civil liberties of Canadians.

Another group that has been outspoken and has taken a leadership role on the issue is a group from my own province, the province of British Columbia, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, one of the most active civil liberties groups in Canada.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association as well appeared before the standing committee on Bill C-17. The association said that it was a draconian bill which was an attack on a free and democratic society. It pointed out that the bill went far beyond what was actually required to deal with the actual threat of terrorism. It said that much of what needed to be done did not need new legislation at all. In fact under the existing Emergencies Act, there are ample powers to respond to the kinds of concerns that have been raised.

There is always this tension between, on the one hand, the fundamental rights of Canadians as set out in the Charter of Rights and in a body of law and, on the other hand, this desire in the name of fighting terrorism to give sweeping new powers to the police. We as New Democrats argue that the government has failed terribly to achieve the correct balance.

I also want to note another provision of Bill C-17 and that is with respect to exclusion zones. There would be an order in council that would apply to an unknown area. We do not know exactly what that area would be, around Halifax, Esquimalt and Nanoose Bay. It could be used in other parts of the country as well, and we still do not know exactly what powers will be given with respect to these controlled access military zones of Bill C-55.

• (1255)

When it comes to Nanoose Bay, a growing number of British Columbians are saying that they do not want American nuclear powered submarines or American submarines that possibly carry nuclear weapons, in their waters. Yet the bill gives new powers to the government to provide for exclusion zones in these areas as well.

This legislation, Bill C-17, should be scrapped. The government should go back to the drawing board and recognize that we protect and value civil liberties in this country. We do not attack civil liberties and privacy as Bill C-17 does.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Government Orders

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Call in the members.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask that the vote be deferred until 3:00 this afternoon at the end of question period.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF CANADA ACT

Hon. Jean Augustine (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved that Bill C-36, An Act to establish the Library and Archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain Acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, one of the fathers of Confederation, once said that there was a duty which especially belonged to Canada: to originate a history which the world would not willingly let die.

Today, 135 years later, I think that my colleagues in this House will agree with me that the people of Canada have fulfilled this duty magnificently. While our country is still quite young, we have numerous feats and accomplishments to celebrate in every conceivable sphere of activity.

Over time, our scientists, doctors, researchers, leaders and many other Canadians have distinguished themselves in various ways. They have enabled our country to make its voice heard among the community of nations.

It is with great pride that I rise today in this House to speak on a bill to preserve and further celebrate our rich history and unique heritage.

If passed, the Act to establish the Library and Archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain Acts in consequence, will give birth to a new agency, the Library and Archives of Canada, from the merging of the National Library and the National Archives of Canada.

Our government is amalgamating these two entities for one reason, and only one: to ensure the new agency will be a centre for information and knowledge management that will provide us, today and in the future, with unprecedented access to our documentary heritage.

In the throne speech of September 2002, our government made a commitment to ensuring that we would have access to our history by creating a new institution that brings together the National Archives

of Canada and the National Library of Canada. As this bill demonstrates, our government fulfills its commitments.

With this bill, we want to amalgamate two institutions that are already playing a crucial role in the conservation and dissemination of our heritage and our history. We want to bring together the knowledge, the vision and the creativity of more than 1,000 employees to create a new dynamic and modern entity that will disseminate our stories, our images, our testimonies and our legends.

This new unified agency will be in a better position to manage the millions of documents and to respond to the various requests from experts and Canadians, in both our official languages.

The mandate of the Library and Archives of Canada will be based on the foundations of the current mandates of the two separate entities. Of course, its mandate will also be extended to allow it to work more easily in the interpretation and programming sectors and to make greater use of new technologies.

Over the years, the National Archives and the National Library of Canada have provided us with valuable services and have just about done the impossible to preserve Canada's impressive documentary heritage. Thanks to them, Canadians can now access more than 20 million books, government documents and publications, 340,000 hours of films, videos and sound recordings, 2.3 million maps and more than 20 million photographs.

The Library and Archives of Canada are nothing less than our collective memory and they constitute a real treasure for humankind.

People need to have seen an exhibition such as Reflections of Canada at the Canadian Postal Museum, which features all the stamps issued since the beginnings of our country, to understand the role played by the national archives of a country. The 12,000 stamps in this collection are a unique and original history book that summarizes the most glorious phases of the Canadian epic.

None of this would have been possible without the cooperation of the National Archives and other public institutions such as Canada Post. There are many examples such as these, both for the Archives and for the National Library.

• (1305)

Today, we want to see more of these types of initiatives so that Canadians from all walks of life, as well as people all over the world, can have access to valuable information on our country, Canada, its people, its culture, its society and its values.

As has already been mentioned by the National Archivist of Canada, Ian Wilson, and by the National Librarian, Roch Carrier, there is no doubt that these two institutions have converging roles and similar responsibilities. Their respective administrations already share the same building and perform four similar activities, namely, identifying, selecting and acquiring; describing and promoting; preserving; and making accessible collections.

Government Orders

Until now, it was mainly the type of documents that determined which of the two institutions would have responsibility. The National Library was responsible for the preservation of printed material, such as books and magazines, whereas the National Archives handled prints, microfiches, manuscripts and various other important documents.

In this area as in many others, new technologies have brought down the barriers that delineated responsibilities. Until microchips replaced microfiches, we had no other choice but to go with the flow and modernize our laws and the structure of our organizations to be able to meet the needs of Canadians. We must also make the widest use possible of the enormous potential provided to us by cyberspace to help us access information regarding our heritage. That is what we are proposing with this bill today.

In 2001 and 2002, the number of visitors to the National Archives website exceeded 2.5 million, a 30% increase from the previous year. As for the National Library website, it was accessed by 4.3 million Internet users, which represents a 20% increase.

The demand is there. It is strong and growing. We must meet this demand as best we can to bring our history to Canadians wherever they live in this vast country of ours. After all, the Library and Archives of Canada are not meant to be used exclusively by those who live in the national capital region.

This bill also provides that the new agency will concentrate more on programs which are designed for the public. For example, thanks to its many collections, this new institution will provide material for the Portrait Gallery of Canada which will open in the next few years.

The proposed legislation also provides that the Canadian heritage minister may establish an advisory council to advise the librarian and archivist with regard to new exposition and interpretation activities and the collection of non-governmental information.

The new agency will continue to develop its collections through the same mechanisms, that is legal deposit, recording, sampling, transfer of government documents, donations, acquisitions and administrative arrangements. But a new mechanism will be added. The new institution will be allowed to take from time to time a representative sample of the documentary material that is accessible to the public without restriction through the Internet.

The Internet has become a true reflection of our society, and we are going to make use of it so that, 10, 50 or 100 years from now, historians will be able to get, thanks to these samplings, an accurate picture of the concerns, issues and culture in Canada at a given moment in history.

Obviously, to make this possible, we have to amend the Copyright Act to allow the agency to take from time to time representative samples of our documentary heritage for preservation purposes.

• (1310)

We have worked hard on this file with all parties concerned, so as to define a specific exemption to copyright for librarians and the National Archivist.

I wish to reassure the members of this House that we have not overlooked any details. We have taken our inspiration from the

legislation of a number of countries. We also propose other changes in the Copyright Act in order to strike a fair balance between the needs of those holding copyright on unpublished works and the needs of the Library and Archives of Canada.

Since we made the last series of amendments to the Copyright Act in 1997, some Canadian authors' heirs have expressed their concern about the new criteria covering copyright duration for unpublished works.

After consultations with the Canadian Historical Association, the Bureau of Canadian Archivists, the National Archives of Canada, and The Writers' Union of Canada, we have reached a consensus by which there will be transitional periods depending on when authors died.

We also want the Library and Archives of Canada to become a centre of expertise within the Government of Canada for the management of government documents. At present, the National Archivist plays an important role in this field, advising government institutions concerning standards and procedures for the management of records.

The bill provides that the head of the new agency will retain this responsibility. But the government wants to go farther in order to ensure that all valuable historical documents are preserved for future generations. The Librarian and Archivist of Canada will thus have the power to require the transfer of any documents considered to be at risk.

In the private sector, the word "merge" often implies budget cuts, major organizational restructuring, and staff cuts. But in this operation, such is not the case. The budget and staff of these two institutions will remain unchanged. However, we should remember that certain valuable collections have been threatened by the decrepitude of the buildings housing them.

In the last budget we allocated \$15 million to respond to certain specific, short-term needs and to conduct studies to give us a better overall view of our long-term needs and priorities. The new entity we want to create should also make it possible to have a clearer vision of the way forward.

Of course, we as parliamentarians have great respect for libraries and archives. The Library of Parliament, now undergoing renovations of extreme urgency, is a resource of inestimable value. It provides a wide range of services without which our work would be much more difficult.

The National Library of Canada provides the same type of services, but to a much broader clientele. After all, this library serves all Canadians from coast to coast.

Government Orders

As a parliamentarian, I have been on many committees, and I have put together many personal files. So it is easy for me to understand that the archives represent a wealth of information. They are a veritable gold mine for students and academics hoping to understand the debate on, for example, the Canadian flag or the second world war. And they are a rich source of institutional memory for those developing policy or seeking information on the Spicer commission or the P  pin-Robarts commission.

Given the value and the potential of the collections, I am sure that the House will agree when I say that it is important for a large number of Canadians to have access to them. Our institutions must keep up with the times and reflect the introduction of new technologies.

That is why I am pleased to take part in this debate. It is clear, when I consider this legislation, that it will ensure we can rely on a new, improved, modern cultural institution better able to protect and promote the documentary heritage of this country.

• (1315)

By merging the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada to create the Library and Archives of Canada, this government is recognizing a situation that has evolved over the past few years. However, we are doing much more than that. We are also creating a new agency with modern tools to meet our informational needs in the 21st century.

Everyone familiar with these two institutions knows that they have been collaborating closely for many years. Already, these two entities share various administrative services such as finance, human resources, some facilities, security and information and preservation services.

Merging libraries and archives is popular in universities. Increasingly, university courses relate to both disciplines. Therefore, it is not surprising that the National Library and the National Archives of Canada initiated this merger.

In addition to the close collaboration between the National Library and the National Archives, there are other reasons to believe that the merger of these two venerable organization into one new and modern institution will be a good thing.

There is a constantly increasing requirement for Canadians to have simpler access to knowledge and information, particularly in the areas of heritage and culture. The explanation for this is the constant evolution of information technologies, which has whetted their appetite for rapid access to information in all of its forms. The new technologies also have a huge potential for storage, organization and consultation of documents.

We now have the capacity to digitalize books, newspapers, photographs, pictures, sound recordings and films. What is more, we can also create a single access point for all this material. The magic of the Internet can also facilitate the sharing of all these records with people here and elsewhere.

Technological progress has also redefined the conservation field. Better climate control, a better understanding of the composition of materials, more sensitive sensors and other new developments help

us to preserve the most precious artifacts of our heritage for future generations.

This will put life back into our documentary heritage and will provide us Canadians with enhanced access to a vast quantity of information about ourselves and our country.

For this and a number of other reasons, I am proud to add my voice to those who support Bill C-36. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the House to follow my example, so that we may meet the needs of Canadians wishing to learn more about their country.

I might add that Bill C-36 includes some other amendments to the Copyright Act, which are absolutely vital to the proper operation of the new agency.

As you know, copyright is a controversial issue and has been for some time. In the 19th century, Charles Dickens was annoyed because the Americans were getting around the British copyright legislation by copying his works and trying to make money off them. Today, the situation is somewhat reversed.

One of the key issues in today's debate on copyright is the need for governments to strike a balance between the needs of artists and the needs of consumers. In other words, how can they provide artists with protection so they are the only ones to profit from their efforts, while at the same time providing users with reasonable access to their works?

• (1320)

This challenge is even greater when it comes to artists who have died or whose works will never be or never were published. Unfortunately, this is exactly the type of situation that can arise for libraries or archives. Imagine if a collection of documents was donated by a Canadian, and a researcher discovered a short text that was never published in a collection of short stories or in a book. Does this discovery belong to the author's estate or to his or her descendants? That is the type of confusion this legislation seeks to avoid.

In 1997, during the last review of the Copyright Act, the Government of Canada ended the permanent protection of unpublished works by submitting them to the same general rules that govern copyright protection in Canada.

Now, unpublished works are protected for 50 years after the death of the author. A five-year transition period was established in 1997, for heirs of authors, to prevent the works from entering the public domain immediately. These amendments came into force December 31, 1998 and the unpublished works of authors who died 50 years prior to that date, 1948 in other words, will enter the public domain on January 1, 2004.

However, while certain authors' heirs have expressed concern regarding copyright protection, there are a number of people, including historians, archivists, genealogists and other stakeholders who have been calling for unpublished works to enter the public domain. The concerned parties undertook negotiations and arrived at a reasonable compromise. They then presented it to the government so that it could consider implementing it in this bill.

Government Orders

Accordingly, the legislation being debated here will make the following changes. First, unpublished works from authors deceased before January 1, 1930 will remain copyright protected until December 31 of this year.

Unpublished works of authors who died after December 31, 1929 and before January 1, 1949 will be copyright protected until December 31, 2017.

In both cases, all unpublished works that are published before the protection expires will be granted an additional 20 years of copyright protection from their date of publishing.

The changes I have just described extend copyright protection for unpublished works. However, we are also making an amendment to help historians, archivists, genealogists and other stakeholders.

Bill C-36 will also amend section 30.21 of the Copyright Act to remove certain conditions that the archives must abide by to make a single copy of an unpublished work. This type of copy is used for research or private studies.

Currently, under section 30.21 a copy of an unpublished work deposited before September 1, 1999 may be made only when the archives are unable to locate the owner of the copyright. The bill also provides that a record be kept of all the copies made under this section. As members can imagine, these conditions represent an extra burden for our archives.

The amendments proposed to the Library and Archives of Canada Act that we are debating today would eliminate these two conditions. I am very pleased to point out that this change has been supported by all the stakeholders who took part in the negotiations on this issue.

This is further evidence that the Library and Archives of Canada will have the mandate, the powers and the tools required to reach its objectives.

• (1325)

Our documentary heritage belongs to us all and it must be more readily accessible. The proposed amendments and the other changes mentioned by my colleagues will create an institution which will be highly appreciated and which will make us proud.

This is what is being proposed in this legislation. By recognizing the complementarity of the mandates and collections of the National Library and the National Archives of Canada and by building on that fact to create a new and more effective institution, the government is providing the citizens of this magnificent country with a new cultural institution which will reflect, stimulate, interpret and celebrate our national identity; an institution that will help Canada become a real knowledge-based society.

The proposal being debated today will herald a new era for Canada. With 130 years of experience in the collection, preservation and diffusion of the Canadian documentary heritage, the Library and Archives of Canada is the institution we need in the coming century.

We cannot change the course of history. However, we will be in a better position to face the challenges of the future if we know our past.

Thanks to the bill before the House today, the Library and Archives of Canada will be prepared to take up the challenges of the 21st century and will be able to preserve the many records of our collective history.

Therefore, I urge all members to support this bill, which will equip our country with the necessary tools to bring together in wonderful collections our books, prints and drawings, musical recordings, films, maps and digital documents of yesterday, today and tomorrow and make them more accessible to Canadians.

We Canadians will thus be in a position to carry out our duty as set out by D'Arcy McGee a century ago: to originate a rich history, in the knowledge that it will be preserved, celebrated and accessible to all.

[*English*]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak to the bill, an act to establish the Library and Archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain acts in consequence.

The primary purpose of the bill is to create a new federal agency that would combine the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada. In a moment I will outline the positives of this new convergence, but I first want to state for the record the Canadian Alliance position with regard to this initiative and the legislation. We do have a policy, which people are welcome to look at on our website or elsewhere. The policy states: "The Canadian Alliance affirms the federal government's role in the preservation of Canada's natural and historical heritage, such as national parks, museums, archives and so on, and historic sites, for the benefit and enjoyment of all and as an enduring reminder to all Canadians of our common inheritance".

As such, by the end of my speech I will be advising my Canadian Alliance colleagues to support Bill C-36. There will be many questions that will need to be answered in committee and I am sure we will have a full complement of witnesses before the committee. In general, the drift of the legislation is in the right direction. As to the specifics, of course the devil may be in the details but we do think that it is supportable.

There is a definition of the role of National Archives of Canada:

To preserve the collective memory of the nation and the government of Canada and contribute to the protection of rights and the enhancement of a sense of national identity: by acquiring, conserving and facilitating access to private and public records of national significance, and serving as the permanent repository of records of federal government institutions and ministerial records; by facilitating the management of records of federal government, institutions and ministerial records; and by encouraging archival activities and the archival community.

There are some things I will be saying about the preservation of records and of archiving important government documents, including documents of the cabinet, a little further on in my speech.

Right now the national archives are accessible to all Canadians and that will continue under the amalgamation of the Library of Canada and the archives.

Government Orders

The main role of the National Library of Canada is as follows: "... to preserve and promote...the published heritage of Canada". The library is recognized as "one of the nation's foremost centres for research in Canadian Studies and as a showcase for Canadian literature and music". The library is also accessible to all Canadians.

Bill C-36 will merge these two entities. We think that potentially there could be, and should be, some positive results for Canada's recorded and published history and heritage.

On a personal note, I remember that when my brother was doing research for a book he wrote about our family history he came to Ottawa and spent time at the National Archives. He eventually wrote a book and I am sure the National Library has a copy of it. The folks at the archives were most helpful. It is always amazing to me and to amateur historians like my brother how accessible the archives are, how helpful the folks are and how useful the information is when we are writing a book. In that case it was a family history, but it is certainly true for all Canadian history and studies.

The preservation of archival information of course is important. Clause 8 of the bill states, "The Librarian and Archivist may do anything that is conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the Library and Archives of Canada". The list includes a lot of things: acquire publications; take measures to catalogue, of course; compile and maintain information; provide information, consultation and other lending services to any Canadian; establish programs and organize or encourage any activities, including exhibitions, publications and performances; enter into agreements with other libraries, archives or institutions, inside and outside Canada, to help preserve and encourage the understanding of our historical information; advise government institutions, including on ways to use the Internet to promote and provide information; and provide leadership and direction for library services for all government institutions. It goes on. There is much to do and of course they do a good job, even today under difficult circumstances. In other words, there is a very powerful mandate to assist the preservation of Canadian heritage.

●(1330)

For the purposes of preservation, Bill C-36 also allows the librarian and archivist to take a representative sample of the documentary material of interest to Canada that is accessible to the public without restriction through the Internet or any other similar medium. That also is in clause 8.

Again, increasing numbers of Canadians will take advantage of this service. Even those who cannot get to Ottawa will have new and improved access to documents through the Internet. The hope is that by providing this invaluable information to future historians, both amateur and professional, we will not only preserve but will better understand our past and apply it to today's concerns and issues and our culture.

The management of the combined archive and library should be more efficient by bringing the two organizations together. The collections will be combined and will be comprehensive, thereby increasing the efficiency and feasibility of information management. The convergence of human expertise and knowledge should increase the proficiency of information management. In other words, by bringing them together under one command and control we should

be able to benefit from the immense amount of expertise in the two organizations right now.

The merging of these two institutions should provide synergy and efficiency in the delivery of internal human resources, financial, marketing and technology systems and so on. I say it should because it is not entirely clear from the briefing notes that we received from the department whether this will actually take place. In fact, the notes say there may actually be no cost savings from this merger. This should be investigated at committee.

It seems to me that by bringing together management systems under one aegis should provide some financial savings on everything from human resource management to technology systems. We will be looking at ways to do that. We encourage the committee to make sure that is done to the best of its ability.

There are some clauses in the bill on the access provisions. By unifying the two entities we hopefully will increase the visibility of Canada's heritage and history. We believe that the library and archives of Canada will provide integrated access to its collections by offering one stop access.

Again I will use the example of my brother's research. It would have been handy for him to go to one spot and ask for historical information for example on the original ships that brought over our ancestors and at the same time any other books on that subject. Many other people would be looking for different heritage information. In my case it is the Mennonite background and the Swedish background, or the "Swennonite" background, that I cherish. It could be one stop.

The library and archives of Canada would use the latest technology to collect and provide access to its collections. The library and archives of Canada would use web services for some of the following: the Canadian Genealogy Centre; Virtual Reference Canada; the Portrait Gallery of Canada; initiatives to preserve Canada's multicultural documentary heritage; services such as the interlibrary loan of publications and microfilms; programs to promote literacy; support for Canadians with print disabilities; and so on. It would improve access for all Canadians, even those who are unable to get to Ottawa to go through the documents on site.

We have some concerns about Bill C-36. There are things that need to be looked at in committee.

The documents I received from Heritage Canada indicate that the transition will cost \$7.5 million over three years. There was also \$15 million awarded in the 2003 budget for better short term protection of documents and artifacts. I am not sure if that \$7.5 million is part of the \$15 million, but regardless, preservation is necessary. We will try to figure out exactly what those costs are and whether there will be potential cost savings down the road. The bill was dropped on us late last week and we have yet to receive a briefing from the department. We are not sure what the \$7.5 million includes. Is it just the accounting costs? Is it labour time costs? We are not sure but that will be looked into.

Government Orders

•(1335)

Again I emphasize that the documents from Heritage Canada admit that it is not a cost cutting exercise. While it may not be cost cutting, it does seem to me that there should be savings realized. We will be asking the department heads to explain why that does not take place. I certainly think it should.

There are also greater opportunities to involve more fully the private sector, people who can make use of this in a positive way. Perhaps there are revenue generating opportunities in this as well. Perhaps that will take place under the coalitions built among other libraries, both nationally and internationally.

For anyone who has looked at this file at all, there is a concern not so much with the bill but with the general preservation of our national archives. In the last couple of years taxpayers have spent approximately \$4.5 million just to repair items damaged by water leaks and maintenance problems in the current archive buildings. It seems to me that the Department of Public Works and Government Services along with the archives and library when they get their act together have to quit the squabbling and find a solution to the accommodation and preservation of Canada's national archives.

There is no sense saving a copy of everything and putting it in a room where the water leaks into the cardboard box. If we are going to preserve this stuff, go through the expense of cataloguing it, accounting for it, preserving it and so on, then let us make sure it is preserved and not stuck in one of the leakiest buildings in Ottawa. I urge Public Works and Government Services and the archives and library to put the turf wars behind them and get at actually preserving the stuff we are talking about today. It is important information that needs to be preserved. Let us find a way of doing that quickly.

This next point is part of the work of any committee and any bill that comes before it. I would urge the committee, and again I am part of that, to make sure that we are getting value for the dollar under this proposal. At face value everything looks fine, and it always looks fine in a government briefing document. I have never seen one yet that looks as if we are about to waste a pile of money, but on the other hand there are enough examples of cost overruns. The Canadian War Museum is a prime example. Everyone is in favour of the war museum. We think it should go ahead and we are all in favour of it, but we have not even gotten the walls up and it is tens of millions of dollars over budget already.

Understandably there is going to be scrutiny at the committee level, as there should be. It is part of our job on all sides of the House to scrutinize that spending. I would urge all members to do that carefully because these sorts of bills have little surprises hidden in them if we do not do that properly.

It is also important to note that clause 8(g) of the bill says that the combined national archives and library is to "advise government institutions concerning the management of information produced or used by them and provide services for that purpose". In other words, if there are ways to better manage it—and in the briefing notes it sounds good and the bill reads fine at first blush—we are going to want to know exactly how that management system is going to improve it.

Clause 12(1) of the bill, another important clause which I would urge interested archivists to browse, states:

No government or ministerial record, whether or not it is surplus property of a government institution, shall be disposed of, including by being destroyed, without the written consent of the Librarian and Archivist or of a person to whom the Librarian and Archivist has, in writing, delegated the power to give such consents.

It is tremendously important that people understand what is involved, that government bureaucrats understand what this actually means. It means there is an obligation among departmental employees to make sure that proper record keeping takes place and that archives are preserved not just when it is convenient, not just when they look good or when they have a glowing report, but that all records are to be preserved. In fact it says properly under clause 12 that no government or ministerial record shall be disposed of including by being destroyed.

•(1340)

In other words, just because it is a negative report or it is something someone does not like or hopes does not come up for his or her grandchildren to read, it is too bad. In the government, archives are archives. We preserve the good, the bad and the ugly. We take it all, preserve it all, so future historians will be able to learn from it and hopefully steer clear of some of the problems we have had, and even have currently, by making sure that record keeping is done properly.

I point out that we are once again embroiled in a controversy here in Parliament, in this case with the records kept by the business development bank, a semi arm's length corporation mandated by this House. What is interesting is the lack of proper record keeping and missing documents. Key documents that may or may not implicate the Prime Minister or others in business dealings or loan approvals, or whatever it might be, are suddenly missing from its archives.

The government is involved. It is getting and giving advice and doing studies and all the things that governments are involved in. Again, clause 12 says to keep the records, the good and the bad and understand that it is the law that they be maintained and given to the archives. Increasingly it will be electronic records and they too need to be preserved.

The Government of Canada needs to improve its information and record keeping practices. I am afraid the way the government will avoid this clause is it will just not create a record at all in the first place. That is one way around it.

On March 24 of this year, Canada's Information Commissioner said the following as reported in the *Ottawa Citizen*:

The most significant threat to open, accountable government is a crisis in information management in the federal Government of Canada.

The article went on to say:

Despite warnings to public servants that they must improve in such areas, federal officials are avoiding creating records, Mr. Reid said. Under the spectre of financial penalty or imprisonment for destroying or falsifying records, he added, officials are encouraged to make oral briefings or exchange information by e-mail to avoid creating permanent written records.

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That is not the intent of clause 12 as I understand it. The clause says that the records are not to be destroyed. They are to be kept intact. They are to be passed along and archived so that all of us will have a chance to see them one day. In essence, although it is not in the bill, as a tangent of this, it is important to know that whistle-blowing legislation will be critical to solving this problem, where people actually have the gumption to stand up and be counted, make written proposals and written briefings for ministers, instead of just an oral chat around the coffee machine knowing that that cannot be archived, but on the other hand neither can we learn from mistakes.

There are many acts that are amended in consequence to this bill. Each one of them in and of itself is also important. For example, there are changes to the Yukon First Nations Land Claims Settlement Act, to which the member for Yukon will no doubt want to pay attention. There are changes to the National Archives Act. There are also changes to the Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the proceeds of crime act, and the Public Sector Compensation Act. There is an important consequential change to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act. The Financial Administration Act is another one. All of these will have to be looked at.

There is an important consequential change to the Copyright Act. This has been somewhat controversial. The issue of copyright protection is an important one and Canada has been less aggressive than most of its international competitors in linking information innovation to intellectual property or in protecting and promoting intellectual property rights. In fact, the Canadian Alliance member for Yorkton—Melville presented a private member's motion requesting the House of Commons to create a parliamentary committee to examine property rights, including copyright. Copyright is a section of property rights. It is important to do that.

● (1345)

The tricky issue raised by the bill concerning copyright is the need to balance the incentives created by copyright and patent protection with the public nature of the work of the authors and the artists. Since the government has recently undertaken quite an extensive review of copyright issues, I will look forward to the testimony of witnesses in committee on this issue.

I believe the industry committee as well will want to look at this, if not to study the entire bill, at least to look at the consequential amendments to the Copyright Act. We need to strike the balance between the rights of artists and the rights of their heirs to preserve their creations for the purposes of the heirs and the right of the public to have access after a certain amount of time to unpublished works.

It seems to me we have to balance that. This bill extends that by 15 years, which is a goodly length of time, considering we only reviewed this and made changes to the Copyright Act only four years ago. The expiration of that copyright protection is supposed to come up this following year. For unpublished works this extends it considerably. It has been quite controversial and that too will have to be looked at in committee, whether the 15 years is necessary or whether there is something in between next year and 15 that would be more appropriate.

It seems to me that eventually there will come a time when unpublished works of deceased artists will no longer be protected

under this copyright legislation. We need to delve into that and the industry committee will have its part in ensuring it is of the right balance.

Overall, I will be encouraging my colleagues to support this at second reading in principle. It is sound management to bring the archives and the library together. I have the concerns, as I mentioned earlier, about cost savings and some of the other issues, and consequential amendments. It should be an easy bill to approve in committee, although once we are in there and the witnesses start telling us what those consequential amendments are, perhaps something will come up.

At this stage, we will be supporting the bill and look forward to the committee work to get into the nitty-gritty.

● (1350)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on this bill.

Before getting into the various issues raised by Bill C-36, I would like to point out that, since the Liberals took office, all programs and bills from the Department of Canadian Heritage look alike and their main objective is to instill into the people of Quebec and the rest of Canada a strong sense of belonging to Canada.

It is a terrible shame that amendments to the Copyright Act were included in this bill. While these amendments seem to be good, in principle, they are not when we consider the direction this bill, an act to establish the Library and Archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain acts in consequence, was intended to take.

My point is that, because of many issues, we are against the principle of this bill. In the minutes to come, I will try to explain why we oppose it.

In a nutshell, the enactment creates the Library and Archives of Canada as the successor to the National Library and the National Archives of Canada. It provides for the appointment of this new agency's head, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada.

The mission of the new agency will be based on those of the National Library and the National Archives of Canada, and expand them to include the interpretation of Canadian history and the display of collections. The regime for legal deposit of publications has also been updated to provide for the deposit of electronic publications. A new power to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada as found on the Internet has also been introduced. These are essentially the objectives of the bill.

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In addition, the bill amends the Copyright Act by providing for a longer term of protection for unpublished or posthumously published works of authors who died before 1949. The new terms of protection are extended for varying periods, depending on the date of the author's death and whether or not the work is published during the particular periods in question. Requirements for archives holding unpublished works in their collections that were deposited before 1999 to obtain consents from copyright holders for the making of certain copies of those works and related recordkeeping or owner-tracing requirements will be removed.

This enactment also makes consequential amendments to relevant legislation and contains transitional provisions and coordinating amendments.

So, when we analyze the bill, we find that it contains many important measures. The National Library and the National Archives of Canada will be replaced by the Library and Archives of Canada, and it is hard to oppose the renaming of these institutions.

We are not against this change. However, there are other measures that we do oppose. The library community, particularly the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation, is not in favour of amalgamating the National Library and the National Archives of Canada. Why? It is because it believes that the two organizations have very distinct missions and approaches. The National Library is more at the service of libraries and, occasionally, of individuals, while the National Archives' mission is the conservation of Canada's heritage.

The Bloc Québécois also believes that it is very difficult to reconcile both missions, since they pursue different objectives. We have the support of the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation.

Furthermore, several libraries in Quebec sent me their thoughts on this amalgamation, indicating that they were against it. They believe, as we do, that being a librarian is quite different from being an archivist. Consequently, the amalgamation of both entities could create some problems. The Bloc Québécois believes that a full analysis of the project should be conducted.

• (1355)

There is also the matter of the mandate of the head of Library and Archives of Canada. The public administration will be placed under the authority of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, but managed by a general administrator known as the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, who will be appointed by the governor in council.

The Bloc has some questions. The general administrator will have additional powers. He or she will have the power to ask for the transfer of documents from the Government of Canada or from other libraries, if he thinks that those documents might be damaged or destroyed.

Again, the government could have looked at what has been done at the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec as far as responsibilities are concerned. The Government of Quebec appointed trustworthy people, who are accountable to the Quebec minister of culture and communications. It also determined that other people from the library community, the publishing community, writers' associations and the universities would sit on the board. Three of these members

have to be librarians. One of them has to be a conservation expert and another an exhibitions expert. These people also have to be appointed by the City of Montreal.

Two users are also members of the board. The Government of Quebec sought out citizens. One must reside in Montreal and be elected by his peers, in accordance with the library's regulations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): We will now proceed to statements by members. The member for Erie—Lincoln.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CANADIAN SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Canadian Shipowners Association on its 100th anniversary.

Formed in 1903 as the Dominion Marine Association, the CSA represents the interests of Canadian companies that own and operate Canadian flagged vessels on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterway, the east coast and the Arctic.

It has proven, through established partnerships between its member companies and the government, that the marine industry is a reliable, safe, environmentally sound and competitive sector of the Canadian economy.

The CSA is a leader in technological and environmental innovation. Its leadership in technology has consistently improved safety and efficiency. The CSA believes that the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waterways are a national treasure, which is why it uses vessel technology and training techniques that are geared toward safety and environmental protection.

The future will bring many challenges to Canada's marine infrastructure. The ships, ports and locks that form the seaway require new investments to meet the needs of increasing volumes and competitive realities. We welcome the CSA's input and participation.

I congratulate the Canadian Shipowners Association for 100 years of quality transport. May it continue with many more years of success.

* * *

MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, terrorism has struck at the heart of the Middle East once again. This time al-Qaeda is responsible for bombing four separate housing and commercial complexes in Saudi Arabia.

This is the type of event that distresses my brothers and sisters in the Islamic Canadian community to the core.

Just this morning I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Arab community concerned about the government's overreaction to these type of events here at home.

Since 9/11 Canadian Muslims have felt that they have been unfairly targeted by initiatives such as the Anti-terrorism Act and now Bill C-18.

The Canadian Alliance has tried to be responsive to those people in the Islamic community who have had their lives turned upside down by efforts to improve security. We recognize the problems that Arab Canadians have faced when travelling outside of Canada and we condemn all discrimination based upon country of origin.

We must all work together to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of race or country of origin, are treated equally and fairly under the law.

* * *

● (1400)

CANADA BOOK DAY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to mark this year's Canada Book Day and Book Week, I hosted my annual Canada Book Day celebrations in my riding on April 19.

I give special thanks to Greg Gatenby, artistic director of the International Festival of Authors, for organizing the day.

At the event my constituents had the pleasure to meet the following renowned Canadian authors: Rosemary Aubert, Catherine Bush, Stephen Finucan, Joe Fiorito, Greg Gatenby, Lesley Krueger, Hal Niedzviecki, Christine Pountney and Jason Sherman.

Book Day, which is spearheaded by the Writer's Trust of Canada, founded in 1976, is a unique national charitable organization providing a level of support to writers unmatched by any other non-governmental organization or foundation.

The Writer's Trust of Canada is committed to exploring and introducing to future generations the traditions that will enrich our common literary heritage and strengthen Canada's cultural foundations.

Canada Book Day provides us with the opportunity to recognize the contribution writers make to the cultural richness of Canada.

This day also provides us with the opportunity to—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HYDROGEN STORAGE

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to congratulate our federal government.

On April 22, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, on behalf of the Minister of Industry, announced the creation of the Industrial Research Chair in Hydrogen Storage. A \$1 million contribution has been made toward the funding of this chair at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

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Most Canadian companies working to develop this technology are small companies with limited financial resources and personnel. This chair will therefore be of great benefit to companies and will help them develop their products in Trois-Rivières and market them across Canada.

This is another example among many of the federal government's financial support for projects that benefit the people of Canada, Quebec and Trois-Rivières.

* * *

PORTUGUESE CANADIANS

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first group of Portuguese immigrants officially recognized as such by the Government of Canada.

On this occasion, I would like to highlight the long and rich history of Portuguese Canadians and their contribution to Canada's development.

This is the ideal moment to celebrate the first immigrants who landed at Pier 21 in Halifax and settled here in Canada. Although many people had immigrated from Portugal before that time, they came on ships registered in Greece, Italy, Dominica, the U.S. or the Caribbean. Because there was no official agreement on immigration between Portugal and Canada, these first immigrants were recorded as nationals of those countries.

I salute the Portuguese Canadians in my riding of Laval West, and I invite all Canadians to take part in the festivities celebrating their heritage and contributions. They have enabled Canada to become the multicultural and diversified nation it is today.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FAMILY VALUES ASSOCIATION

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, today I would like to recognize the Canadian Alliance for Social Justice and Family Values Association based in Vancouver for the work that it has done in support of Canadian families and social justice.

Yesterday, on its behalf, I tabled in Parliament over 12,000 petitions, half of them expressing support of the traditional definition of marriage. The other 6,000 petitions expressed opposition to Bill C-250, a bill that raises significant concerns over the ability of religious leaders and institutions to communicate and adhere to essential matters of faith.

The organization is a non-denominational, non-partisan grassroots association. Its principal purposes are to redress social injustice, to advocate and protect constitutional charter and social rights, traditional family values and parental rights. Canadians across the country are grateful for its efforts.

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BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in recognition of a literacy project called “Books for Children and Families”. This limited edition collection of eight books was developed by the University of New Brunswick Early Childhood Centre in collaboration with New Brunswick Early Interventionists and Family Resource Centres and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The collection strives to honour diverse family circumstances and is intended for pre-school children and their parents as they share and learn together.

The books were written and illustrated by accomplished New Brunswick authors and artists. This collection makes a great gift for young constituents and for the schools, day cares and hospitals that I visit in my riding.

I encourage each and every member of Parliament to purchase several copies of “Books for Children and Families”.

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

MINING

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the Bloc Québécois' mining critic, and given that it is national mining week, I am pleased to talk about the effect of mining on our economy and our lives.

Mining is extremely important to keeping our economy strong. The construction, shipping and aviation industries, for example, would not have flourished to the same extent without the numerous resources our mines produce.

It is important to recognize the wealth and the major impact of the mining industry and ensure that this industry receives the tax measures and investments it needs for its development, for exploration, mining or research, and thus guarantee years of prosperity to miners.

* * *

[*English*]

CITY OF SCARBOROUGH

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the rest of Toronto, Mississauga, Markham and Durham are mere suburbs of Scarborough and once again Scarborough was called upon to save the citizens of Toronto and the country.

On Sunday we witnessed the magnificent performance of Anson Carter, who learned all of his hockey in Scarborough, as he scored that lovely wrap around goal to bring Canada gold at the World Hockey Championships. Then on Monday night Mike Myers, who learned all his comedy routines in a recreation room in his parents' basement in Scarborough, told millions of Americans on the *Tonight Show* that Toronto was safe, fun and a great place to visit. He then proceeded to hand out “I Love Toronto” T-shirts.

Once again Scarborough saves a city and its nation.

PERTH—MIDDLESEX

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize our Canadian Alliance candidate, Marion Meinen, and her team of volunteers.

In the Perth—Middlesex byelection they spent countless hours putting forward issues that are very important to Canadians and I want to thank each one of them for their hard work and effort.

I also want to congratulate Canada's newest member of Parliament, Gary Schellenberger, who won the election with 32% of the voters supporting he and his party.

The biggest loser in this election was the former finance minister. Despite winning this seat in the previous three elections, the Liberal vote dropped by over 10% of the popular vote with his impending coronation. Voters wanted a change, so they left the Liberal Party and went to the NDP.

There is a lesson here. Witness a new trend. That trend: vote splitting on the left.

* * *

JOHN SAVAGE

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today my home province of Nova Scotia is a little darker, having this morning lost one of its truly bright lights.

Dr. John Savage, Officer of the Order of Canada, former mayor of the City of Dartmouth, former leader of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia, former premier of Nova Scotia and a global humanitarian, died this morning after a heroic battle with cancer.

Dr. Savage dedicated his life to improving the lot of his fellow human beings. He led Nova Scotians into a radically different way of thinking about government. Fiscal prudence replaced patronage, planning replaced expediency and when it was time to leave politics he put his party's fortunes ahead of his own and turned his energy to the plight of Africa's poorest people.

To his many friends and family I offer my condolences and ask that they take some relief from the knowledge that John Savage was a truly great Canadian who left the world a better place than he found it. I say God speed to him.

* * *

JOHN SAVAGE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in learning today of Dr. John Savage's death, fellow Nova Scotian and family friend, Sine MacKinnon, invoked the words of Hilaire Belloc, “He does not die that can bequeath some influence to the land he loves”.

John Savage was such a person. He was a loving husband of Margaret, proud father of seven and grandfather of eight.

This remarkable man was fiercely devoted to his own family and with their support he devoted his life to creating healthy lives and healthy communities for the entire human family through his political career as Dartmouth's mayor and Nova Scotia's premier and through his visionary medical contribution locally and globally.

Of his battle with cancer, Dr. Savage stated, "I accept what happens to everybody sooner or later", and promptly focused public attention on the virtues of home based palliative care.

To his loving family we extend deepest sympathy. Nova Scotians, Canadians and John Savage's global family will miss his presence but remain forever grateful and indebted for his lasting contribution.

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[Translation]

TERRORISM

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, extremely deplorable attacks are being perpetrated. We can only feel consternation at such violence and its impact.

The Bloc Québécois sends its sincerest condolences to the families of people of every nation who lost their lives in the attacks last night in Riyadh. We hope that the wounded will make a speedy recovery. Our thoughts are with the families of Canadians who were over there.

Terrorism is never a legitimate option. It strikes blindly. Its goals are, as the term suggests, to sow terror. Such utterly reprehensible acts must not affect efforts for peace in the Middle East.

We invite the Government of Canada to continue to collaborate with the appropriate international agencies to combat such violence.

* * *

•(1410)

CYPRUS

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I address this Chamber today in order to wish the most cordial of welcomes to His Excellency, the High Commissioner of Cyprus, on the occasion of his visit to Canada.

Canada has always encouraged and supported the complete and permanent settlement of the Cyprus issue via United Nations resolution.

[English]

Today there is a new beginning to end the close to 30 year impasse of the Cyprus problem. It is a new era for all the people of Cyprus.

I was extremely pleased to be informed last month, just over a week following the April 16 signing of the accession treaty for Cyprus to the European Union, that thousands of Greek Cypriots, including family and friends of mine, crossed Europe's last great dividing line, the so-called "green line".

These individuals were able to visit their native homes for the first time since Turkey's invasion in 1974. They were able to set foot on their native soil for the first time in almost 30 years.

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Canada will continue to work with the UN to persuade Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot leader to work within the UN process to end the division of Cyprus and bring unity to the Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

We wish the newest member of the EU, the Republic of Cyprus, peace and unity.

* * *

PERTH—MIDDLESEX

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, today is indeed a historic day for Progressive Conservatives, for Ontarians, for Canadians and especially for Gary Schellenberger, the newly elected Progressive Conservative member of Parliament for Perth—Middlesex.

Today is the first day of many more days to come that will highlight a return to issues based politics and the denial of a regional, divisive and ineffective official opposition.

The new member of Parliament for Perth—Middlesex should be commended for running a clean, principled campaign. He stayed on message even when the member of Parliament for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast tried to make a mountain out of an earpiece.

That unprecedented attack showed the voters of Perth—Middlesex the clear strategy of the Canadian Alliance, to defeat a Progressive Conservative and elect a Liberal.

The tide has finally turned and once again the Liberals will be held accountable to the people of Perth—Middlesex.

I congratulate Gary Schellenberger.

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NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recent outbreak of SARS has reminded us of the dedication, commitment and compassion of Canada's nurses.

The new health accord shifts how and where we care for patients; home care, palliative care and mental health issues are now national priorities.

The delivery of this new system will rest squarely on the shoulders of nurses. Today there are 232,000 RNs in Canada, half of whom will retire in 10 to 15 years. By 2011 we will face a shortage of 78,000 nurses. The recruitment and maintenance of nurses must become a priority for governments.

The high stress, high risk environment in which nurses work and their rising frustration are a direct result of the lack of respect we give them. They are overworked, underpaid and undervalued.

Yet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in community health care centres and clinics, metropolitan teaching hospitals or isolated nursing stations, nurses continue to provide needed care for Canadians.

Oral Questions

This week is National Nursing Week. It is time to publicly thank Canada's nurses because nursing is at the heart of our health care system.

* * *

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is National Nursing Week and an opportunity for Canadians to celebrate the important role that nurses play in the well-being of Canadians.

Nurses are a valuable part of the health care delivery team, working hard day and night to relieve the pain and provide comfort for family members and loved ones.

This year Canadian nurses deserve a special recognition for their work in the global struggle against SARS. Despite the lack of leadership by the federal health minister, and at a time of great uncertainty and risk, nurses from across this country, especially from Toronto, have indeed been valuable frontline workers caring for the sick and supporting the efforts to contain this virus. Nurses have led the way in continuing to meet the challenging need of Canadians touched by this outbreak. Indeed, Canadian nurses have constantly demonstrated that they are the heart in health care.

I invite members to join me in acknowledging the significant contribution nurses are making, and I extend my warmest thanks to our Canadian nurses.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

•(1415)

[English]

AUBERGE GRAND-MÈRE

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in July of last year the RCMP applied for a search warrant against the *National Post* for files on the Prime Minister's Grand-Mère dealings. It turned out that when the RCMP applied for the warrant and it had an obligation to provide the court with full and complete information, that did not happen. Information was withheld.

Has the Solicitor General inquired with the RCMP as to why it applied for and received a search warrant based on incomplete information?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the court documents speak for themselves, and as the member well knows, the RCMP makes its own judgments in such matters. However I can tell the member that all the relevant facts of this affair have long since been known, have long since been on the record, have long since been examined, and the hon. member would do better to spend his time and attention focusing on issues that are of relevance to the Canadian people rather than chasing shadows in matters that have long since been put to rest.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I say to the Prime Minister that if he really wants to stonewall this, he would be better than to send the minister who is responsible for the Airbus investigation.

The manager of the BDC branch involved provided police with a statement on the granting of this loan. She said that the loan would never have been approved without the interference of the Prime Minister, yet this and other information was left off the application for the search warrant.

Will the Solicitor General allow an independent investigation into why the police were using incomplete information to obtain a search warrant to intimidate a major newspaper?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely amazed that the Leader of the Opposition continues to not only malign individuals and malign agencies that are recognized as among the best around the world. The fact of the matter is the RCMP takes action which it deems appropriate. It did take the appropriate action in this course and that is where it should be left.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let me ask the minister responsible for the BDC a question since he seems so enthusiastic to stand up. Officials at the BDC were clear. The Grand-Mère Inn did not qualify for loans, but the BDC is supposed to be independent of government. However one phone call from the Prime Minister and the loan was approved.

Is this normal practice at the BDC? If not, has the minister responsible ordered an investigation into how the BDC is operating?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the relevant facts are on the table. They have been examined time and again. The record is quite clear.

One thing I can observe, is the people of Perth district or Stratford, Ontario, that whole region, have been watching very carefully the behaviour of the Alliance Party and yesterday they expressed their view of the performance of the Alliance and its leader. We agree with their judgment.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, considering the minister does not even know where Perth—Middlesex is, he is a fine one to make those comments.

The last time the Prime Minister was in hot water over inappropriate loans to the Auberge Grand-Mère, a judge authorized officials to search the home of the BDC president and to seize and destroy any documents related to the financial file of the Auberge Grand-Mère; to search and destroy the evidence.

Now it has been revealed that documents related to the Grand-Mère Inn have indeed gone missing, this time from BDC headquarters. They are missing and presumed destroyed, and the RCMP did not even bother reporting the loss during its application for a search warrant.

Is the government finally convinced that this sordid affair deserves a full independent investigation or will it leave that—

The Speaker: The Minister of Industry.

Oral Questions

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the matter has been investigated and every relevant fact has been examined and has been laid on the table. These members will do themselves no good by poking through the embers of a dead affair trying to advance their political interests by attacking the reputation of a man who in 40 years has achieved more for this country than that party ever will.

• (1420)

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the industry minister that the last industry minister who wore the flak jacket for the Prime Minister has a different mailing address today than he had back then.

At one time, Liberal spokesmen said the following, “that the government never interferes in the loan granting operations of the Business Development Bank”. After the bank president was let go, after the local bank manager said that this thing should have never been approved, what will it take exactly for this industry minister to call an independent investigation, or will he leave that to the member for LaSalle—Émard to do the dirty work for him?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor has examined this issue. The relevant facts have been looked at time and again. The ethics counsellor's decision was made, in writing, available to all members of the House of Commons.

All these matters have been considered and gone into time and again. What we are seeing here is a desperate party with nothing to offer of any relevance to Canadians, no position of value of the true issues facing this country, looking backwards yet again.

* * *

[Translation]

MARIJUANA

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice had barely completed the presentation of his marijuana bill to Cabinet and he was off to Washington to discuss its contents with United States Attorney General John Ashcroft.

Does the Prime Minister think it right that his government should consider it more important to get Washington's okay on this than to inform the members and the public of his intentions?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has regular contacts with the U.S. Attorney General, and this was one of their meetings.

As for the matter of changing and modernizing penalties relating to marijuana, it will remain illegal, but the penalties will be different.

Of course, if the Americans want to know more about our bill, I have no objections to telling them, once Parliament has decided.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber crisis, the anti-missile shield, GMOs and decriminalization of marijuana, are all areas in which the federal government is groveling before the Bush administration.

Is the Prime Minister telling us that this is now the legislative process: cabinet decision, followed by the thumbs up from

Washington, followed by first reading, second reading, third reading? Is this what we have come to?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the matter has been examined. Reports have been received from the House.

The best proof of the independent nature of our decisions is that, when we reached a decision not all that long ago in connection with the war in Iraq, our position had been clear for the past year, and we stuck to it despite protests from some, because this country is capable of making its own decisions, since we are independent.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, under the usual process for drafting and considering a bill, cabinet decisions are discussed by the Liberal caucus and the bill is introduced in the House, where it is debated and amended as needed, then passed.

Is the reason the Minister of Justice is in such a rush to go to Washington because he wants to leave as much latitude as possible to make the changes recommended by the U.S., without it appearing obvious and without anyone knowing?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be a bill, and at that time the member can say, “this line comes from the Americans; this line comes from the British; this line comes from the Bloc Québécois; this line comes from the Liberal caucus”.

When the bill is before the House, he can make all the comments he wants. However, there will be a bill to modernize sentencing for marijuana.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister admit that by going to Washington, the Minister of Justice is confirming that the legislative process has become an insignificant detail, since the changes that will be made to the bill will be done in backrooms in the U.S. and not here, by the federal government?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add. There will be legislation that the members can debate. There have been recommendations from both the House of Commons and the Senate.

We will be introducing a bill on this whole issue. Very soon, there will be a bill to modernize sentencing for offences involving marijuana.

• (1425)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister who must have had a tough decision to make whether to brief the provisional government of the member for LaSalle—Émard first or brief the American government first. The one thing that did not seem to occur to the Prime Minister was to put down the new marijuana law here in Parliament for members of Parliament who should have seen it first.

Why this contempt for Parliament?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the law is not completed by the government as of yet. We cannot table something that does not exist. When the law is ready, it will be tabled in the House of Commons for first reading, second reading and third reading. He knows that. He has been around for a long, but probably he has nothing very serious to ask about, so he has tried to create a problem again.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been around long enough to have respect for Parliament and know that laws should be introduced here first and not elsewhere. Even though the Prime Minister has been here longer than me, he never has to worry about being charged with possession of respect for Parliament, even in small amounts.

The Prime Minister said that the decision with respect to star wars has been put off. Who will he consult? It is not enough to just consult Liberals. They are not the entire political universe. There is a thing called Parliament. How will he consult Parliament and the Canadian people?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Parliament has been consulted. A committee of the House of Commons has been studying this problem for months and months. What is he complaining about?

We are now preparing the legislation and it will be tabled. That is very simple. When he has it, he will vote on it. If he wants to vote on the day that the bill is tabled because he seems to be in favour of changing the sentencing on marijuana, that is fine. We will vote in the House as quickly as possible. He should ask his people not to speak too much.

* * *

AUBERGE GRAND-MÈRE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

France Bergeron was manager of the Business Development Bank branch that served the Prime Minister's riding at the time of the Auberge Grand-Mère case. Court records indicate that she told the RCMP that "without the intervention of the federal MP, the project would never have been accepted". The MP who made the \$615,000 intervention was the Prime Minister.

Does the government agree with Ms. Bergeron's professional analysis and sworn testimony?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was in a letter addressed to that member that the ethics counsellor expressed his opinion on all of these matters, including the facts referred to just now in the question. The ethics counsellor said clearly that there was no violation of any principle involved.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the professional mouthpiece.

The cross-examination by the *National Post* has revealed new evidence in the Shawinigate matter. It talks about pages of files that have been lost and about electronic records that have disappeared.

The RCMP search warrant application for leaked documents omitted France Bergeron's signed testimony that the only reason the loan was granted was because the Prime Minister intervened.

The Solicitor General does not need a mouthpiece. He can answer for the RCMP himself. Will he tell the House why the RCMP kept the most relevant part of Ms. Bergeron's statement out of the warrant application?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that I find the Canadian Alliance and the leader of the Conservative Party in bed on this particular issue.

They are both trying to dig up old news and malign agencies and organizations, and the RCMP. They are continuing to malign the Prime Minister. That seems to be their whole tact on this issue. There is really nothing new here. I said earlier that the RCMP did an investigation on this matter and that is appropriate.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a long list of senior military and government officials have criticized Liberal bungling and interference in the Sea King replacement project. Yesterday they were joined by former deputy minister of public works, Raymond Hession, a man the justice minister has said is well respected.

Since the government has so much respect for Mr. Hession's ability to fix failed government programs, will it act on his observation that the government's process for replacing the Sea Kings is "plain stupid"?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many people are offering many different opinions about helicopters. Mr. Hession has his view, but then so does the chief of defence staff who has indicated that the 1999 statement of requirements had the full support of military leadership. He said that all of the helicopters in the competition were very fine candidates.

We are trying to be very precise in our requirements and in the process to ensure that both the military and the taxpayer can be properly satisfied.

● (1430)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the list. Three former deputy ministers, two former Sea King squadron commanders, and a former director of the helicopter project have said it has been corrupted by political interference.

On the one hand the government is trying desperately to cover its tracks on the Sea King replacement program, and on the other hand a growing group of highly respected inside experts have said that the program has been corrupted.

Who does the government really expect Canadians to believe?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in the House before, since last year, both the Minister of National Defence and I have been working very hard to ensure that this procurement proceeds in the proper manner. The first step was taken last December by the Minister of National Defence in the re-bundling process.

I would point out that the chief of defence staff also said that it was in fact “just the way to go” in regard to the re-bundling. I think the advice of the chief of defence staff is good advice to follow.

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[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister for International Trade assured this House that he was working closely with the softwood lumber industry in the discussions with Washington to settle the softwood lumber dispute.

How can the minister justify the industry being informed only today that the negotiations with the Americans had resumed, basically being presented with a fait accompli?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be very surprised if the industry had been informed today that the negotiations were to resume this week, because they will not be resuming this week.

On Thursday, the coordinators for this matter will be visiting the U.S. Department of Commerce, as they have been doing on a regular basis for two and a half years. These are regular meetings that do not qualify as negotiations.

The point I am making is that the negotiations will not be resuming this week. A meeting is scheduled between the coordinator

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew: Mr. Speaker, they do not even care to listen to the answer. All they want to do is chat.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the minister told us the matter was settled. The reality is that not only was the softwood lumber industry not informed until today of the negotiations and their content, but also a representative of the industry in Quebec has confirmed that the positions being discussed probably stem from ongoing discussions between the American softwood lumber industry and American officials.

Is this not further evidence that more and more, on major issues such as the space shield, marijuana and softwood lumber, this government is taking its lead from the American government and that the real decisions are being made in Washington, and not in Ottawa?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a conspiracy theory put forward by suspicious and slightly paranoid individuals.

On the softwood lumber issue, if there is a government that has stood up for producers, it is ours.

The fact that we are making progress in Washington seems to bother certain members of the Bloc Québécois who are not concerned about the real interests of lumber producers in Quebec, but would like to make political mileage on a sensitive issue. We have been working with all the provinces and industries across the country for the past two and a half years, and they will continue to be consulted as closely as they have been in the past.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Sea King project is not the only procurement debacle that the Liberals have authored. The replacements for Canada's CF-18 fighter jets are not going well and their upgrades are merely a Liberal band-aid solution.

When will the Liberal government fast track our involvement in the joint strike fighter project to avoid a repeat of the Sea King debacle?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of transforming the military as is the case for militaries around the world. Militaries around the world face a radically different environment with the end of the cold war and the beginning of the anti-terrorist phase, as well as a hugely rapid change in technology.

We have already made a number of announcements and are proceeding along that track. Members can be sure that the government will advance sound plans to transform the Canadian Forces in years to come.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we have already seen some of the government's plans: Sea King projects that go nowhere; Hercules planes with their wings cracking on the edges; and troops going into combat environments with the wrong camouflage, having to bum cigarettes, ammunition, and porta-potties from our allies. The government is certainly transforming our armed forces but not in a way that is anywhere near helpful.

I want to know specifically from the minister, will the government fast track our involvement in the joint strike fighter project, yes or no?

● (1435)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Alliance never sees a piece of military kit that it does not want to buy yesterday. For example, it wants to spend \$5 billion on strategic airlift which would cost so much we would have no money left over to buy things to put in those airplanes. Now it has chosen the next most expensive kit on the global market.

Oral Questions

We have responsibilities on this side of the House. We have a limited budget. We must spend our money strategically and wisely. So I will not answer that question off the top of my head.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the antimissile shield, the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed to the committee that Canada was opposed to the militarization of space. The discussions with Washington on this subject will soon resume, which shows that the Canadian position is changing.

How does the Minister of Foreign Affairs reconcile his position in committee with the government's decision to begin negotiations with the Americans on this subject?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the government has not yet made a decision to negotiate with the Americans. The premise of the question is somewhat shaky.

If the government were to begin discussions with our American counterparts, it would always be on the basis of the Canadian values and interests we put forth. We have clearly indicated to our American colleagues that the militarization of space is not a priority of the Canadian government, and we are fiercely opposed to such a measure.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, just as in the case of marijuana and softwood lumber, is the behaviour of the Government of Canada on the antimissile shield issue not proof that the positions of ministers and committees count for nothing when it comes to pleasing the Americans, and that, from now on, it is the head office in Washington that will be making the decisions on all these issues?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, our policy clearly indicates that we consult Canadians and our hon. colleagues in Parliament through the committee system. That is exactly what this government is doing. We have not made any decision, specifically because the Prime Minister indicated that we were going to hold very broad consultations before making a decision, and that the decision, once taken, would take into account the interests of Canada and Canadians.

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[*English*]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, hepatitis strikes one in four federally incarcerated inmates and 1,500 inmates with hepatitis C were released into their communities in 2001. This is a low estimate, given that Correctional Service Canada believes that hepatitis and HIV are even more widespread than the statistics may indicate.

Given that prevention is key in this age of communicable diseases, why will the Solicitor General not impose mandatory infectious disease testing on all federal inmates?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has come a long way. He is now

talking about prevention which was something he did not want to agree with us a while ago.

In fact, inmates are entitled to the same health care, under the same kinds of conditions, as all Canadians. We are trying to provide treatment for inmates as well as education in prevention. I am glad to see the hon. member is on side now in terms of prevention.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is the government that has not woken up yet to the problem that is facing it.

The general population, and correctional officers and their families are put at risk. Even the inmates, to whom the Solicitor General owes at least some level of duty and care, are being put at risk because the Solicitor General refuses to protect them from dangerous and potentially deadly viruses.

My question is again to the Solicitor General. Not if, but when will he impose mandatory testing on all—

• (1440)

The Speaker: The hon. Solicitor General.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I am glad to see that the hon. member has come a long way. As he knows, the safety of the public, inmates and staff is of paramount importance to us. That is why we have introduced a fairly expensive treatment program and are proceeding with extensive prevention measures. I believe we are doing the right thing and making giant steps forward in terms of protecting the public, staff and inmates.

* * *

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actors, producers and directors from the Canadian film and television industry are on Parliament Hill today making it clear that support for Canadian production is needed now more than ever.

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. What will the Government of Canada do to ensure that Canadians continue to enjoy homegrown shows like *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *The Eleventh Hour*?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for the question because I think he is the only member of ACTRA who actually happens to be a member of Parliament as well. I know that I am available any time for *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, but I do not get any ACTRA fees.

I will say that I am pretty proud of the record we have. Since we have come into government we have signed co-production treaties with 25 foreign countries, including 635 projects and a total of \$4.5 billion in funding. The CFVPTC has created \$10.8 billion in total—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Dartmouth.

Oral Questions

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a deep crisis in Canadian TV production. Since 1999 we have seen twelve domestic TV dramas reduced to four, thousands of jobs lost and some of our best creative minds forced to go south to work. This crisis stems from four years of bad CRTC policy and four years of drift and neglect from the cabinet.

Will the minister today commit to use the Broadcasting Act to review the 1999 CRTC policy and start to rebuild Canadian TV drama using the necessary regulatory and financial resources?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): First, Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to table a document that lays out the road map for success in Canadian film and television. I would also like to table the list of all those productions that have received an additional \$130 million. At the same time, I would like to agree absolutely with the question of the hon. member.

Of course the work of the standing committee on broadcasting is going to open doors to new investment in Canadian television and film, and I hope to see many future Gordon Pinsents being launched because of the programs of the Government of Canada.

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AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a month ago the Liberal government was ready to loan millions of dollars to Air Canada. Now Air Canada is trying to extract a 20% pension cut from its employees, including those who have already retired. Think of what it means to a retired pensioner to lose 20% of their income overnight.

I ask the government, since it was willing to loan Air Canada millions to squander on executive salaries, will it now put the loan money on the table to make sure pensioners do not lose their retirement security? Or do pensioners not matter as much to the government as airline executives?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that Air Canada is now under CCAA process, which means the courts are supervising the transactions, including the issues of compensation, collective agreements and pensions. I would think that the hon. member should let the court do its job.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Although the statement of operational requirements stayed the same, the important information on helicopter specifications changed at least seven times. These changes have lowered the bar in terms of safety and operational requirements.

Now, three former deputy ministers, including Raymond Hession, have all slammed the process. Hession has even called the decision to acquire the lowest cost instead of the best value helicopters “plain stupid”. Would the minister confirm that more than seven drafts of helicopter specifications, not requirements, have been produced?

• (1445)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, having spoken many times to the chief of defence staff, just to make absolutely sure I spoke to him yesterday. As he said at the time, the statement of requirements in 1999 had the full support of the military leadership.

To go on to the next part of the hon. member's question about translating that statement of requirements into the technical requirements to build this complicated thing that is called a helicopter, the chief of defence staff went on to say, and he cited as well the chief of air staff—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, for about a year now the Minister for International Trade has said that we were going to have a made in Canada solution, but the United States Department of Commerce has just produced a policy bulletin that says the U.S. Department of Commerce will determine whether individual Canadian provinces have reformed their policies and practices. If the U.S. Department of Commerce is going to determine what the Canadian provinces do, how is that a made in Canada solution?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two and a half years we have adopted a very clear strategy, one which was challenging the U.S. allegations that we were giving any sort of subsidies to our softwood lumber producers. Let me tell the hon. member that we are not, we will not and we have not done so in the past.

However, given the long time it takes before the courts, we have said that with the support of industry all over the country and all of the provinces we should sit down with the Department of Commerce. As to those policy bulletins, the provinces and the Government of Canada have contributed substantially to their elaboration and I believe they can be very helpful in the future.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last October the minister for the Canadian Wheat Board was informed that the board was illegally taking money from farmers' pooling accounts. It is taking this money to manage and administer national licensing fees which the Wheat Board Act says the government has to pay.

The minister said he was going to refer the matter to “officials and law officers”. It has been six months since the Canadian Alliance raised this issue. What are the results of the minister's investigation and why is this illegal practice continuing?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did in fact refer the matter, which was raised by one of the directors of the Canadian Wheat Board, to the board of directors of the board as well as its legal counsel. I asked them to inquire into the matter to see if there was anything to the allegations. I have certainly not been advised to this date that there was anything to substantiate the allegations.

It is after all a matter of the management of the Canadian Wheat Board, which by law is vested in the hands of the directors.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is the board of directors that is breaking the law. The minister in charge of whitewash just cannot get away from that.

In Australia, licensing fees cost \$20 million annually. We cannot even guess how much Canadian farmers have been illegally charged because of the lack of transparency at the Wheat Board and the Canadian Wheat Board directors.

Does the minister know how much farmers have been charged? Why is he allowing the Canadian Wheat Board and the board of directors to operate illegally outside of the Canadian Wheat Board Act?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing at all on the public record to support the allegation that the hon. gentleman has just made. The fact of the matter is that this House created a new governance system for the Canadian Wheat Board. The old system of appointed commissioners is gone. There is a modern, corporate style board of directors, 15 in total, 10 of whom are directly elected by farmers themselves.

The opposition would like to replace the judgment of farmers with the political judgment of the Alliance Party. I would rather rely on farmers.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN TELEVISION FUND

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has a new pretext to avoid explaining \$25 million in cuts by her department to the Canadian Television Fund. She said that it was too complicated.

Will the minister admit that what is not complicated is that, once again, she has no intention of keeping her promises?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, there will be \$230 million in the fund. When I created this fund six years ago, there was \$200 million. There is \$30 million more than there was when we created it. That is what I said a few weeks ago.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot deny that she promised to restore funding to the Canadian Television Fund the day before producers were to launch a

campaign condemning the cuts, because she did not want to hurt her leadership campaign.

Now that she has launched her campaign, can she tell us when she will restore the \$25 million she promised that were cut from the Canadian Television Fund?

• (1450)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the House, I will table here today the list of all those who received this additional funding, for a total of \$230 million, which represents a \$20 million increase over what there was before.

So, if the House agrees, I will table everything I have been given to show that we are spending \$230 million this year, in comparison to what we spent at the start.

Will the Bloc Québécois agree for these documents to be tabled?

An hon. member: Table them.

Hon. Sheila Copps: All right then. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[English]

COAST GUARD

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard response to the fire yesterday aboard the B.C. ferry *Queen of Surrey* was woefully inadequate. The Coast Guard attended the scene with all the equipment available to it at the time: a 41 foot cutter from the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, a 24 foot inflatable from the Gibson Coast Guard auxiliary and a helicopter from Comox.

Fortunately the weather was kind and evacuation of 350 passengers was not required, but what if an evacuation had been required? How could this tiny fleet effect a massive rescue effort?

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely ridiculous. That was a very good response. We got three vessels there. The military was there with its Cormorant helicopter. B.C. ferries were there with a spare vessel. Had it been necessary, we could have evacuated everybody off that ferry. There was a great response by the crew of the ferry and they should all be congratulated.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister does not know the capability of his equipment. Missing from yesterday's emergency was the only vessel capable of carrying sufficient life rafts and operating near the shore: the hovercraft based at Vancouver airport. It was laid up for repair.

Yesterday it was 350 passengers aboard a B.C. ferry. Tomorrow it could be 350 passengers aboard a jumbo jet on the tidal flats off the airport, where a hovercraft is the only vessel capable of functioning. When is the government going to—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Oral Questions

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the member take a trip on one of the B.C. ferries or any other commercial vessel. He will notice that these vessels do carry life rafts capable of taking care of their passengers. They had a second ferry there in response and we had three vessels and a military helicopter. It was a great response by all agencies and above all a super response by the crew of the B.C. ferries who put out the fire safely, not needing any evacuation.

* * *

[Translation]

LA FRANCOPHONIE

Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the French-speaking segment of the population of the United States is growing. Could the Secretary of State responsible for la Francophonie share with us Canada's vision of the development of the French language south of the border?

Hon. Denis Paradis (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) (Francophonie), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are currently some 12 million citizens of French extraction in the United States, and more than 2 million of these speak French fluently. There are hundreds of French language organizations and groups across the United States. For example, the American Association of Teachers of French has a membership of more than 10,000.

Canada must be prepared to help its neighbours, especially those with whom it shares a border, by developing with them a dynamic dialogue on la Francophonie.

* * *

[English]

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Nexus program was designed to separate low risk travellers from high risk travellers. The greater use of this program will free up customs and immigration officers to concentrate on the small percentage of high risk travellers.

However, today Nexus is only used at a couple of land crossings. Why the delay in using Nexus at all Canadian land crossings?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact there has been no delay. We are very proud of the fact that the Nexus program, which is two way with the United States and negotiated as part of the smart border, is rolling out across the country. There has been a lot of interest. People are signing up and 39,000 to date have already applied. It is an example of how we can make the border function smarter. That means safer and more efficiently for both Americans and Canadians.

● (1455)

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, while the Nexus program has generally worked well at border crossings in British Columbia, one flaw has been the lack of an appeal process. Constituents of mine have been denied Nexus passes because of such minor issues as sandwich meats or old customs violations by their now deceased spouses. When will the minister introduce an appeals process to the Nexus program?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this gives me a very good opportunity to let people know how important this program is, because everyone who qualifies for this program must have a clear criminal record, have no security concerns and no customs violations. The terms have been agreed to by both Canada and the United States. This is a new program. We are watching it to see how effective it is and if the member has suggestions on how it could be further improved. However, this program rewards those people who have no blemish at all on their records. Those are the people we trust and those are the people who qualify.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the support of Canada, the American administration has today announced that it will be bringing a challenge before the World Trade Organization in connection with the European moratorium on importing genetically modified organisms.

How can the federal government support this American action when 87% of the population of Canada, and 90% of the population of Quebec expect more transparency from their government and more precautions in the handling of GMOs?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have asked for today, in conjunction with the United States, Argentina, Egypt and several other countries, is merely that the European Union not implement its GMO legislation, and we wish that EU member countries would respect their own laws and stop blocking the process. That is all we are asking.

* * *

[English]

POLITICAL PARTY FINANCING

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-24 is of direct concern to all members of the House as well as to future members because it will change the way political parties and candidates are funded in the future.

Bill C-24 is currently before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Could the chair of the committee inform the House as to the progress of the committee in its consideration of the bill and the issue of political financing?

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's interest in this topic is an example to us all.

The committee has been considering Bill C-24 for three or four weeks. This evening at 5:30 in room 253-D there is a round table meeting of the committee which is open to all members. We hope that all members will respond to that opportunity.

Later this week we will have further witnesses from provinces which have experience with similar legislation, and some time after the break we will be consider clause by clause and amendments.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Ind. BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the House. Bill C-24 calls for the automatic payment of a quarterly allowance to established parties, which will guarantee their financial survival and enable them to amass campaign funds paid for out of the public purse.

Can the government leader explain to us why his bill does not contain any provisions to ensure that these allowances are paid solely for the purpose of reimbursing actually incurred expenses, as the Quebec electoral legislation does?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the system in Bill C-24 is in part based on the systems in place in Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. It provides parties with \$1.50 per vote cast, which will enable them to ensure that their party offices can be run properly.

As far as I am aware, the parties have not said that this would leave them with any money left over. If the member claims this is the case for certain parties, I would like to know the names of these parties.

* * *

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there is a killer stretch of highway in my riding where there have been 22 deaths and 119 seriously injured since 1999.

The federal government has been aware of the need to widen the Trans-Canada Highway near Lake Louise in the Banff Park for many years.

Since 1993, I have been calling on the government to address this problem. How many more lives must be lost before the government will submit to the twinning of this major highway?

Hon. David Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that there is a program under Transport Canada for highway infrastructure improvements and the Government of Alberta has signed that agreement. Certainly that particular stretch of highway, which we well know is a dangerous section, is eligible for funds, but really the matter has to be shared with the provincial government.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, softwood manufacturers are asking the Minister of National Revenue to harmonize Canadian customs services with those of their American counterparts, so as to obtain the same services on both sides of the border.

Can the minister assure us that she will provide the money needed and establish additional customs officers at the border crossings in Estcourt, Saint-Pamphile, Saint-Just, Sainte-Aurèle and Saint-

Zacharie in order to provide the same services on the Canadian side of the border as are offered on the American side?

[English]

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an interesting but little known fact is that traditionally on the Canadian side of the border, prior to 9/11, we had 40% more resources in customs officers than on the American side. The Americans have beefed up their people. They have been hiring and training.

We are working very hard at this point now, as part of the smart border initiative, to develop those kinds of initiatives to ensure that the border is safer and more efficient. I can assure the member opposite that we have the resources to do that.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER OF OFFENDERS ACT

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-33, an act to implement treaties and administrative arrangements on the international transfer of persons found guilty of criminal offences, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:02 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-33.

Call in the members.

• (1515)

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

*(Division No. 160)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Allard
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bagnell
Bakopanos	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin
Carignan	Carroll
Casey	Castonguay
Catterall	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Clark
Coderre	Collette
Copps	Cullen
Cuzner	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	Desjarlais
Desrochers	DeVillers

Dhaliwal
 Discepola
 Dromisky
 Duceppe
 Easter
 Finlay
 Fournier
 Fry
 Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
 Gallaway
 Gauthier
 Godfrey
 Goodale
 Guay
 Harvey
 Herron
 Jennings
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lancôt
 Lebel
 Lee
 Lincoln
 Loubier
 Macklin
 Malhi
 Manley
 Maril
 Masse
 McCallum
 McGuire
 McLellan
 Ménard
 Murphy
 Nault
 Normand
 O'Reilly
 Pacetti
 Paquette
 Parrish
 Perron
 Pettigrew
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Plamondon
 Price
 Proulx
 Reed (Halton)
 Robillard
 Rock
 Saada
 Savoy
 Scott
 Shepherd
 St-Hilaire
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Stoffer
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tirabassi
 Ur
 Wappel
 Wilfert

Dion
 Doyle
 Drouin
 Duplain
 Farrah
 Folco
 Frulla
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gaudet
 Girard-Bujold
 Godin
 Graham
 Guimond
 Hearn
 Hubbard
 Jordan
 Karygiannis
 Keyes
 Knutson
 Laframboise
 Lastewka
 LeBlanc
 Lill
 Longfield
 MacAulay
 Mahoney
 Maloney
 Marceau
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Matthews
 McDonough
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Neville
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Owen
 Pagtakhan
 Paradis
 Peric
 Peterson
 Picard (Drummond)
 Pillitteri
 Pratt
 Proctor
 Provenzano
 Regan
 Robinson
 Roy
 Sauvageau
 Scherrer
 Sgro
 Speller
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Tonks
 Valeri
 Whelan
 Wood— 184

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Benoit
 Burton
 Casson
 Cummins
 Forseth
 Goldring
 Grewal
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Hilstrom
 Johnston
 Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Mills (Red Deer)

Ablonczy
 Bailey
 Breikreuz
 Cadman
 Chatters
 Elley
 Gallant
 Gouk
 Grey
 Hill (Macleod)
 Jaffer
 Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 Merrifield
 Moore

Government Orders

Penson	Reynolds
Schmidt	Skelton
Sorenson	Spencer
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Toews
Vellacott	Venne
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich— 43	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bergeron
Cauchon	Grose
Harvard	Lalonde
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Tremblay
Vanclicf	Venne— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find concurrence with the movers of both the private members' business bills before us and with the others in the House of Commons, that we proceed to consideration of the budget implementation act and defer the voting on the two private member's bills.

The Speaker: To defer them until the end of the vote today, is that correct?

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Yes.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-28, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 18, 2003, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the report stage of Bill C-28. The question is on Motion No. 13.

● (1525)

(The House divided on Motion No. 13, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 161*)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bigras
Blaikie	Bourgeois
Cardin	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Duceppe
Fournier	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gagnon (Québec)
Gallant	Gaudet
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Laframboise

Government Orders

Lancôt
Lill
Marceau
Masse
Ménard
Perron
Plamondon
Robinson
Sauvageau
Stoffer

Lebel
Loubier
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Paquette
Picard (Drummond)
Proctor
Roy
St-Hilaire
Wasylycia-Leis— 42

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Allard
Assad
Augustine
Bailey
Barnes (London West)
Bélaïr
Bellemare
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Breitkreuz
Bryden
Burton
Caccia
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Casson
Catterall
Charbonneau
Clark
Collenette
Cullen
Cuzner
Dhaliwal
Discepolo
Dromisky
Duplain
Elley
Finlay
Forseth
Fry
Godfrey
Goodale
Graham
Grey
Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lee
Longfield
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Moore
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric

Ablonczy
Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Bertrand
Binet
Bonin
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Brown
Bulte
Byrne
Cadman
Cannis
Carignan
Casey
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Chatters
Coderre
Copp
Cummins
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Easter
Farrah
Folco
Frulla
Gallaway
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Harvey
Herron
Hill (MacLeod)
Hubbard
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Knutson
Laliberte
LeBlanc
Lincoln
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marcil
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Merrifield
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paradis
Penson
Peterson

Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Regan
Robillard
Saada
Scherrer
Scott
Sgro
Skelton
Speller
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Strahl
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Ur
Vellacott
Whelan
Wilfert
Wood

Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Reed (Halton)
Reynolds
Rock
Savoy
Schmidt
Serré
Shepherd
Sorenson
Spencer
St-Julien
Steckle
Stinson
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Valeri
Wappel
White (North Vancouver)
Williams
Yelich— 188

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Cauchon
Harvard
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Vanclief

Bergeron
Grose
Lalonde
Tremblay
Venne— 10

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 13 lost.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 14. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 15.

● (1530)

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 14, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 162*)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Blaikie
Cardin
Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais
Duceppe
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Godin
Guimond
Lancôt
Lill
Marceau
Masse
Ménard
Perron
Plamondon
Robinson
Sauvageau
Stoffer

Bigras
Bourgeois
Crête
Davies
Desrochers
Fournier
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Guay
Laframboise
Lebel
Loubier
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Paquette
Picard (Drummond)
Proctor
Roy
St-Hilaire
Wasylycia-Leis— 42

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Adams

Ablonczy
Alcock

Government Orders

Allard
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Augustine
 Bailey
 Barnes (London West)
 Bélaïr
 Bellemare
 Benoit
 Bevilacqua
 Blondin-Andrew
 Bonwick
 Boudria
 Breitzkreuz
 Bryden
 Burton
 Caccia
 Calder
 Caplan
 Carroll
 Casson
 Catterall
 Charbonneau
 Clark
 Collette
 Cullen
 Cuzner
 Dhaliwal
 Discepola
 Dromisky
 Duplain
 Farrah
 Folco
 Frulla
 Gallant
 Godfrey
 Goodale
 Graham
 Grey
 Hearn
 Hill (Macleod)
 Hubbard
 Jennings
 Jordan
 Karygiannis
 Keyes
 Knutson
 Laliberte
 Lebel
 Lee
 Longfield
 Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Macklin
 Malhi
 Manley
 Matthews
 McGuire
 McLellan
 Meredith
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Moore
 Myers
 Neville
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Owen
 Pagtakhan
 Parrish
 Peric
 Pettigrew
 Pillitteri
 Price
 Provenzano
 Regan
 Robillard
 Saada
 Scherrer
 Scott
 Shepherd
 Sorenson
 Spencer
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Stinson
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)

Anderson (Victoria)
 Assadourian
 Bagnell
 Bakopanos
 Beaumier
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Bertrand
 Binet
 Bonin
 Borotsik
 Bradshaw
 Brown
 Bulte
 Byrne
 Cadman
 Cannis
 Carignan
 Casey
 Castonguay
 Chamberlain
 Chatters
 Coderre
 Copps
 Cummins
 DeVillers
 Dion
 Doyle
 Drouin
 Easter
 Finlay
 Forseth
 Fry
 Gallaway
 Goldring
 Gouk
 Grewal
 Harvey
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Hilstrom
 Jaffer
 Johnston
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keddy (South Shore)
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lastewka
 LeBlanc
 Lincoln
 Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 MacAulay
 Mahoney
 Maloney
 Marcil
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Merrifield
 Mitchell
 Murphy
 Nault
 Normand
 O'Reilly
 Pacetti
 Paradis
 Penson
 Peterson
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Pratt
 Proulx
 Reed (Halton)
 Reynolds
 Rock
 Savoy
 Schmidt
 Sgro
 Skelton
 Speller
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)

Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Tirabassi
 Tonks
 Valeri
 Wappel
 White (North Vancouver)
 Williams
 Yelich — 187

Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Toews
 Ur
 Vellacott
 Whelan
 Wilfert
 Wood

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
 Cauchon
 Harvard
 Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
 Vancief

Bergeron
 Grose
 Lalonde
 Tremblay
 Venne — 10

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 14 lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 15 lost.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 17.

• (1535)

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House that the vote on Motion No. 14 be applied to Motion No. 17.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 17, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 163*)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Blaikie
 Cardin
 D'alphonse-Guiral
 Desjarlais
 Duceppe
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
 Gauthier
 Godin
 Guimond
 Lanctôt
 Lill
 Marceau
 Masse
 Ménard
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Robinson
 Sauvageau
 Stoffer

Bigras
 Bourgeois
 Crête
 Davies
 Desrochers
 Fournier
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gaudet
 Girard-Bujold
 Guay
 Laframboise
 Lebel
 Loubier
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 McDonough
 Paquette
 Picard (Drummond)
 Proctor
 Roy
 St-Hilaire
 Wasylcia-Leis — 42

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Adams
 Allard
 Anderson (Victoria)
 Augustine
 Bailey
 Barnes (London West)
 Bélaïr
 Bellemare
 Benoit
 Bevilacqua

Ablonczy
 Alcock
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Assadourian
 Bagnell
 Bakopanos
 Beaumier
 Bélanger
 Bennett
 Bertrand
 Binet

Government Orders

Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Burton	Byrne
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carignan
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Castonguay
Catterall	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chatters
Clark	Coderre
Collenette	Copps
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Elley	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Forseth	Frulla
Fry	Gallant
Galloway	Godfrey
Goldring	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Grewal	Grey
Harvey	Hearn
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lebel
LeBlanc	Lee
Lincoln	Longfield
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Matthews
McCallum	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McTeague	Meredith
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell	Moore
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Penson	Peric
Peterson	Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Provenzano
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Reynolds	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Schmidt	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Skelton	Sorenson
Speller	Spencer
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tirabassi
Toews	Tonks
Ur	Valeri
Vellacott	Wappel
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert	Williams
Wood	Yelich— 188

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bergeron
Cauchon	Grose
Harvard	Lalonde
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Tremblay
Vanclief	Venne— 10

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 17 lost.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the name of the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan recorded with the Canadian Alliance on that last vote.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 18.

[*Translation*]

A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 19.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent in the House that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on Motion No. 18 with Liberal members voting no.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members vote no to the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois vote no on this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The members of the New Democratic Party vote yes on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party vote no to the motion.

I would also like to have the member for Fundy—Royal recorded as voting no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan: Mr. Speaker, I vote no on this motion.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel: Mr. Speaker, I vote yes on this motion.

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 18, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 164*)

YEAS

Members

Blaikie	Davies
Desjarlais	Godin
Lebel	Lill
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McDonough	Proctor
Robinson	Stoffer
Wasylycia-Leis— 13	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Allard
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Augustine
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bennett
Bertrand
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Boudria
Bradshaw
Brown
Bulte
Byrne
Cadman
Cannis
Cardin
Carroll
Casson
Catterall
Charbonneau
Clark
Collenette
Crête
Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Duplain
Elley
Finlay
Forseth
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Galloway
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Graham
Grey
Guimond
Hearn
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lee
Longfield
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marceau
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard
Merrifield
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Pacetti
Paquette
Parrish

Ablonczy
Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Binet
Bonin
Borotsik
Bourgeois
Breitkreuz
Bryden
Burton
Caccia
Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Casey
Castonguay
Chamberlain
Chatters
Coderre
Copp
Cullen
Cuzner
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepolo
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Farrah
Folco
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gallant
Gaudet
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Guay
Harvey
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hubbard
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keys
Knutson
Laframboise
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Lincoln
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Marcil
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Moore
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Penson

Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proulx
Reed (Halton)
Reynolds
Rock
Saada
Savoy
Schmidt
Sgro
Skelton
Speller
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Stinson
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Valeri
Wappel
White (North Vancouver)
Williams
Yelich— 217

Perron
Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Price
Provenzano
Regan
Robillard
Roy
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Scott
Shepherd
Sorenson
Spencer
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Strahl
Telegdi
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Ur
Vellacott
Whelan
Wilfert
Wood

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Cauchon
Harvard
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Vancielief— 9

Bergeron
Grose
Lalonde
Tremblay

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 18 lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 19 lost.

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be the pleasure of some members of the House to adopt the motion. Therefore I think you would find consent that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yes.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, on Bill C-28 Canadian Alliance members will be voting no.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois vote no on this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party vote no on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Progressive Conservative Party vote no to the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan: Mr. Speaker, I vote yes on this motion.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel: Mr. Speaker, I vote no on this motion.

Government Orders

● (1540)

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

*(Division No. 165)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Coderre	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhalival	Dion
Discepola	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Frulla	Fry
Gallaway	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Harvey	Hubbard
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Matthews
McCallum	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McTeague	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Sgro
Shepherd	Speller
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Ur
Valeri	Wappel
Whelan	Wilfert

Wood— 137

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Benoit
Bigras	Blaikie
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Breitkreuz	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Clark
Crête	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Elley	Forseth
Fournier	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gallant	Gaudet
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey	Guay
Guimond	Hearn
Herron	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Laframboise
Lancôt	Lebel
Lill	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse	McDonough
Ménard	Meredit
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Reynolds
Robinson	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Skelton	Sorenson
Spencer	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Toews
Vellacott	Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich— 93	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bergeron
Cauchon	Grose
Harvard	Lalonde
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Tremblay
Vanclief— 9	

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY ACT, 2002

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-17, an act to amend certain Acts of Canada, and to enact measures for implementing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, in order to enhance public safety, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and on Motion No. 6.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 6 at the report stage of Bill C-17.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent among members in the House that the vote on report stage concurrence to Bill C-28 be applied to the vote now before the House.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 6, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 166)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Coderre	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Frulla	Fry
Galloway	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Harvey	Hubbard
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keys	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Matthews
McCallum	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McTeague	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Sgro
Shepherd	Speller
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Szabo

Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Valeri
Whelan
Wood — 137

Government Orders

Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Ur
Wappel
Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Benoit
Bigras	Blaikie
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Breitkreuz	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Clark
Crête	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Duceppe
Elley	Forsyth
Fournier	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gallant	Gaudet
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey	Guay
Guimond	Hearn
Herron	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Laframboise
Lancôt	Lebel
Lill	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Marceau	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Reynolds
Robinson	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Skelton	Sorenson
Spencer	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Stoffer
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Toews
Vellacott	Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich — 93	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bergeron
Cauchon	Grose
Harvard	Lalonde
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Tremblay
Vanclief — 9	

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 6 carried.

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in with a further amendment.

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.

Private Members' Business

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.

An hon. member: On division.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed from May 7, consideration of the motion that Bill C-408, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (oath or solemn affirmation), 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-408.

• (1550)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 167*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Assadourian
Augustine	Bagnell
Bailey	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Benoit	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Burton	Byrne
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Casey	Casson
Castonguay	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Collenette
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	DeVillers
Dhalival	Dion
Discepolo	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Duplain	Easter
Elley	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Forsyth	Frulla
Fry	Gallant
Galloway	Godfrey

Goldring	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Grewal	Grey
Harvey	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
LaLiberte	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Lincoln	Longfield
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Marcil
Masse	Matthews
McCallum	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McTeague	Meredith
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell	Moore
Murphy	Myers
Nault	Neville
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Peric	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Regan
Reynolds	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Schmidt	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Skelton	Sorenson
Speller	Spencer
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tirabassi
Toews	Tonks
Ur	Valeri
Vellacott	Wappel
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert	Williams
Wood	Yelich — 178

NAYS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bigras
Blaikie	Bourgeois
Caccia	Cardin
Crête	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Duceppe
Fournier	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Gagnon (Québec)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin
Guay	Guimond
Hearn	Herron
Laframboise	Lanctôt
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	McDonough
Ménard	Paquette
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Proctor
Reed (Halton)	Robinson
Roy	Sauvageau
St-Hilaire	Stoffer
Wasylycia-Leis — 45	

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bergeron
Cauchon	Grose
Harvard	Lalonde
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Tremblay
Vancielief	Venne— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the motion is referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

COMPETITION ACT

The House resumed from May 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-249, An Act to amend the Competition Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-249 under private members' business.

• (1600)

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

(Division No. 168)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bagnell
Bailey	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Binet
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bourgeois	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin
Carignan	Casey
Castonguay	Catterall
Chamberlain	Collenette
Crête	Cullen
Cuzner	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	Desjarlais
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duplain
Easter	Farrah
Finlay	Fournier
Frulla	Fry
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gagnon (Québec)	Gaudet
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Graham
Grewal	Guay
Guimond	Harvey
Herron	Hubbard
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes

Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laframboise	Laliberte
Lancôt	Lastewka
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lill
Lincoln	Longfield
Loubier	MacAulay
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Marceau	Marcil
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
McCallum	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Ménard	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Owen	Pacetti
Pagtakhan	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Peric	Perron
Peterson	Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Plamondon
Pratt	Price
Proctor	Proulx
Provenzano	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Robillard
Robinson	Rock
Roy	Saada
Sauvageau	Savoy
Scherrer	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Speller	St-Hilaire
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Stoffer	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Ur	Valeri
Wappel	Wasylcia-Leis
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood— 175	

NAYS

Members

Benoit
Burton
Chatters
Forsyth
Goldring
Heam
Hilstrom
Johnston
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Schmidt
Sorenson
Strahl
Toews

PAIRED

Members

Asselin	Bergeron
Cauchon	Grose
Harvard	Lalonde
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Tremblay
Vancielief	Venne— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 60 minutes.

Privilege

The Chair has notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Vancouver East.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

MARIJUANA

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning Parliament and members being kept in the dark about legislation that is about to be tabled when information is widely available in the media and the justice minister is running off to Washington, D.C. to talk to the U.S. Attorney General, Mr. Ashcroft about the marijuana bill.

Information about a bill is meant to be secret until it is released as a bill in the House. In this case everyone else seems to know about the bill, everyone but the House. I believe it is contemptuous of this place. It is an occurrence that has become all too common, that information is made widely available before anything has been tabled in the House.

Indeed, the justice minister could have tabled the bill, he could have made a ministerial statement and then he could have gone to the U.S. if its approval was so important to the Canadian government.

I believe every MP has a privilege to see legislation tabled in Parliament before the minister decides to blow smoke to his friends in Washington. I would ask the Speaker to review whether privilege has been breached in this case.

• (1605)

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question of privilege, at least as alleged, I do not believe is one.

We have to remember the sequence of events and then perhaps a reference to Marleau and Montpetit would assist the House.

First, we are talking about the discussions that ministers have from time to time with counterparts in other jurisdictions. Next week a number of us, including myself, will go to the United Kingdom with the Deputy Speaker to consult with colleagues over there about how we will amend House orders. The consultation process will happen prior to us putting our report to the House.

Similarly, the Minister of Justice is in Washington. Whether he will bring up the subject of this bill or some other bill up is for him to determine. However if he does that prior to introducing the bill to the House as part of a consultation, it is surely similar to the consultation that other people around here have from time to time about legislation.

The other thing we should bring into consideration is the process by which bills are introduced in the House of Commons. I verified this reference from Marleau and Montpetit just a little while ago. I did not actually think it would come back to us, but I think I have pretty well memorized the gist of it and it works this way. Actually I have to deal with it on a daily basis, which should not be too hard to remember.

The minister produces a document to cabinet. Marleau and Montpetit will confirm this almost word for word. Following that process, a bill is produced by the Department of Justice. Then the

Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, that is myself, will verify whether that bill reflects the cabinet decision that has been passed. Once that process happens, so Marleau and Montpetit informs us and it is actually what happens all the time, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons then seeks delegated authority from cabinet affirming that such is the case. Only then is the minister in question, regarding any legislation, authorized to then present legislation in the House of Commons. That is the sequence of the process. The fact that a minister consults prior to introducing legislation is not exactly an unfathomable proposition.

Perhaps the hon. member wonders why the minister did not consult us. As a matter of fact that is exactly what he did. The member for Langley—Abbotsford, together with the member for Burlington, I believe that is the name of her riding, jointly held an exercise which led in the very productive report from the House committee on the non-medical use of drugs. A parallel committee in the Senate, which went quite a bit further in its recommendations, produced a report as well. Therefore the other place produced a report and this House produced a report as part of that consultation.

As I understand, the minister is in Washington for discussions with his counterpart. Whether he raises this issue or another issue is hardly a question of privilege before the House. That is a ridiculous proposition. This is no more logical than someone stating two weeks from today, when the Deputy Speaker and I and a number of others return from the U.K., that we offended the privilege of this House because we consulted the British house about the modernization of House rules prior to our report being tabled in this House. It is the identical thing and it is hardly a question of privilege.

• (1610)

The Speaker: I think I will dispose of the point now. I know the hon. member for Vancouver East is an assiduous reader of the newspapers. That is apparent from the question of privilege she has raised this afternoon. I must say I sometimes read them myself, but I have to take stories about the contents of government bills, or even private members' bills, that are to be introduced in the House with a grain of salt. I always regard them as quite fictional until the bill has been introduced and I can compare what is written in the story with what actually is in the bill. This is particularly true of bills that are on contentious matters.

We read stories in the newspapers about the contents of the budget for months in advance that bore some or little resemblance to what was in the budget, depending I guess on the sources of information that the reporter had, or his or her ability to dream these things up. In most cases we do not know from where this information comes. We can only regard it as what I could call fiction until such time as the bill has been introduced and we have solid evidence as to what the contents of the bill are.

In this case, we have stories that have appeared saying that these various things are in a bill that is to be introduced in the House, and we will not know until it has been introduced. I am afraid it is difficult for the Chair to find there has been a breach of the privileges of members if people write these stories.

*Government Orders***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Unless there is some considerable evidence that the minister has made available copies of the bill to somebody else, and I do not think we have that evidence at the moment, I certainly did not hear that suggested by the hon. member, and the bill has been handed out in the form in which it will be introduced in the House later, it is hard for the Chair to find any breach of the privileges of the House. Accordingly, I decline to do so in this instance.

Of course the hon. member I am sure will monitor the situation closely and watch to see if copies are being bandied about in advance, which I admit might be a breach of the privileges if that sort of thing were going on. We do not have evidence of that at the moment, so there is not a question of privilege here.

I have a point of order by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during oral question period, I asked a question of the Prime Minister regarding the crab crisis in Quebec and in the Acadian Peninsula of New Brunswick.

This question referred to sums of money which could have been allocated to fish plant workers. The government said that New Brunswick had to pay, because there was a program in place and the federal government had provided \$90 million to New Brunswick and \$600 million to Quebec.

The question was addressed to the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans hurried to reply to it. He said the problem had been resolved. But he misled the House because the problem has not been resolved; no agreement has been reached.

The Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member has actually raised a subject of debate. There often are disagreements about the questions and answers in the House. But the hon. member knows very well that he cannot rise on a point of order to continue a debate that began during oral question period.

He will probably wish to express himself on the subject tomorrow during oral question period, with a supplementary question for the minister. I invite him to proceed in that way.

[*English*]

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is a tradition in the House that when we misquote, misspeak or otherwise provide information as inaccurate, we get up in the House at the first opportunity to set the record straight. I think you would agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

I go back to last Friday's question period. When putting a question to the Minister of Finance, I used the figure of 14,000 job losses in the month of April. I simply want to set the record straight that it was 19,000 job losses, not 14,000. I know you are good at arithmetic, Mr. Speaker. That is 5,000 more jobs lost than what I otherwise stated. I thought I should bring that to the attention of the House.

The Speaker: I am sure all hon. members thank the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest for his correction.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the extension of government orders because of the recorded divisions just taken, I believe you would find consent to have government orders end at 5:30 in order to proceed to private members' hour.

The Speaker: Therefore, just to make it clear, there would be no extra hour today. We will not pick it up after private members' business. Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, my point of order will be simpler. The Minister of National Defence quoted from a specific document when I was asking my question earlier today. I am asking the minister to make that document available and to table it in the Chamber.

The Speaker: Obviously we will have to wait until the minister is here to see if he agrees and tables the document. I am sure the hon. member's point of order will be noted and no doubt we will hear from the minister in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, an act to establish the Library and Archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain Acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will continue the speech that I started before oral question period regarding the bill to establish the Library and Archives of Canada. As I was saying earlier, there are several issues underlying this bill.

We, in the Bloc Québécois, will not support this bill.

This new institution replaces the National Library and the National Archives of Canada and will be named Library and Archives of Canada. So there is a merger as well as a new name. It is difficult to oppose the name, and we have no problem with it. The problems come further on in the bill.

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The library community, including the Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation, or ASTED, is not really in favour of a merger between the National Library and the National Archives of Canada because it believes that the missions of these two organizations are totally different. The National Library provide services to libraries and, on occasion, to people, whereas the National Archives are mostly responsible for the conservation of our documentary heritage. The Bloc Québécois also finds it very difficult to reconcile the missions of both institutions because they have different goals and different objectives.

I received many letters from various libraries in Quebec detailing their concerns about this merger. Librarians and archivists receive very different training. The merger of these two institutions could create problems. The Bloc Québécois believes, instead, that a more indepth study should have been done before the bill was introduced.

Another problem is that the librarian and archivist will be responsible for the administration of the agency. He or she will answer to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, while the head of this institution will be called the librarian and archivist and will be appointed by the governor in council.

It would have been preferable to have seen legislation similar to the Quebec National Library Act, which went much further in terms of appointing a committee to support the administrator. Five people were also appointed by the government on the recommendation of Quebec's minister for culture and communications. But after consulting with libraries and the publishing industry, as well as with writers' associations and universities, it was decided that three of these people had to be librarians. Of them, one had to be specialized in conservation, the other in mergers, and two people had to be appointed by the city of Montreal. Moreover, two library users, one of whom must be a resident of Montreal, must be elected by their peers, in accordance with the library's regulations.

After the appointment of a librarian and archivist, there is also mention of a committee, but without similar guidelines to ensure that this committee would be more transparent and would not necessarily answer to political authorities. Therefore, in terms of political power and institutions, the Liberal government has a tendency to want to combine the two without any watchdogs ensuring integrity and transparency.

In other areas we have seen how easy this is when reporting directly to a minister, because the guide posts are lacking for greater independence. We have seen the composition of the board of governors of the CBC, and how an institution that ought to be independent is not fully independent as far as policy and administration are concerned, often with the result that the outcome is not what one would expect. And that is unfortunate.

Once again, with this bill they have tried to take a tack that is a bit too close to power for our tastes, and will not give the leeway necessary for institutions of this type.

The Librarian and Archivist has one additional power. He can require government records or records of other libraries to be transferred if he is of the opinion that they are at risk of serious damage or destruction.

• (1620)

The Bloc Québécois would like more information on these additional powers. The bill says nothing. Will the Librarian and Archivist be entitled to require the patriation of any record he deems to be at risk and if so, what does this comprise? We do not know enough on this to be able to assess the direction this bill is taking.

As far as political power and institutions are concerned, caution is required. Who will be responsible for evaluating the records? Perhaps the Librarian and Archivist ought not to hold all this power, for fear of abuse. The Bloc Québécois will work to ensure that these additional powers are in line with the way the various libraries across Canada operate.

The mandate of the Librarian and Archivist, like that of the new institution bringing together the National Library and the National Archives, has been broadened to include the understanding and promotion of Canada's documentary heritage. This is the area in which there must be greater respect of what is being done in Canada.

I know about the Minister of Canadian Heritage's preoccupation, and that of her department. I know they want to have one Canada, coast to coast, to build a nation, without any differences, where history is a one way street and does not respect what is happening elsewhere. This represents an approach that we cannot support.

The Bloc Québécois feels that the mission of the Librarian and Archivist of Canada must not become politicized. With the promotion of heritage included in its duties, the position is being turned into a political appointment, which runs counter to the primary mission of the Library and Archives of Canada.

This is why Quebec's legislation provided for increased transparency with respect to appointments, with respect to choosing the different people who will sit on the board of the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec. The Bloc Québécois would like any references to understanding and promoting heritage to be withdrawn from the mission of the Librarian and Archivist of Canada.

The same thing is occurring with the mandate of the CBC. It refers to this notion of Canadian unity, which could prevent certain journalists from expressing themselves freely about what is happening on the ground, because of this dynamic, this "one nation, coast to coast" approach.

What we want is for the powers and responsibilities that are already given to the National Archives and the National Library through their respective legislation to be maintained. The mandate of the new agency is to be broadened to include interpreting our history, which refers to Canada's history.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage's press release states that the purpose of the bill is to give Canadians greater access to their history and culture. Why would the government want to broaden the mandate of the National Archives and the National Library to include interpreting Canada's history?

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For example, depending on the university that students attend, and the province in which they live, Canada's history can be taught very differently. There are a thousand and one ways Canada's history can be interpreted. In any case, depending on one's perspective and depending on what a nation, like Quebec, has experienced, the perception of events can vary greatly.

The Library and Archives of Canada cannot promote its own interpretation of the history of Canada and try to convince the public of its historic value. The role of the Library and Archives of Canada should therefore be to make historical information available, and not to produce its own version and then propagate it across Canada as a propaganda tool.

I think that caution is in order. Thought should be given to broadening the debate and allowing the various interpretations of Canadian history to coexist in Canada. There is no need for this constant effort to promote a coast to coast identity which is the same from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia.

•(1625)

I know this because we travelled across Canada with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. There are many realities in Canada, and this explains why Newfoundland is seeking to get a jurisdiction back. It also explains why, in Quebec, the situation has evolved in such a way that the interests of Quebec are often threatened by all sorts of interpretations made in the name of Canadian unity.

To have this new agency, the Library and Archives of Canada, interpret history so that it can be better understood by Canadians reflects incredible arrogance on the part of the federal government and basically has a political flavour. The Bloc Québécois believes that the broader mandate given to the new agency is solely designed to serve objectives of propaganda in connection with Canadian unity. The new mandate is contrary to the neutrality objectives historically pursued by the National Library and the National Archives.

The government is trying to impose its own vision of Canadian history. The Bloc Québécois will do everything in its power to preserve the exceptional reputation that the National Library and the National Archives have always enjoyed.

The Bloc Québécois demands that any reference to the interpretation of the history of Canada be removed from the mandate of the Library and Archives of Canada. This is part of a Trudeau-style nation-building effort and, as I said, seeks to instill a sense of belonging based on a single version of the history of Canada.

There is one other irritant: the creation of an advisory council to be appointed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

As I was saying, we took a different approach when we instituted the Quebec National Library Act. The advisory council will advise the chief executive of the new agency on the promotion and accessibility of Canada's documentary heritage.

This is an extremely important role and requires transparency and freedom of action. Because of this arrangement, we have reason to believe that Canadian Heritage, with its vision of Canadian unity, may be able to influence this council and hinder it in some ways. The role of the council is to advise the Librarian and Archivist, to make

the documentary heritage known to Canadians and to anyone with an interest in Canada, and to facilitate access to it. Members of the advisory council will still be appointed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

We feel it is unacceptable for council members to be selected by the heritage minister, particularly given the mandate of the new Library and Archives of Canada. Its supervisor will be the Minister of Heritage, whoever that will be when the bill takes effect.

Giving the council the mandate of promoting history and heritage makes for an undeniable lack of neutrality. We fault this also in other federal institutions that report to ministers and have a similar dynamic. The CBC is one patent example of this. If we add to this the fact that its members are appointed by the minister, how can the public be convinced of the council's neutrality?

Thus the Library and Archives of Canada are, or could be, politically influenced, because the Minister of Heritage has the power to appoint whomever she wants to the council. Greater transparency would have been preferable, through the appointment of people from the community as well as outsiders, ordinary citizens.

The Bloc Québécois feels that the creation of an advisory council with the mandate of promoting the history of Canada is useless because this is contrary to its historical mandate. A new power aimed at preserving Canada's heritage on the Internet—another aspect of the bill—is allocated to the Librarian and Archivist.

I do not think that the Bloc Québécois sees this new way of collecting information as innovative and indicative of a deep understanding of new information sources. However, everything seems to have been thrown together in the bill that is before us today. It is unfortunate because the Bloc Québécois would have liked to support certain aspects of the bill, including this new power to preserve Canada's documentary heritage as found on the Internet. We cannot be against that.

However, we will oppose this bill because we are against the principle underlying another aspect of the bill. Because the government wants to mix together all kinds of issues in this bill, the Bloc Québécois will not be able to support it. This is unfortunate, and I was very upset to have to say no. We will not be supporting this bill even though I found certain aspects of it very interesting and the idea of adjusting to new technologies very refreshing.

•(1630)

Another aspect of the bill is that it amends the Copyright Act by providing for a longer term of protection for unpublished works of authors who died before 1949.

In 1997, substantial changes were made to the act through Bill C-32. Before these changes, unpublished works of authors enjoyed perpetual protection under the Copyright Act. The amendments made through Bill C-32 were very controversial. Historians, academics, archivists and genealogists put a lot of pressure on the government to shorten the transition period so that archival documents would become public more rapidly.

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Those whose interests were compromised, namely the heirs of authors whose works would soon become public, launched a campaign to extend the protection for unpublished works so they would have more time.

We supported this amendment to section 7 of the Copyright Act. The amendment to subsection 7(4) would extend the copyright protection until December 31, 2003 for unpublished works of authors who died before January 1, 1930. New subsection 7(5) provides that, where the death of the author occurred before December 31, 1929 and before January 1, 1949, copyright on his or her unpublished works is protected until December 31, 2017. In either case, unpublished works published before the copyright protection has expired would be protected for another period of 20 years.

We are in favour of these amendments providing for a longer term of copyright protection to allow heirs to publish works that had remained unpublished. Also, if a particular work is published before its protection expires, the copyright is then extended by 20 years. This is a measure that the Bloc Québécois approves. But here again, efforts were made to mix everything up and try to make more propaganda. That is unfortunate because, as a result, the Bloc Québécois will not be able to support this bill.

Another aspect of the act is the Depository Services Program, or DSP, which was established in 1927 to supply libraries with government publications. It ensures that the Canadian public has equal and immediate access to Government of Canada information by distributing these publications to a network of more than 790 libraries in Canada and another 147 institutions around the world holding collections of Canadian government publications.

In September 2002, without any consultation of the public, this program was merged with government publishing at Communications Canada, and it is now administered by Communications Canada. Concern grew about the instability of this program in recent years. In November 2002, Communications Canada agreed to look into the matter. I am trying to provide a little background on how the change came about.

Discussions then started on a recommendation by members of the library community to transfer the DSP to the Library and Archives of Canada. While the federal government seems to be open to this suggestion, there has been no further contact with the library community, and nothing has filtered through the discussions between government agencies.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the government should end its silence and discuss this openly with the library community. Moreover, the DSP ought to be integrated into the new institution proposed by the government as quickly as possible. It is not mentioned in the bill.

In short, we have objections regarding the bill to establish the Library and Archives of Canada. The Bloc Québécois has reservations about the Library and Archives of Canada, because the library community is opposed to the merger bill, which makes us question its usefulness.

The Bloc Québécois considers that the enlarged mandate of the new institution is aligned with Canadian propaganda goals, and that

the new mandate will interfere with the neutrality the library and archives have always displayed. The federal government wants to impose its view of Canadian history, and the Bloc Québécois knows what it is talking about when it says the federal government wants to impose its view.

● (1635)

The Bloc Québécois also demands that all references to interpretation of the history of Canada, the goal of such interpretation being Trudeau-style "nation building", and to instilling a feeling of belonging to a so-called Canadian version of the history of Canada, be removed from the mandate of the Library and Archives of Canada.

Further, it is unacceptable to see an advisory council selected by the Prime Minister alone. Here, too, we have concerns. The position of Librarian and Archivist of Canada thus becomes a political appointment, just like the council.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of the amendments to the Copyright Act. What is most frustrating is that we would have liked to split this bill with regard to the non-partisan aspects, such as the Copyright Act, and give our support. That would have provided much stronger protection for copyright, and thus, more time for the heirs to publish hitherto unpublished works. In addition, if a work is published before its protection expires, the copyright is prolonged by 20 years; the Bloc Québécois thinks this is a good provision.

So, the general position with regard to this bill is to strongly encourage the federal government to split Bill C-36 in two, so that the positive measures related to copyright can be adopted. The Bloc Québécois considers the part of the bill on the new Library and Archives of Canada to be pure Liberal government propaganda. The Bloc Québécois will therefore vote against the bill, unless the bill is split in two, so that it can be studied more carefully.

I hope that the considerations mentioned by the Bloc will be taken into account. We do not oppose everything in the bill. We are not throwing the entire bill out. But it is a shame, because we cannot make any suggestions. The government should make an effort and listen to the Bloc and the other stakeholders, who are also concerned about these political appointments, be they at the CBC or the new Library and Archives of Canada. Obviously, there are political appointments.

Furthermore, the appointment of the entire committee will be political, because it will be appointed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage. She is known for using her influence to frequently silence administrators in institutions under her responsibility. This does not just happen at Canadian Heritage. It happens in other areas too.

I have outlined the Bloc's main points regarding Bill C-36, which is quite disappointing. As I stated at the beginning, since the Liberal Party came to power in 1993, the programs and bills from Heritage Canada, for one, are all identical, because the aim is to create a feeling of belonging from coast to coast.

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It is well known that some subtleties are being overlooked. There are the Alliance members with their region. There are also subtleties with respect to Canada and its history. There are other subtleties in Quebec. Historians do not all share the same vision about Canada's birth. It is well known that the Minister of Canadian Heritage loves to minimize, for example, the birth of Quebec, by recalling other historical perspectives.

It would be extremely beneficial to this bill to show openness and understand certain aspects of the history of the birth of Quebec and Canada. An effort could at least have been made to try to better understand what is being said about some Canadian historians. As a result of the mandate given to the Library and Archives of Canada, the Bloc cannot support this bill.

• (1640)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, Financial Institutions; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence.

[English]

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-36 regarding the wisdom of the merger between the national archives and the national library. These are two cultural institutions that mean a great deal to me and also to Canadians and Canadian culture.

Within my first year of being an MP, and as our new culture critic, I was asked to comment on the consultation by Dr. John English on this subject. In 1998, to prepare a submission for Dr. English, I looked into the background of the library and the archives and frankly was not happy with what I found.

It was obvious that because of the serious cuts of the 1990s the archives and the library were both placed under stress and were in peril. The parliamentary allocation for the national archives in 1990 was \$65 million and the allocation for the library was \$40 million. By 1998 both institutions saw an actual cut of one-third and a real dollar or inflation adjusted cut amounting to one-half of their budgets. Suddenly archivists had to decide which historical collections of national significance were going into the blue box. The cuts meant that the papers of labour leaders, business leaders, politicians, feminists and journalists, plus aboriginal histories and the stories of new Canadians, were lost to historians forever because the collections were not being accepted and processed by an archive that was struggling to exist. This has meant that historians will look to our national collections for the stories of our ancestors and will find some of them missing.

Some Liberals have said that the cuts of the former finance minister were historic. In the case of the archives, I think the cuts have been anti-history. The archives were at least able to cope with the draconian cuts by trimming collections, but the library did not have this option because of the nature of their mandate. Parliament has dictated by law that the national library must collect two copies of every publication in Canada. It has no option about its acquisitions. We have told them to be the national repository of all our books, papers and magazines. This chamber has said that the

national library is our collective meeting place for writers, poets, journalists and other muses. It represents the central coordinator for our greatest national literary network, our public libraries.

For the national library, those cuts meant that its physical plants deteriorated. There were staff cuts, there were roof leaks, the pipes burst and new books had to be put into boxes and then put into warehouses. The greatest enemy to preserving paper is water. A book does not survive when the roof leaks. Old paper copies of documents do not survive when the water pipes burst. Old diaries disintegrate when they are kept in cardboard boxes due to a lack of space and staff.

News reports say that there have been more 45 incidents in the last decade where water damage has threatened the national library and Archives collections housed at 395 Wellington Avenue. This has caused the damage and loss of over 25,000 works. Even attempts to improve the capital plant by building a new preservation centre in Gatineau have been a band-aid solution, for the cuts have meant a lot fewer archivists and without archivists no one takes care of the archives.

The report from Dr. English in the year 2000 called for greater administrative coordination between the two institutions, a coordinating committee of both institutions and the department and more record sharing to allow clients to access records from both institutions in one place. It said that the collection should focus only on Canadian content and that a general merger of everything but the management of the two institutions would be acceptable. However, he stopped short of recommending a complete merger. I will quote from his report. It said:

No brief from any major stakeholding organization recommended that the national archives and the national library be merged. Major archival and library organizations recommended that the positions of National Librarian and National Archivist be maintained as separate positions.

He also strongly supported the view that our archives should continue to be an archive for all Canadians, collecting records of national importance across the country, not just an archive for government records, a view that I strongly support.

• (1645)

The institutions crept along for years. The funding levels evened off at their reduced levels and did not really climb to match inflation. The good news, I guess, is that the Liberals have stopped making things worse, but the funding has not yet been restored.

A couple of interesting things have happened at the library over the last few years, the most exciting being the appointment of Roch Carrier as the national librarian. Mr. Carrier has been successful in raising the profile of the library and the problems at the library within the context of the importance of our national library to our national library system as a whole.

In 2000, in an address to the heritage committee on the book publishing industry, Roch Carrier said:

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As national librarian, I must say bluntly, that I do not have the tools in some areas to fulfill our mandate to preserve the published heritage of Canada. The national treasure of original Canadian newspapers, for example, is sitting in horrendous conditions out in an industrial area of Ottawa—with bare, hot light bulbs dangling from the ceiling not far from very brittle, dry newsprint...This is a disaster waiting to happen.

This resulted in heritage committee recommendation 5.2, which stated:

The Committee recommends that in conjunction with the National Librarian and the National Archivist, the Department of Canadian Heritage immediately initiate a planning process to examine the long-term space and preservation needs of both the national archives and the national library.

Sadly, these three year old recommendations have not been acted on. Instead we have seen a continuation of the underfunding, no new building, and this bill calling for a formal merger. Bill C-36 says that the merger is not a cost saving exercise, but given the government's track record it is hard to trust that. I have no philosophical objection to merging these two institutions. I even think there is a strong case to be made that our beloved Library of Parliament should be looked at as an additional partner for merging with the new library and archives of Canada so the research and parliamentary capacity of the proposed institution would be increased and so parliamentarians would have easier access to the broader resources of the national library and Archives.

My quandary with Bill C-36 is not philosophical but is based on the fact that the most obvious and long-standing problems with these two important institutions, funding and mandate, are not being dealt with.

What I am prepared to do today is support the bill in principle, but I give the government warning that the following things need to be dealt with at committee for our support to continue: that the protection of the collection of the archives and library be the first priority in funding and mandate discussions; that no current employees will lose their jobs due to the merger; that the replacement of the roof of the building at 395 Wellington will be only the first step in upgrading and replacing the new institution; that the plans to upgrade and replace be presented to the committee during the bill's study; and that the long term possibility of also including the Library of Parliament in a real, full archival research and repository institution for the history of the country be considered.

I hope we will see for Bill C-36 that there will be a serious consideration within the heritage committee of some of these important factors and an opportunity for us to discuss these important institutions. I warn the government that my tenuous support for the bill will evaporate if I see that the rationale for this bill becomes simply a continuation of the Liberal policy of neglect of our cultural repositories.

• (1650)

Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if she sees any strong advantages to having this new agency created.

Ms. Wendy Lill: Madam Speaker, I do see some very strong advantages if in fact it has the resources that are required. The American Library of Congress is one of the greatest institutions in the world and it is the model that we would say would be the best

merger model we could look at. If we are serious about strengthening our institutions, I would say that would be the model to look at.

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assume the member would appreciate the extra \$15 million we gave for storage space and also for repairing the roof. Perhaps the member could comment on the new function of displaying our heritage. Does she think that is a positive addition to the new organization?

Ms. Wendy Lill: I would like to comment on the money that did go into repair work. It is not enough. I sit on the Library of Parliament committee and we had the opportunity the other day to have a briefing on the construction work being done on the parliamentary library. We did talk openly about the continuing crisis situation facing the national library and the fact that these organizations are all working on the same mission, which is to preserve our heritage. None of these librarians or archivists feel very good about the fact that their sister organization is in such dire straits. Any kind of effort we can make to display our culture and to interest Canadians in our heritage I will always endorse, and I will fight for more of that.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise on behalf of the PC Party of Canada to speak to Bill C-36, an act to establish the library and archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain acts in consequence.

It is important to emphasize that the proposed new library and archives of Canada would have the exact same legal status as presently accorded to both the National Archives of Canada and the National Library. Bill C-36 endeavours to bring both these entities under one umbrella, which would be a departmental agency within the portfolio of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The creation of the library and archives of Canada would be under the direction of the librarian and archivist of Canada, and accountable to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, as listed in schedule I.1 of the Financial Administration Act.

Most important, all employees of both the National Library and the National Archives of Canada would maintain their existing status as public servants as governed by the Public Service Staff Relations Act. There was some discussion about that from the member for Dartmouth, but perhaps she missed that part of the bill when she was reading it over.

It is important to note that this enactment would modernize the existing functions and powers of the two institutions, use new technology-neutral wording wherever possible, and harmonize activities that were previously conducted individually by both institutions.

The librarian and archivist of Canada, as head of the new institution, would be given additional power to intervene and request the transfer of records created by the Government of Canada when those records are determined to be at risk of serious damage or destruction. We have seen many instances in the past of records and documents in the archives having been destroyed because of neglect of the government.

Government Orders

This position would have the rank and the powers of a deputy head of a government department. It would be a governor in council appointment to serve at pleasure, as is the current status of the National Archivist and the National Librarian.

Bill C-36 would provide for the creation of an advisory council to advise the librarian and archivist of Canada in making known the documentary heritage to Canadians, and to anyone else who has an interest in Canada, and in facilitating access to such heritage.

All of us in this chamber understand the importance of history, tradition and heritage. It is in that vein that Bill C-36 and the establishment of an advisory council would help us all better access and understand Canada's documented heritage.

Some may wonder why it is necessary to appoint a council to achieve this. The mandate of the library and archives of Canada would be to make known the heritage of Canada more strongly than it was in the mandate of either the National Archives or the National Library. The mandate of the new library and archives of Canada would go beyond allowing Canadians to access their heritage, it would make known and facilitate access to Canada's vast and diverse documentary heritage.

This enhanced role would be best achieved with the advice of an independent council with relevant expertise while reflecting the diversity of Canada.

This piece of legislation would provide authors with protection in terms of unpublished works. The amendments, as advocated within Bill C-36, would provide for a longer period of protection for unpublished works by authors who died before 1999. The period of protection would obviously vary, depending on the author's death and the date of publication. However, this initiative is applauded and strongly supported by the PC Party of Canada.

Those who are following the debate today may be wondering what government records would be transferred to the library and archives of Canada. It should be noted that the existing power of the National Archivist is to identify records of historical or archival significance and that would be continued by the librarian and archivist of Canada.

• (1655)

In terms of the powers regarding the transfer of government records, the librarian and archivist would have the power to request the transfer of records with historical and archival value that in the opinion of the librarian and archivist would be at risk of serious damage or destruction. This would remedy an existing void in the National Archives of Canada Act. In order to fulfill its legislative mandate of preserving the documentary heritage of Canada, the librarian and the archivist must have the power to intervene when government records of significance are at risk in order to maintain and ensure their long term preservation. Bill C-36 would achieve this objective.

I alluded earlier to changes to the Copyright Act that would take place in order for the creation of the library of archives of Canada to move forward. Members will recall that in 1997 Bill C-32 significantly amended section 7 of the Copyright Act, which prior to this amendment meant that unpublished works had perpetual

copyright protection. This amendment caused various controversies that eventually led the government to reduce the transitional periods.

Briefly, Bill C-36 prescribes for section 7 of the Copyright Act to be amended to allow the extension of the term of protection accorded to unpublished works of Canadian authors who died after 1929 but before 1949. This would be extended until 2017 as opposed to December 2003. This would allow the heirs of an author of such work an opportunity to publish previously unpublished work. If the work were to remain unpublished at the end of this 14 year period, the work would then enter the public domain. If the work were published in this period, it would then be accorded 20 years of copyright protection from the date of publication.

In addition, section 30.21 would be amended to remove the condition that archivists must keep a record of persons who access unpublished works for which copyright has not expired but for which the copyright owner cannot be located. This would remove a condition that is administratively cumbersome and imposes a financial impact that is particularly difficult for smaller archives with limited resources to sustain. On the whole, the Copyright Act is designed to provide a balance between protecting the rights of creators and the benefit to society of the dissemination of their work.

Under this bill, the library and archives of Canada would continue to make its vast holdings available subject to the application of the Copyright Act, as was previously carried out by the National Archives and the National Library. It is important to note that there is no contradiction or discrepancy between the mandate of the library and archives of Canada and the Copyright Act as they both seek to achieve complementary goals. The library and archives of Canada would continue practices permitted under the Copyright Act, to ensure the preservation of documentary heritage materials once within the permanent collection of the library and archives of Canada.

Finally, I would like to address one area before completing my remarks pertaining to this bill. It is clear that the purpose of the new library and archives of Canada would be to collect and to preserve records of significant importance to the Government of Canada. Under this new piece of legislation the library and archives of Canada would continue to collect and document the documentary heritage in the methods previously separately pursued by the National Archives and the National Library of Canada. Further, the library and archives of Canada would continue the responsibility of the National Archives to be the official repository of Government of Canada records.

In addition to these traditional powers, the wording has also been updated to be technology-neutral and the library and archives of Canada would have the new power to take periodic snapshots of the Canadian Internet. The purpose of this activity would be to ensure that the traditional published and unpublished forms of Canadian cultural expression, regardless of the medium used to create that expression, would be sealed and preserved.

It is evident from my remarks that the PC Party of Canada, for the most part, is in support of this legislation and will be supporting it as it goes through this place. We look forward to following the bill through its various stages in Parliament and in committee in the days and the weeks ahead.

Government Orders

•(1700)

I think this is a well-founded bill. It is based on something that was needed and actually makes sense. It is encouraging to see this bill placed before the House.

During the six years that I have been here we have all heard the stories of documents, national treasures, part of our history, and part of our culture being destroyed by leaky roofs, rain water, bursting pipes, cold temperatures, and humidity. This should never have been allowed to happen. After 10 years the government has finally recognized that if it did not do something, there would be nothing left.

I am glad that after a long time and a long wait, and after the destruction of part of our heritage that has occurred while we have been waiting, we have this bill before us. It is the intent of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada to support its progress through Parliament.

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his excellent description of the bill. It was very helpful and he provided a good outline.

I have one question. In his remarks he mentioned that he was glad the archivist would have the power to obtain and protect documents because the government had caused the destruction of many documents. Could the member outline what those documents might be?

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate questions from the member for Yukon. He obviously listened to the speech and, therefore, I have no problem answering his question. I do not have the names of the various documents, but I am certain he could search through the materials of the House.

There have been at least a number of times that I am aware of that we have asked questions because of pipes bursting in the library of the National Archives of Canada, as well as rain damage, water damage and humidity problems. I have seen a number of news stories in the brief six years that I have been here where we have lost cultural artifacts and part of our history. I would hope most of it would be recorded on microfilm or that there would be a copy of some sort. There is probably a difference in documents. Rare books and manuscripts might be kept under closer supervision than some of the bulkier documents that would be found in the archives. Without question, we have lost a good deal of material over the last six or seven years.

•(1705)

Mr. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I said I only had one question, but I have another one.

The one aspect that the member commented on at any length was the one new function of the bill relating to the display of our heritage. Basically we are putting the two institutions together, the library and the archives, but there is a new function, which is the display of our wonderful heritage. I wonder if the member has any comments on that.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, that is a part of the bill I find a bit lacking because we are talking about something that is going to be after the fact. However, I applaud the principle of having better

access to and better display of our culture, written, video and Internet heritage, and that is happening daily.

I think it is a good idea. It is something that should have been done a long time ago. To be quite honest with the member for Yukon it is not something I can comment on until I actually see what will be presented, how it will work, how the display will be set up, what type of public access there will be, and if it will be interactive to classrooms across the country. I am not aware of that part of the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of Bill C-36.

This is a pivotal year. It is the 50th anniversary of the creation of the National Library, and we are now preparing the creation of a new cultural institution that will add to the achievements of the National Library so far.

[*English*]

It may seem odd to some that Canada's National Library is only 50 years old. After all, our country will be 136 years old in July, and the National Archives are 131.

[*Translation*]

In 1883, it was none other than Sir John A. Macdonald who mentioned that the Dominion of Canada should have a national library.

In 1944, a young MP by the name of Paul Martin—senior—also stressed the importance of creating such an institution. Let me quote him:

[*English*]

The National Library would be an additional symbol of those intangible qualities of mind and spirit, which in the long run make a country truly great. It would be a symbol, too, of the union of two cultures and their complementary contributions toward Canadian unity.

[*Translation*]

Obviously, there were other important reasons, albeit less symbolic, for the creation of a national library.

[*English*]

By the 1940s it was becoming obvious that the lack of a single national catalogue listing holdings of the most important Canadian libraries was seriously hampering both research and the inter-library lending and borrowing of materials. We have 790 such libraries in Canada now.

[*Translation*]

Moreover, the country also needed a vast national bibliography that would be kept up to date.

Finally, the National Library was also necessary to compile retrospective bibliographies that would enable Canada to meet its international obligations in this regard. This institution was also going to make it possible to collect and preserve works published in Canada and to make them accessible to the Canadian public.

Government Orders

• (1710)

[English]

That is interesting because the progress and the need to preserve and promote Canada's documentary heritage is once again pushing us to create a new cultural entity.

[Translation]

Some of my colleagues have already pointed out the benefits of the proposed legislation. Today, I would like to focus on a key element, namely the new power granted to the Library and Archives of Canada to periodically take samples of the documentary material accessible through the Internet.

[English]

To give members a sense of why this is important I would like to quote Mr. Paul LeClerc, president of the New York Public Library, who spoke in 1999 at Schaffer Library at Union College in New York. He said:

[Translation]

"It could be said that libraries have benefited from the most simple and most durable series of principles of all cultural businesses. Since the very beginning of their existence, which goes back to antiquity, libraries have had only three basic functions: to acquire material, to store and preserve it, and to make it accessible to readers".

[English]

The National Library of Canada has carried out those functions with great distinction, and the new entity, the library and archives of Canada, will do so as well. The national headquarters, as hon. members know, is the fifth building this way on Wellington Street.

Indeed, the library and archives of Canada will continue to pursue all the activities now conducted separately by these two institutions. These include collecting Canada's documentary heritage by purchase, by agreement with other levels of government, legal deposit, collections of master copies of recordings and the transfer of Government of Canada records.

• (1715)

[Translation]

However, these traditional activities are supported and strengthened by a new method of building collections, Internet sampling, which will reflect Canadian society thanks to the virtual world.

[English]

For example, the library and archives of Canada may wish to preserve a copy of a website of a Canadian department store, let us say Hougou Centre in Yukon; or a beer company, such as Chilkoot Brewing in Whitehorse; or Air North airlines; or perhaps a fan site dedicated to a particular Canadian singer, such as Barbara Chamberlin from Yukon; or a site dealing with the prime ministers of Canada or indeed the deputy prime ministers of Canada, including Erik Nielsen from Yukon.

[Translation]

The purpose is to immortalize a sample of our era and of this new medium, which is both present and virtual and which is changing as fast as new technologies allow.

[English]

Taking these snapshots of the Internet that is accessible to the public without restriction is essential if the library and archives of Canada is to succeed in preserving for all future generations a record of the life we have led, the communication tools we have used and the technologies which assisted us.

[Translation]

A few minutes ago, I mentioned that the new institution would have the power to take samples from the Internet. It is important to specify that this only refers to Internet content that is accessible to the public without restriction. Also, it is important to add that even though it is solely for the purpose of preservation, permission to download this material may not be given unless the Copyright Act is amended. Bill C-36 therefore proposes the necessary changes.

[English]

These amendments have been developed in consultation with the Department of Industry. Even though the Copyright Act is under review, Bill C-36 has been written with the evolving nature of the current Copyright Act in mind so that it can adapt to future amendments to Canada's copyright regime.

[Translation]

I would like to say more, but I am running out of time. To conclude, I would like to remind the House that the new power to explore and record parts of Canada's presence on the Internet is an excellent example of the broadened mandate of the Library and Archives of Canada. For this reason, I support this bill and, like other Canadians, I welcome the creation of this new institution that will act as a new steward of Canada's documentary heritage.

As you know, this bill represents the realization of a commitment made by the government in its Speech from the Throne on September 30, 2002. At that time, we made a pledge to Canadians to improve access to the history and culture of our vast country, as well as to its other aspects.

[English]

I am very encouraged to underline the fact that there is a growing demand for this kind of knowledge. Canadians want to know more about the history and culture of their country, whether it is the genealogical details of their own family, the wonderful achievements of our writers and musicians, the contributions made by members of their community to the growth and development of Canada, or perhaps even the role played by the Government of Canada at some defining moment in our history.

[Translation]

It is the duty of our government to respond to this demand and the new knowledge institute this bill will create will be the ideal tool for attaining this objective. To that end, the Library and Archives of Canada will benefit from a much broader mandate than those of the two existing organizations.

Government Orders

[English]

The mandate for this new agency will be established on the foundation of the respective mandates of the National Library and the National Archives of Canada. However it will also include a new component, which is the interpretation of our heritage and the exhibitions of its collections.

[Translation]

The new organization will take advantage of all the resources and all the expertise of both original entities to fulfill this broader mandate. Think of all the possibilities that this represents. Think of all the new horizons that will soon open for us.

[English]

Already we have some sense of the tremendous potential of the library and archives of Canada. The two bodies are already working closely together to serve Canadians through the new Canadian Genealogy Centre.

[Translation]

In cooperation with the Department of Canadian Heritage and other partners, such as the Société de généalogie de l'Outaouais, the Library and Archives of Canada has launched this new website on genealogy and the history of families.

[English]

As the House no doubt knows, the Canadian Genealogy Centre is a one stop shop providing electronic access to the genealogical resources in Canada. The centre offers genealogical content, services, advice, research tools and opportunities to work online on joint projects, all in both official languages.

[Translation]

This service is offered in response to a growing demand for genealogical information from Canadians.

• (1720)

[English]

The goal of the centre is to foster the discovery of our roots and our family histories as a basic part of our Canadian heritage. At the same time, its mission is to encourage the use of genealogy and the resources available in libraries and archives as tools for lifelong learning.

[Translation]

In addition to this new centre, the National Archives collections will also be used to create the Portrait Gallery of Canada, a new jewel in the crown of our Canadian heritage.

[English]

The vision of the new Portrait Gallery of Canada is to emphasize portraits of people from all walks of life who have contributed to the development of Canada, not only decision makers and famous public figures but people from every social background. I think that it is a powerful example of equity and fairness.

[Translation]

The Portrait Gallery of Canada will link Canadians together through the preservation and consideration of values that have

defined us in the past and that continue to support the vision of our existence as a nation, today and into the future.

[English]

This wonderful new facility will provide a unique visual history of Canada, interpreted on a human scale, through the faces of individuals who have shaped and continue to shape the history and culture of this nation.

[Translation]

Finally, it will link Canadians together through contemporary and historical exhibitions and new media accessible in person and through the virtual network.

[English]

The Canadian Genealogy Centre and the new Portrait Gallery are just two examples of the contribution made by the National Library and the National Archives. Indeed, the two entities already organize exhibitions that explore various aspects of their collections. I am certain that, strengthened by the new mandate provided by the bill, the library and archives of Canada will have no trouble carving out a niche for itself in the cultural sector, thanks to its exhibitions and interpretation activities.

[Translation]

In conclusion, I am happy to point out that the Library and Archives of Canada will take full advantage of new technologies to better respond to the ever growing desire of Canadians for simplified access to knowledge, to their history and to their documentary heritage in all its diversity.

These are some of the reasons why I support this bill. I encourage all members to join with me in voting in favour of Bill C-36, which will enable us to better promote our documentary heritage for the greater pleasure of those who want to gain a better knowledge of it.

[English]

I will close with a few personal comments. The first is a suggestion. In other jurisdictions where there has been an amalgamation, sometimes the actual name of the organization gets lost in telephone directories and government directories. It becomes very difficult to find the organization. If it is called archives and libraries Canada and someone is looking for libraries, it would not be under the "L" listings.

I hope that the people organizing directories in the government and information services and web pages will take that into account. A double listing is needed, one for "libraries" and one for "archives". To a large extent those are separate functions and people will be looking for those individual functions.

I also want to pay tribute to the wonderful people who staff our libraries across the country. As I said, there are 790 libraries. In fact, our documentation is also found in 147 institutions internationally. Those people are the silent heroes who no one sees. They work very hard in very quiet places which often do not have windows. Those people have an impact on the future of our nation. Usually it is not dangerous work, but we must remember that the most beautiful part of our Parliament buildings was saved by a librarian who closed the metal door to the library. The rest of the building burned down but the most beautiful part was saved for our heritage. I think that was in 1916...

More important, librarians historically have been the gatekeepers by paper but now also by the Internet to a vast resource of knowledge for our children and our future. Many books have had a big influence on my life. *Who Is The Chairman of This Meeting?* would be one of them.

How many people, in the very difficult times in their lives through tragedy or desperation, have thought of the words of William Shakespeare "Come what come may, time and the hour run through the roughest day"?

How many people have not realized how important institutions such as this are when the veil of civilization is so thin as outlined in *Lord of the Flies*? For those who say books and librarians do not have an impact, what impact has Kahlil Gibran's book *The Prophet* had or the Koran or the Bible on our civilization?

Librarians perform such a valid function for children. We all know the most influence in a child's life is in its formative years. I still remember the book *The Little Engine That Could*. It had an effect on my life.

An hon. member: I think I can, I think I can.

Mr. Larry Bagnell: That is right. In fact I read it a week ago to a group of school children in Yukon.

I am delighted at the additional resources to preserve and protect our archives. The poet who wrote the book that has sold the greatest number of volumes in history is Robert Service. There needs to be a lot more of his work collected in the national archives. An opportunity was missed recently to have a large collection. There are not too many.

I applaud this new effort. I hope that for one of our greatest selling poets it will be one of the early displays of heritage under this new role.

* * *

• (1725)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand there is agreement that when the House is in committee of the whole on the main estimates later this day, the 20 minute speaking times will be assigned to parties and that each respective party shall assign speaking times to one or more members in that 20 minute segment.

I believe you will find consent to make this an order, Mr. Speaker.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to the 2003 Conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, seven (7) members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to Winnipeg, Manitoba, from September 14 to 16, 2003, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): **The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House has heard the termes of the motion. Is there unanimous consent to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, An Act to establish the Library and Archives of Canada, to amend the Copyright Act and to amend certain Acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): On questions and comments, the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention to the member opposite. While time is running out on this debate, I call his attention to clause 12(3) of the bill which suggests that the records held by the Privy Council Office, cabinet confidences, that is subsection 69(1) of the Access to Information Act, would not be accessible by the national archivist. That means there is going to be a body of records that will be unavailable and out of reach of historians should the Privy Council Office refuse to give permission for the chief librarian archivist to access them.

Does he have a comment on that?

Private Members' Business

Mr. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, could the member tell me, is that a change from the previous act?

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Let us call it 5:30 p.m.

I have received notice from the hon. member for Beaches—East York that she is unable to move her motion during private members' hour on Wednesday, May 14, 2003. It has not been possible to arrange an exchange of positions in the order of precedence. Accordingly I am directing the table officers to drop that item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence. Private members' hour will thus be cancelled and the House will continue with the business before it prior to private members' hour.

[*Translation*]

It being 5:31 p.m., the House will now proceed to consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.) moved that Bill C-269, an act to amend the Criminal Code (firefighters), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to open the debate on my private member's Bill C-269, an act to amend the Criminal Code, respecting firefighters.

Bill C-269 seeks to give greater protection to firefighters by amending five sections of the Criminal Code and creating two new criminal offences of aggravated assault and first degree murder when the victim is a firefighter acting in the line of duty.

For years Canada's firefighters have been coming to Parliament Hill during their legislative days and speaking to individual members of Parliament, one on one, respectfully asking that they receive greater protection under the law.

After years of hard work by the International Association of Fire Fighters to make these issues a priority on the government agenda, I am pleased to report that with the introduction of Bill C-32 by the Minister of Justice and this debate tonight, the International Association of Fire Fighters can claim some success. Those years of hard work are finally paying off for the people who provide such a vital role in terms of safeguarding Canadians from the ravages of fire.

In particular, I want to thank Mr. Jim Lee, Mr. Sean McManus and Mr. Greg Hewitt for their work and dedication to Canada's firefighters. These three individuals have been crucial in putting the issues of firefighter safety on the public radar.

These issues are not new to members of Parliament or to the House. My own involvement with these issues goes back to December 2001 when I first introduced this bill in the House of Commons. I should say as well that I had a personal experience with a fire a couple of years ago which really reinforced my view as to how important firefighters are within our society.

The particular circumstances of that situation were that my wife and I had been out for dinner one Saturday at a friend's place in nearby Kanata which is adjacent to Nepean. I noticed flames coming out of a house on our way home. I stopped my car and a couple of other people stopped as well.

The first thing I did was I called 911 and notified the emergency response people that there was a fire happening and that they had better get there as quickly as possible. My second move, along with another couple of individuals who had stopped, was to see if we could get inside the house to make sure that there was nobody in the house.

I would say that we got to the fire fairly quickly in the sense that some of the flames were clearly visible but it seemed as though they had not consumed the entire house. However, by the time I got to the front door, the door knob on the screen door was already hot and it was clear that things were becoming very dicey from the standpoint of safety. I tried to go around the back of the House and use a garden hose on the fire, but it was not working. Very shortly thereafter the house was beyond hope in terms of saving the property of a family who obviously had worked very hard over many years to build their house and enjoy the benefits of their property.

Unfortunately the firefighters were responding from a distance of about 10 kilometres away. They got there just as the fire became completely uncontrollable.

That whole situation gave me a sense of the difficulties that firefighters have and how dangerous it is in terms of going into a building where their own safety is in peril. It just so happened that in that particular case, the fire had been set deliberately, unfortunately.

• (1735)

I would also like to take this opportunity to draw to the attention of members some of the contributions that have been made by other members of Parliament on the subject of protecting firefighters and their safety, notably the hon. members for Surrey Central and New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby. They have also brought important issues related to firefighter safety to the floor of the House of Commons through their own private member's bills.

As I indicated, by its very nature firefighting is a dangerous occupation and Canada's firefighters respond to a variety of emergency situations with the knowledge that their work may result in serious injury or death. Like police officers or the men and women of the Canadian Forces, firefighters perform their duties on our behalf knowing that at any time they may have to pay the ultimate sacrifice. It is disturbing to note as well that the number of deaths and injuries sustained by firefighters continue to rise.

Since my days as a municipal councillor with the former city of Nepean, I have had the honour of working with many local firefighters, firefighters like Ron Phillips, Steve McFarlane, Ron Ralph, Dave Stevenson, Mike Vervoort and John Sobey. These brave men, who I count among my friends, put their lives on the line to make us all safer.

Private Members' Business

While firefighters understand and accept the inherent danger of their jobs, they are often put in harm's way through deliberate criminal acts such as arson. These crimes are a deliberate attempt to cause harm, property damage or loss of life. These actions needlessly place firefighters at risk and must be deterred to the greatest extent possible.

As public safety officers and first responders engaged in a dangerous occupation professional, in my view firefighters are deserving of specific protection and measures under the law that would reduce the incidents of exposure to situations that could result in serious injury or death. As legislators, we have an obligation and a duty to use the Criminal Code to protect our firefighters from harm.

Before I get into the actual provisions of the bill, there are a number of what I would say very complex issues related to this bill. In that respect, one of the things I think would be useful in connection with this legislation is that rather than debating for another two hours some of the issues related specifically to the issue of criminal intent in the bill, the issue of *mens rea* in particular related to the first degree murder aspect of the bill, these provisions should perhaps be considered by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

There have been some consultations on this issue with members of various parties. At this point in the debate, I would like to seek unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That Bill C-269 be not now read a second time and that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I would like to put that motion to the House because there are some rather significant issues that must be dealt with, technical issues and issues related to possible charter challenges. The firefighters have agreed to this as well.

● (1740)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. David Pratt: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, Bill C-269 would create two new criminal offences of aggravated assault and first degree murder when a victim is a firefighter acting in the line of duty. I would first like to address the aggravated assault provisions of Bill C-269.

In recent years Canada's professional firefighters have faced a growing and serious threat from illegal drug operations, which are often rigged with hidden devices designed to kill or injure anyone who interferes with them, particularly public safety officials.

For example, a recent drug growing operation in New Brunswick was guarded by 30 spring loaded traps. In Nova Scotia, a boy was recently hit in the leg by a shotgun which was rigged to a trip wire in a marijuana field.

One of the most common traps set by criminals and organized crime, in an attempt to protect their drug growing operations, is a crossbow which is rigged to automatically fire at anyone who opens the front door, such as a firefighter entering a house to put out a fire.

Given that these drug growing operations often use illegal and unsafe electrical hookups, otherwise known as meter jumping, which cause fires, the dangers to firefighters in particular who are on the scene to battle a house fire cannot be discounted.

I believe that if we are to deter criminals from setting these traps in the future, we must amend the Criminal Code to provide more severe punishments for such acts. It was for that reason that I included provisions within Bill C-269 which would address this growing problem.

I am pleased that this is an issue which has not gone unnoticed by the government. On April 11 the Minister of Justice introduced Bill C-32, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts. Responding to the dangers posed by these types of traps, sections of Bill C-32 would create a new criminal offence targeting anyone who sets a trap for a criminal purpose and intends to cause injury or death.

Bill C-32, which I fully support and which has the support of the International Association of Fire Fighters, would provide a maximum penalty of 10 years on anyone convicted under this new offence with an additional four years if that trap injured or killed someone.

I would like to quote from a press release issued by the International Association of Fire Fighters in support of the government's legislation. It says:

Canada's professional fire fighters will soon have important new protections from a growing threat.

The firefighters press release went on to quote the general president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, Mr. Harold Schaitberger, as saying:

We are pleased to see the Government of Canada taking action today on this important issue of fire fighter safety.

In my view the Minister of Justice should be congratulated for this legislation which imposes stronger punishment on an offender and greater protection of Canada's firefighters than my own bill. Given that the government has introduced its own legislation which has the full support of Canada's firefighters and which I believe would provide greater protection to firefighters, I do not believe it is necessary or even helpful at this point to proceed with the amendments outlined in Bill C-269 regarding aggravated assault.

I would now like to speak on the second issue of first degree murder. The second criminal offence created by Bill C-269 is first degree murder when the victim is a firefighter acting in the line of duty. At present, section 231 of Canada's Criminal Code specifically refers to the death of a peace officer while acting in the line of duty. However there are currently no similar specific provisions or increased penalties to deter criminal acts that jeopardize the lives and safety of firefighters in cases such as arson.

Bill C-269 seeks to change that by giving firefighters the recognition they deserve and putting them on the same legal footing as police officers. I fully recognize that there are many difficult issues which need to be addressed surrounding such amendments to the Criminal Code.

Private Members' Business

For example, in Canada there is a constitutional requirement that to be convicted of murder it must be proven that the accused had intended to kill prior to committing the act. The question then arises: Is it possible to prove that a person who lights a fire intended to kill a firefighter called to the scene? I believe anyone lighting a fire which would knowingly put lives in danger can reasonably assume that his or her actions could result in the death of a firefighter. Did the person know a firefighter would die as a result of his or her actions? Perhaps not. However reasonably, in my view, the person should have.

● (1745)

For a number of reasons, amending section 231 of the Criminal Code to include firefighters, as I have suggested in Bill C-269, was not included in the federal government's Bill C-32.

I have spoken to officials from the justice department. They have expressed their concerns over the constitutionality of such changes, and I would agree that more detailed discussion is needed before moving forward with Bill C-269. I believe this is an issue that does require closer examination by parliamentarians, legal experts and firefighters themselves.

To conclude, every time a firefighter is injured or killed, that means one less professionally trained public safety officer is available to respond to situations which are dangerous to the public. As legislators, I believe we must do everything in our power to protect the people who serve us as firefighters from harm.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Nepean—Carleton for bringing forward this important issue through a private member's bill.

As he mentioned, I introduced a similar motion in the House sometime ago. Approximately in March of last year we had a debate on the issue. During that debate, the Liberal members who spoke on the issue opposed the motion. I wonder why the Liberal members at that time, not this hon. member, chose to vote against making my motion votable. The million dollar question is this. If this was a bad idea a year ago, why has it suddenly become a good idea, and has been incorporated into Bill C-32 as well?

Does hon. member have any comments as to why some of the ideas brought forward by opposition members are rejected, or ridiculed or opposed but after some time the government steals them? Why does it happen that way?

Mr. David Pratt: Mr. Speaker, I do not think at all that it is a question of theft of ideas or anything like that. I gave the hon. member credit for advancing this issue. Other members in the House have spoken on it as well and have spoken very fervently and passionately on the need to protect firefighters. I think there has been a real recognition and realization as well, post-September 11, 2001, that this issue is a very real one and that it needs to be dealt with.

However I give the credit to the firefighters themselves who have done a good job in terms of fleshing out these issues, making the government and members of Parliament aware of them and ensuring that the government is responsive to the problem that currently exists.

● (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): With the indulgence of hon. members, when the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton rose on a point of order, he clearly stated that Bill C-269 be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

The Chair asked for unanimous consent, which was given for adopting the motion. Therefore, according to the Chair once more, debate should be over and we should suspend until 6:30 p.m. for the late shows.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal: Mr. Speaker, when the House was asked for consent to refer the bill to committee, the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton got the consent from the House, but he was allowed to continue his speech after that. I think the same privilege should be given to me, as the next speaker on this issue. I am also very passionate about the issue and I think I should be allowed to speak on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member is right in saying that once unanimous consent was given to adopt that, the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton should not have spoken any more. However there was some question and we needed to clarify the matter. We needed to check the rules. This is why he continued his speech.

However, as I said two seconds ago, there should not be any more debate because the motion was adopted and therefore we should suspend until 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not for me to comment on decisions of the Speaker but I think you have made the correct procedural ruling. It is hard to speak to something that is no longer on the floor, although obviously the feelings of members who wish to speak to the bill are somewhat hurt, shall we say, by the fact that as a result of a procedural error someone else got to speak after the motion no longer existed and the subject matter was referred to committee.

I simply want to indicate that I am glad there was an agreement to send the subject matter to committee. It is second best. I wish we could have passed the bill. Had I had an opportunity to support the bill I certainly would have, and had I had an opportunity to speak in support of the bill I certainly would have, but I understand why that is not now possible.

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the way to resolve this issue of members not having an opportunity to speak is simply to ask for unanimous consent for the following:

That the debate be allowed to continue on the subject matter of Bill C-269 until 6:30 p.m. when it is deemed to have been adopted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Private Members' Business

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I applaud the opportunity to rise on behalf of the constituents of Surrey Central to participate in the debate on Bill C-269, which of course will be sent to the committee. This is an act to amend the Criminal Code in regard to firefighters. It was initially introduced as Bill C-419 in the last session. The stated purpose of Bill C-269 is to amend the Criminal Code and to give greater protection to firefighters by creating two new offences of aggravated assault and first degree murder when the victim is a firefighter acting in the course of his or her duties.

I wish to congratulate the member for Nepean—Carleton for bringing forward this issue as a private member's bill. The protection of firefighters is an issue that has also been high on my agenda. As I mentioned, two years ago I introduced a motion in the House which called upon the government to take a tough stand in regard to those responsible for firefighters killed in the line of duty. Motion No. 376 read:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should amend Section 231(4) of the Criminal Code to expand the definition of first-degree murder to include the death of a firefighter acting in the line of duty and amend Section 433 of the Criminal Code dealing with the crime of arson by adding language that addresses the death or injury of a firefighter engaged in combating a fire or explosion that is deliberately set.

Although we went about it in a slightly different manner, both the member for Nepean—Carleton and I have sought changes to the Criminal Code that would have a similar effect, but as I said in the question, and I am not talking about the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton, I would like to reiterate that the Liberals generally oppose any good idea coming from the official opposition. They criticize it and sometimes even ridicule an idea, but then they steal the ideas of the official opposition. The Liberal government has stolen many ideas from the official opposition, as hon. members know.

Let me give another example. The Liberals defeated my motion calling for legislation to recognize foreign academic credentials. They opposed it, but then they stole the idea and put it into their next Speech from the Throne. I always say that we in the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition of Canada, carry the flashlight to show the Liberals their darkness.

I took up the cause of firefighter protection at the urging of the Surrey Firefighters Association, which has been lobbying to change the law since 1995. There were about 14,000 arson fires in Canada last year. I was alarmed to learn that over one-third of the fires in Surrey are the result of arson and a very high percentage of them contain booby traps. It is very disturbing.

The Surrey Firefighters Association president, Mr. Lorne West, moved the issue of Criminal Code protection for firefighters on behalf of his 350 members. He took it from being a local Surrey issue to the national stage by raising the matter with the International Association of Fire Fighters. Later, the International Association of Fire Fighters, along with the Surrey Firefighters Association and the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, went on to warmly endorse my motion. They sent letters in support of my motion.

Firefighters want to classify as first degree murder the act of an arsonist whose mischief leads to the death of a firefighter. As well, they want every person who intentionally or recklessly causes

damage to property by fire or explosion, whether or not that person owns the property, to be guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life where the fire or explosion causes bodily harm to a firefighter acting in the line of duty. They request life imprisonment as a minimum penalty.

As public safety officers who risk their lives in the course of protecting the lives and property of the public, firefighters are deserving of specific protection and measures under the law that will reduce the incidence of exposure to situations that could cause serious injury or death.

• (1755)

Firefighters, who command the highest trust of any professionals, face an on the job mortality and injury rate four times higher than that of other occupations but they should never have to accept criminal acts that are intended to injure or kill them.

No one would say that a firefighter's life is worth less than a police officer's, but that is precisely what our Criminal Code says. When police or firefighters are called to enter drug labs or illegal marijuana grow operations, firefighters go in first. Firefighters are our first line of defence but they are not afforded the same Criminal Code protection as our law enforcement officers. Regrettably, too often fires are deliberately set, often with the sinister intention of covering up illegal activities like marijuana grow operations or methamphetamine labs.

At other times, firefighters respond to calls only to find the premises booby trapped with crossbows, propane canisters ready to explode, cut away floor boards, or other intentional hazards. These malicious devices are intended to kill or injure anyone who interferes with a drug operation, including firefighters.

Firefighters in Surrey are especially at risk considering the increasing number of marijuana grow operations that plague the city. An RCMP report recently announced that there are 4,500 marijuana grow operations in the city of Surrey. That represents about 6% of the households. In a cul-de-sac, 9 out of 12 new homes have been linked to the illegal marijuana growing trade. But this Liberal government has done nothing to control the illegal marijuana grow operations except to talk about decriminalizing its simple possession.

Eight U.S. states have already moved to protect their firefighters under criminal law. Since no one would say that a Canadian firefighter's life is worth less than that of a U.S. firefighter, we obviously need to take steps to improve the Criminal Code.

As the member for Nepean—Carleton is undoubtedly aware, the government is already moving toward providing firefighters with added Criminal Code protection. Two weeks ago we debated Bill C-32 at second reading. I was particularly pleased to see that the bill creates a Criminal Code offence of setting a deadly trap in a place used for criminal purposes. This is to protect first responders such as firefighters and police, et cetera, whose lives could be endangered by entering such a place in the performance of their duties.

Private Members' Business

The maximum sentence for this offence depends on the outcome of the situation. It is generally 10 years. If injury occurs, the maximum sentence increases to 14 years. If death occurs, then the maximum sentence is life. Currently, section 247 of the Criminal Code provides for the offence of setting a trap with a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment only.

In conclusion, I would like to again thank the member for Nepean—Carleton for bringing forward this private member's bill. As well, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Lorne West and all Surrey firefighters who, through great perseverance, brought this issue to the national forefront.

Hopefully we will soon have changes to the Criminal Code in place that will provide a greater deterrent to those who deliberately set fires or booby trap buildings. Firefighters deserve this much at least. We need to protect the protectors. This should have been done a long time ago.

● (1800)

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit surprising to speak today following the unanimous adoption of a motion of this House, but it is still gives me great pleasure to do so.

The House has unanimously decided to refer the subject matter of the bill to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights so that it might consider a fairly serious problem in our society, which is to determine how to protect the men and women who risk their lives trying to save innocent men, women and children who are, unfortunately, all too often victims of infernos.

I had mentioned to the hon. member who introduced Bill C-269 that we strongly supported the principle, which is to protect these men and women, rightfully known as heroes, who do an extraordinary job for society. Their work is essential and too often overlooked.

By the way, I was a little surprised to see people's reaction to the events of September 11. Firefighters were transformed into heroes, as if they had not been heroes before September 11. Of course, the attacks of September 11, 2001, really highlighted the heroism of these people, but they were already heroes before that; they were already people who deserved to be honoured and protected as much as possible, especially by legislation, such as that which the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will be studying very soon.

Thus, it was certainly time to do this. I had one problem, which I pointed out, with the various sentences provided for in Bill C-269. I will simply say that the Bloc Québécois will work very seriously so that firefighters, the men and women who risk their lives in the service of others, will be protected and at the same time, that the sentences for criminal acts should be appropriate, not only in terms of our constitutional law, but also in terms of the protection provided by the charter and the general principles of the Criminal Code.

We are pleased to support this legislation; we will work hard in committee to ensure that it becomes law, so that firefighters get the recognition and the protection they deserve. This is not a demand they are making; this is something they deserve. It is not a privilege but something we owe them.

In that sense, I think it is one of the major pieces of legislation I will have worked on in my career on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Thus, I can assure the hon. members here present and all the firefighters watching and listening today that we will do everything we can so that they have the protection they need in order to do their work, which is to protect us and rescue us.

● (1805)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak in support of Bill C-269, which no longer exists as the subject matter has been referred to committee. I hope that out of that referral to committee will come a new bill embodying the intent of Bill C-269, although it may not be identical and some improvements might be made to it.

Whatever the case may be, I want to indicate my own support as a private member for the bill as it existed, and I think I can speak for all my colleagues in the NDP as well. We hope that some day this will become law. We hope that the committee process will be fruitful and produce a new bill, perhaps a government bill. We hope to implement what the hon. member, who introduced this private member's bill today, is looking for and what many members of Parliament have been arguing for over the years, and certainly what firefighters have been arguing for over the years.

Firefighters come here every year for their national lobby. In fact, they were just here recently. I am happy to report, as I am sure many are, that some progress has been made on issues of importance to firefighters. I have seen some progress myself over the years, and most recently in the budget with the changes to the pension accrual regulations and the Criminal Code amendments having to do with booby traps. Firefighters have also been looking for these changes. The bill takes that promotion one step further and talks about penalties for people who deliberately set fires that ultimately end up endangering firefighters or in the worst case scenario, resulting in the death of firefighters.

The bill is supportable. We in the NDP hope that the committee will do its work expeditiously. We know that the justice committee is a busy place. Having sat on that committee for a while I know just how busy it is. We look forward to the day when the proper procedural successor to Bill C-269 is before the House in the form of a government bill and we can finally implement what firefighters have long requested of this Parliament. I look forward to that day.

● (1810)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand to support Bill C-269 as put forward by the member for Nepean—Carleton. The purpose of the bill is to give greater protection to firefighters by creating two new offences of aggravated assault and first degree murder when the victim is a firefighter acting in the course of his or her duties.

Those on the front lines need the support of government and positive changes to the Criminal Code can send a strong message to those who willingly or unwillingly endanger the lives of these brave men and women.

Private Members' Business

The member for Nepean—Carleton is to be commended for his work on this file. Bill C-269 would amend the Criminal Code to give greater protection to firefighters acting in the line of duty. Essentially these amendments would recognize the importance of their services and could potentially act as a deterrent for those considering nefarious activities which could potentially injure a firefighter. This is extremely important.

As well as the practical application of the law to indicate the seriousness of these types of offences, there is a symbolic recognition when we investigate on grounds of inclusion. Presently, we have Criminal Code applications which recognize police officers injured in the line of duty and the bill puts firefighters on an equal footing.

The argument could also be made to include paramedics and ambulance drivers, et cetera, in a bill of this sort. These front line first responders often find themselves in dangerous, life threatening situations. I ask members, if they hear of an accident or come upon an accident and they stay around, who is always the first on the scene? We quite often find that it is the firefighter who is the first person on the scene.

Should the bill pass, those considering an act of arson would need to think twice and those who rewire their homes to facilitate marijuana growing operations would need to carefully consider whether or not the risk is worth it. Clause 3(1.1) of the bill states:

Every one commits an aggravated assault who wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of a firefighter acting in the course of his or her duties.

If adopted, anyone convicted of the crime would be guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years. Some may believe this to be extreme. However, it would send a clear message to those who would consider this type of criminal activity. It would tell those in that category that this type of behaviour would not be tolerated.

Canadian firefighters put their lives at risk to save ours and it becomes important that we recognize the sacrifices they are willing to make on our behalf. The role of firefighters in rural communities takes on a new meaning when we consider these men and women are volunteers. They live and work in their community. They are our friends and neighbours. On evenings and weekends they take part in training that will hopefully aid in the protection of their lives. It also ensures that they have the ability to aid in the protection of our lives and our properties.

It is fitting for all of us not only to ensure we support our firefighters but also volunteer firefighters. These people work without any recompense whatsoever. They train on their own time and if there is any kind of a problem, a fire or any incident where they are required, it is amazing how many turn up on the scene despite trying to make a living in other avenues of society.

Clause 4 of the bill would add section 433.1 to the Criminal Code. It reads:

Every person who intentionally or recklessly causes damage by fire or explosion to property, whether or not that person owns the property, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life where the fire or explosion causes death or bodily harm to a firefighter who is acting in response to the fire or explosion.

Under section 433.2, the court would be directed to interpret life imprisonment as noted in 433.1 as a minimum punishment. This would send a clear message to those who would perpetrate such a crime. This type of criminal behaviour would not and should not be tolerated.

As with all legislation, nothing is perfect and closer examination of the bill will be needed at the committee stage, and in context with the latest legislation offered by the government in the form of Bill C-32.

●(1815)

However we can all agree that legislation of this type is long overdue. The International Association of Fire Fighters has pushed for legislation of this sort and I am encouraged to see the government finally has recognized the contribution that members of the IAFF play in the daily lives of Canadians.

I would like to take the opportunity to address some of the issues as they pertain to Bill C-32. It is important that we recognize the dangers Canada's firefighters face.

Bill C-32 would amend the code by adding provisions to the existing section of the Criminal Code that deal with setting a trap. The legislation adds provisions for setting a trap used in a place kept for criminal purpose, which is likely to cause bodily harm, with a 10 year maximum prison sentence. It is important to recognize that the legislation, and in particular this portion of the government's bill, seems to stem from the introduction of the member for Nepean—Carleton private member's bill.

If a trap used in a criminal enterprise, such as a drug operation, causes bodily harm, the legislation calls for a 14 year maximum sentence and life imprisonment if a trap causes death. Frontline firefighters have to be protected from this growing danger. The nature of these criminal activities create a risk of fire with volatile chemicals used in drug labs and electric power stolen through unsafe meter bypasses. If firefighters and police officers are put at risk, injured or killed by traps set to defend these criminal enterprises from law enforcement or rival gangs, those who set the traps must feel the full weight of the law.

While this specifically deals with the setting of traps, I believe its inclusion and subsequent maximum imprisonment for 14 years, and life imprisonment if death occurs, sends a strong message.

Amendments to the criminal code of this sort are long overdue and I would encourage the government to take a closer look at initiatives brought forth by the International Association of Fire Fighters. It is time that government truly recognized the sacrifice made by those on the frontlines, in a substantial way.

One other thing we should remember also is that when these people are killed, and there are times when they are, the benefits to their families are meagre. We have to ensure that we put in place an insurance policy that looks after family members of firefighters killed in action.

This private member's bill is definitely one we in the Progressive Conservative Party can truly support.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure today to commend my colleague from Nepean—Carleton on this initiative. It is an overdue initiative that we should have taken a long time ago.

The world as we knew it a couple of years ago completely changed after September 11. The people who responded first were the ambulance attendants, the firefighters and the police.

Just recently in my riding there was another devastation, and that was SARS. The people who were on the frontline were the nurses, the ambulance attendants, the firefighters and the police officers. It is these people who we have to recognize and we have to have legislation in place to protect them. If we do not have legislation that protects the frontline workers, who are there to protect us, then in my opinion we are failing.

I rise today to speak on the bill and to congratulate my colleague from Nepean—Carleton for bringing this forth. I just hope when it goes to committee that we look to extending it a little more to include ambulance attendants.

The act is an act to amend the Criminal Code, firefighters. It seeks to give greater protection to firefighters by amending five sections of the Criminal Code and creating two new criminal offences of aggravated assault and first degree murder when the victim is a firefighter acting in the line of duty.

Currently, section 231 of Canada's Criminal Code specifically refers to the death of a peace officer while acting in the line of duty. However we do not have similar legislation that provides a specific provision on increased penalties to deter criminal acts that jeopardize the lives or safety of fire workers. The bill would address this omission.

The bill would make it an indictable offence to intentionally or recklessly cause damage to property by fire explosion which results in the death of or serious bodily harm to firefighters acting in the line of duty. Anyone found guilty under this amendment would be sentenced to life imprisonment.

There is similar legislation in other parts of the world, especially in the United States, in the states of California, Nevada and Georgia to mention a few.

However I would like to leave some thoughts with my colleagues as we move the bill to committee stage. We should expand this to also include people who work as ambulance attendants. When there is an accident, when there is a fire, when there is any sort of emergency situation, we have the ambulance that responds, the firefighters and the police. We have moved one step to include in this bill the firefighters. When the bill goes to committee, we should seriously think about including the ambulance attendants, because as well as the firefighters they are the first people to respond when it is an emergency situation.

In closing, I would also like to lend my support to the bill and I thank my colleague from Nepean—Carleton for bringing this forth today. I express my sincere wishes that when it goes to committee, we look to include the ambulance attendants.

• (1820)

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. members who have spoken on this issue. The hon. member for Surrey Central, the hon. member for St. John's West, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona, the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt and the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier.

What we have heard during the course of the debate is a clear indication of sympathy on behalf of hon. members for the principles of the bill, specifically as they relate to the issue of first degree murder and the provisions within the bill which would provide for any firefighter killed in the line of duty as a result of an act of arson in having that first degree murder conviction apply.

I had the opportunity to go over very briefly one of the Supreme Court cases that deals with the issue of intent, which is really central to this whole concept of first degree murder, and whether it should apply and whether objective foreseeability should be something that is part of the construct which goes into a first degree murder charge. Obviously under our Criminal Code it is one of the most serious crimes that can be committed. There are a number of fairly complex legal issues that have to be dealt with in relation to that issue.

I have had the opportunity to speak to the chair of the justice committee as well the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice. In the course of the committee's deliberations on this, I very much hope that we have a thorough examination of the issue. Hopefully we will have representatives from the Department of Justice to go through some of these legal issues for us. Hopefully as well we will have representatives from the International Association of Fire Fighters who obviously have a very significant interest in this legislation and moving the bar forward in terms of the protection of firefighters. I would like to see that happen. If necessary, I would like the committee to take as much time as it needs to flesh out these issues so perhaps we can build on what already exists in Bill C-32.

As I mentioned in the past, some American states, as the previous hon. member mentioned, have protections for firefighters in place. Now granted, the U.S. justice system is significantly different from our justice system in terms of the charter of rights, how we interpret that and their bill of rights and how the Americans interpret that in terms of the constitutional rights that have grown up over time in the United States. Obviously from that standpoint, a direct comparison is not always appropriate. What is important is the Americans have been able to extend protections to firefighters in a significant way.

From the comments of members on both sides of the House of Commons, there is a general desire to do the same thing here in Canada. I would suggest we try to do at the committee. I suggest we examine very carefully some of these legal issues so if there is a way to extend this protection to firefighters, then we can do that in a constructive way.

I will also indicate through the Chair that I will be following those committee deliberations very closely and I will also have some questions for the legal experts on this. Not only do members of the House want to see the objective to provide greater protection for firefighters achieved, but the people of Canada would like to see it happen just as soon as is practically possible.

Private Members' Business

• (1825)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): There are four minutes left. Is there unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Pursuant to the order adopted earlier today the motion that Bill C-269 be not now read a second time and that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights is deemed adopted.

(Motion deemed adopted, order discharged, bill withdrawn and subject matter referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Pursuant to Standing Order 81 (4), the motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been withdrawn. The House will now resolve itself into committee of the whole to study all votes under Health in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004. I do now leave the chair for the House to resolve itself into committee of the whole.

[Editor's Note: For continuation of proceedings see Part B]

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CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 138 • NUMBER 101 • 2nd SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 13, 2003
Part B

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

(Editor's Note: Continuation of proceedings from Part A)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

HEALTH—MAIN ESTIMATES, 2003-04

(Consideration in committee of the whole of all votes under Health in the main estimates, Mr. Kilger in the chair)

The Chair: Order, please. House in committee of the whole on all votes under Health in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004. The hon. member for Yellowhead.

• (1830)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chair, it is a great opportunity having the minister here to answer some questions with regard to the estimates. We tried to have her appear before committee over the last number of weeks but we were blocked. However since she will not go to the committee it is great to see committee go to her. She is here now with her delegation of officials and we certainly expect to hear some answers this evening.

I will start by talking a bit about the health accord and what has happened with it. I think Canadians have applauded the accord in the sense that we are finally giving some money back to health care. Health care has received a little breath of fresh air in the sense that the federal government has stepped up to the plate with some of the dollars it pulled away from health care in the mid-1990s.

We agree with a number of things contained in the accord. New cash infusion is great. We said that provincial flexibility to implement those new programs had to be there, and the accord agreed with that. We also said that restoring some of the funding to core health services needed to be there and that there had to be no restriction on alternative delivery within that public system. All of that was achieved with the accord.

We told the government that it had to stop the funny money and that it had to stop trying to discern how much money was going from the federal government to health care. We said that the CHST had to be separated so we would know exactly how many dollars were or were not going in, because that seemed to be a real sore spot. Every time we asked the federal government how much money it was putting in we always received mixed numbers. Hopefully some transparency will now be added to that. Canadians put in \$112.5

billion last year, which is a horrendous amount of money, and they need to know and deserve to know where that money is being spent.

We have identified some shortcomings in the health accord. They are actually shortcomings from the Romanow commission's report as well as from some of the other commissions that dealt with this issue. Very little action was taken with regard to waiting lists and the shortage of health care workers.

We in the Canadian Alliance have been saying for a long time that Canadians need some guarantees. If Canadians have no trouble putting \$112 billion into health care then they need some guarantee of services. They also need a guarantee that they will not die while on a waiting list.

The former finance minister, the member for LaSalle-Émard, made some interesting comments on CTV's *Question Period* with regard to the problems with the health accord. I get very nervous when I hear an individual, who could potentially become the next prime minister of this country, saying that the accord might be scrapped. This is the same minister who pulled the money away from health care in the mid-1990s. It makes me quite nervous to hear that the accord is not adequate.

I wonder if the health minister agrees that the accord does not address these problems. Has she been talking to the former finance minister about this? Was there any dialogue between them? Is this a recommendation coming from her or is this a recommendation just from him? I would like to start with those questions.

• (1835)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I think all of us on the government side see the first ministers accord reached on February 4 as a singular achievement in terms of making sure that our publicly financed health care system is here for Canadians for the future and is an efficient and sustainable system.

However before we go any further I would like to clarify one thing. I think the hon. member for Yellowhead suggested that the former finance minister, the member for LaSalle-Émard, said that he would scrap the accord. I want to go on record that no such statement, to my knowledge, has ever been made by the member for LaSalle-Émard. While he may very well have made comments in relation to health care, I think we need to keep the record as straight as possible here and not have allegations and things flying back and forth.

Supply

From the government's point of view, the accord is a singular achievement that speaks to not only an infusion of significant new dollars from the federal taxpayer, some \$34.8 billion over the next five years to help the provinces and territories deliver health care, but it points us toward the structural reform that has to take place if our system is to be sustained and renewed.

For example, it speaks to the importance of primary health care renewal. It speaks to the importance of the inclusion of home care in the continuum of care. It speaks to the challenge that exists for some Canadians around catastrophic drug coverage. It speaks to the importance of technology and the assessment of that technology. It speaks to the development of a national human resource strategy that will deal with important issues in the provinces and territories around the number of doctors, the distribution of doctors, the number of nurses, the distribution of nurses, the nurse practitioners and the curriculum necessary to train them in this new multi-disciplinary team world of the 21st century.

Mr. Chair, in this process do I get to talk for as long as I want or will you tell me to sit down soon?

•(1840)

The Chair: Probably I would give you a little more time, but it would be my intention to—

Hon. Anne McLellan: To tell me to sit down?

The Chair: It is probably not a bad idea. We have five hours so I would not want you to get foot weary so early in the session.

Hon. Anne McLellan: I know we have a long way to go this evening so I will conclude by saying that the government stands behind the first ministers accord, not only do we stand behind it but we see it as an absolutely singular sign post in terms of the sustainability and renewal of our health care system.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Chair, if we want to set the record straight, it was the former finance minister who pulled the money out in the 1990s and suggested that the accord did not adequately deal with a couple of the issues: the waiting lists and the shortage of physicians and health care workers across the country. Now the minister is saying that has been dealt with in the accord, and that \$90 million is in there for a study on how to distribute those, but does not really address them.

I am wondering what is happening here. It was the former finance minister who actually gutted the system because of the shortcomings in the accord and now we have the minister saying that the accord deals with all those problems.

Is the minister agreeing with the former finance member, the member for LaSalle—Émard, that there are shortcomings in the accord, or does she see the health accord as being totally adequate?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, the health accord was a singular achievement of this government and first ministers at provincial, territorial and federal levels of government. In fact, the accord speaks to not only an infusion of new money, because we know that new money alone will not bring about the changes that have to take place, but it also describes the necessary structural change.

If the hon. member is suggesting that the challenges the accord addresses will not be resolved overnight, yes, of course he is right. We know Canadians have identified access as their number one

issue. They want access to a family practitioner or the appropriate health care provider when they need that person, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We know that.

We also know that Canadians see waiting lists as part of that access, especially seniors who are on a waiting list for a knee replacement, hip replacement or other kinds of operations or treatments, such as radiation therapy or chemotherapy. However we will not be able to deal with those issues unless we bring about the structural change that is mentioned in the accord.

It is illusory to suggest that this large, complex, dynamic health care system can be turned around on a dime regardless of how much money we put into the system. It needed more money and we put more money in. It needs structural change and that structural change is set out in the accord. It will take time but that change will lead to addressing Canadians' issues around accessibility, including waiting lists.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chair, the fact is that waiting lists are getting longer. We had the Canadian Institute for Health Information pointing out that in Quebec the waiting list for breast cancer surgery has gone from 29 to 42 days. Special note was made of that.

I think the concern Canadians have, and frankly what the former finance minister is saying, is that the health accord is not addressing these issues. It is fine to say that we are getting it on track, but in the meantime people are waiting for vital surgery and the lists are getting longer and longer. The question is, when the former finance minister becomes prime minister, as he almost certainly will, will she recommend to him that we change this accord to start to address some of those issues and some of the facts that the former finance minister himself has pointed out? That is the question.

•(1845)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, as far as I am concerned, this accord addresses the issue of accessibility, one part of which is the question of waiting lists, but in fact we have to get the structural change right. For example, there are waiting lists in terms of getting to a GP; people get to a GP before they can be referred to a specialist. How do we deal with that? There are a number of things. For example, we need more family physicians, so in fact that is why we are working with the provinces and the territories to create a national human health resources strategy. Then we will have in place the diagnostic material to help us know how many doctors are needed and where they are needed, how many nurses are needed and where they are needed.

Members can look at the accord and part of what we are doing around primary health care, practice and multidisciplinary teams, how much time is taken up by general practitioners, family physicians, in our health care system who are doing what I would describe as important but routine clerical work? How much of it is taken up in seeing patients who in fact should see a nurse or a nurse practitioner and do not need to see that GP?

In fact it is very short-sighted to suggest that the accord does not deal with important issues of accessibility, including waiting lists. Of course it does. I wish we could snap our fingers and magically turn this dynamic, complex system around on a dime, but what we need to do is identify the problems. Is accessibility, including waiting lists, a problem? Of course. Then we work back and ask how we deal with that. There are no magic bullets. We deal with it through structural change. We deal with it through an infusion of new dollars.

We deal with it through the application of technology and the better use of technology. There is a complex set of tools that we in this system need to use to deal with the question of accessibility. That is what the accord speaks to.

And, Mr. Chair, the last time I checked, you ran this place, not the member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Chair, that is interesting rhetoric about how to fix the system and the minister is in a perfect position to be able to impact that. I would challenge her to get on with the job and stop the rhetoric that we have seen over the last decade.

Let us talk about that last decade a little bit. There has never been a government in Canada, provincially or federally, that accepted to or recommended to or pulled money away from health care, except for one party and one minister of finance. That is the party over there, which actually gutted the health care system in the middle of the 1990s. This is my question for the minister. She sat around that cabinet table for the budget in 1995. I am asking her how she voted on that budget. Would she do it again if that same budget were here today?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I am a member of the government. In 1995 we faced an enormous situation in terms of dealing with the deficit and the debt. In fact, there were some in the international financial community that described us as virtually a third world nation, thanks to 10 years of Progressive Conservative economic mismanagement. So yes, that was in 1995, and in fact the official opposition was one of the most strident voices in this place and across this country in terms of getting our economic house in order.

That is exactly what we did and everybody in this country sacrificed. Everybody in this country gave something up. If the hon. member is saying that as part of getting our house in order so that we are now this economic miracle that the rest of the world turns to, yes, everybody sacrificed, including cuts in transfer payments to the provinces. At this point, rather than focus on the past, because we knew what we had to do, we had the courage to do it and we did it, let us now move forward. Let us look to the future. We are reinvesting in health care and we started reinvesting in health care in a major way in September 2000.

• (1850)

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Chair, I would like to try to focus these questions and ask a relatively simple question so that the minister will not have to go on at length. The former finance minister said that loss of medical personnel to the states was not the biggest problem; it was in fact loss in Canada, with the Maritimes losing positions and nurses to other parts of the country. Does the minister agree with that statement?

Supply

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, there is no question that health human resources is a very important issue and challenge for our health care system. That is why in fact in the health accord that matter was dealt with in relation to providing funding so that we can work with the provinces and the territories whose issue this primarily is, so we can work with them to put in place a national health human resources strategy. Part of that strategy is identifying how many doctors in the various areas we need and are likely to need, and the distribution of those doctors.

In fact there is no question, and it has been identified by small provinces, poorer provinces than our own, as the hon. member for Macleod knows, that there are issues around distribution, especially of health care specialists. We need to address that. We cannot turn a blind eye if the only pediatric cardiac specialist in all of Atlantic Canada is attracted away to another part of the country. We cannot ignore that fact. What we have to do is say that there are pressures as it relates to health human resources. Of course we cannot nor would we want to deny anyone mobility, as that is silly in our country, but on the other hand we have to acknowledge the fact that some regions and some communities find it harder to keep various kinds of health specialists than others and we have to address that as part of our health human resources strategy.

We may be able to do a little of it through tele-health and through robotics. Amazing things are happening, as we saw with McMaster in North Bay and robotic surgery. There are a host of things we can do to help communities, but if the hon. member is saying that the distribution of health human resources is an issue in our country, yes, of course it is.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, I did try to keep my question brief and hoped for a brief answer. Maybe if I ask a longer question I could get a short answer. Let me ask about one other issue. I am going to change topics here. One of the things that brought me to Parliament is that physicians in Canada pay GST and cannot deduct it. Does the minister think that that is fair?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, this is an issue that physicians have brought to my attention. I can only say that at this point the law is the way it is. I think what we will continue to do is discuss this issue with physicians. The hon. member knows that I am not the Minister of Finance and therefore I am not in a position to provide an answer to that question, but certainly we are well aware of the concern of physicians and I will continue to make the Minister of Finance aware of the concern of physicians as it relates to GST.

We have been able to make some changes in this budget as it relates to the GST around hospitals and those issues that have been brought to our attention by the hospital association in this country, but physicians, no, we have not dealt with that issue.

The Chair: The Chair would now recognize a member from the governing party if someone would choose to rise at this time.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Chair, does this mean that I get to speak now?

Supply

An hon. member: Don't forget the birthday.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, may we wish the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve a happy birthday.

First, Mr. Chair and hon. colleagues, I do want to introduce my officials who are here this evening because this will be a long night for all of us. Let me introduce Ian Green, my deputy minister; Ian Shugart, assistant deputy minister of health policy and communications; and Patrick Borbey, assistant deputy minister of corporate services at Health Canada. I thank all three of them, as I know my colleagues do, for being here this evening.

This is an opportunity to focus on issues of profound importance to every one of us: our health and our health care system and the role Health Canada plays in protecting and sustaining both those things.

We know that Canadians are strongly committed to their health care system and they have told us that they care deeply about the basic values at the heart of this system: equity and fairness. Therefore, any actions we take must be measured against these values. This is what Canadians want and this is what the Government of Canada, working together with the provinces and territories, must achieve.

[*Translation*]

I will start with a description of the context within which the government addresses health issues in general, and will then move on to the key components of our strategic priorities for this fiscal year.

The point of departure is the mandate of Health Canada, which consists in helping the people of Canada to maintain and improve their health.

• (1855)

[*English*]

As we all know, this is not a role that we can fulfill alone. All levels of government have important and complementary responsibilities in health, as do communities, the people working in our health system, primarily those on the front line, and individual Canadians.

Before I go on, I would like to take a moment to thank the many doctors, nurses and other health care professionals who have worked tirelessly without hesitation and in some cases at great personal sacrifice during these past two months. Their heroic efforts have helped ensure that SARS has been brought under control in Canada. Since this week is nurses week, I would like to say a special thanks to Canada's more than 100,000 nurses for the significant contributions they make every day to our quality of life.

Let me also highlight the excellent work of Health Canada's scientists, microbiologists, epidemiologists and others working in Ottawa and across the country. The crucial work of scientists at Health Canada's National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg toward identifying the SARS associated coronavirus and in isolating genetic material from the virus was essential to the subsequent sequencing of the genome by the Genome Sciences Centre. I cannot overstate the importance of the contributions of Health Canada scientists working with their outstanding colleagues across the country.

The Government of Canada has clearly defined responsibilities in health which are anchored in collaborative work with others. Health Canada carries out these responsibilities through five broad roles. Let me take a moment to review these roles before speaking more specifically about some of Health Canada's priorities.

In relation to time, and I realize that there are undoubtedly questions my colleagues want to ask, I will not go into a lot of detail in terms of our roles. First, clearly we are a leader and a partner and this is demonstrated in part through Health Canada's responsibility to administer the Canada Health Act.

Second, we also have the role as funder. As we know, the federal government is a major contributor to health care through the Canada Health and Social Transfer. In 2003-04 transfers for health and social programs will total almost \$38 billion.

Third, we have a combined role of guardian and regulator. Health Canada has been mandated by Parliament to protect Canadians against risks to health presented by health products, food and consumer goods. Furthermore, the department is now taking into account the broader smart regulation strategy that seeks to enhance Canada's place as a home for innovation while maintaining our standards for safety and stewardship.

Fourth, we have a service provider role. Health Canada is responsible for delivering health promotion, disease prevention and health care services to Canada's first nations and Inuit, making the Government of Canada the fifth largest health care budget in the country.

Fifth, we have a role as information provider. Canadians expect their federal government to provide reliable health information that they can use to maintain and improve their health.

As hon. members here this evening will have noticed from Health Canada's report on plans and priorities, we have identified five corporate priorities for the next three fiscal years. These priorities respond to current and emerging health issues as well as to government wide commitments. They are: health care system renewal; first nations and Inuit health; safety and health protection; balancing the health agenda; and improving accountability to Canadians. Let me briefly turn to each and discuss some of their major elements.

We spoke already this evening about health care system renewal. Our medicare system reflects some of the basic values of Canadians: the belief that all Canadians are entitled to quality health care based on need and not ability to pay; the conviction that no one should risk losing his or her life savings because that person becomes ill; and a determination to share the cost of health care through a publicly administered system.

These values are fundamental to the Government of Canada, as well as to the governments of the provinces and territories. Governments agree that our medicare system needs to change to reflect new challenges and new opportunities. That need was at the heart of the first ministers' health accord of last February. We have already talked about aspects of that, so I will reiterate that as a result of the accord Canadians will see fundamental structural changes to Canada's health care system over the next five years. Canadians will see improved accountability and they will witness firsthand how their money is changing and improving the system.

● (1900)

I would be remiss if I did not point out the important role that the Romanow commission, the Senate committee, the Kirby committee, and the many other studies that individual provinces commissioned in recent years played in the accomplishments found in the accord. The work of those commissions helped to clarify the direction government should take to meet Canadians expectations of an effective, efficient and accountable health care system.

I do however want to say a few words about the health council which in fact I know many hon. members are very interested in. My colleague, Nova Scotia's Minister of Health, the Hon. Jane Purves and I recently announced that an unexpected combination of issues, in particular the outbreak of SARS, have led to a short delay in finalizing the work surrounding the health council. Having said that, I want to reassure everyone in the House that we are making serious progress and I expect the announcement of the shape and work of the health council to take place within a few weeks.

Let me briefly turn to a second key priority for my department and that is first nations and Inuit health. Closing the obvious and troubling gap in health status between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians is a continuing priority for our government.

As I noted earlier, when it comes to expenditures, my department is the fifth largest provider of direct health care services in this country. That results in our having the same need to get the best results from finite resources that our provincial and territorial partners have within their own health care systems.

The first ministers' health accord recognized this role. The Government of Canada followed through in budget 2003 with \$1.3 billion new dollars in funding dedicated to first nations and Inuit health programs. This will help ease the fiscal pressures on health services and programs for first nations and Inuit, and provide much needed new money for nursing and capital development on reserves. The funding will also support the development of a first nations immunization strategy for on reserve children.

Beyond these and other initiatives my department is working with our partners in aboriginal communities, other federal departments, and the provinces and territories to improve the quality of primary care, prevention and health promotion services. We will continue to be engaged with our partners through community based initiatives such as healthy child development and chronic disease prevention efforts.

I have talked about two of our priorities. The third priority is safety and health protection. Achieving positive health results for all

Supply

Canadians requires efforts to protect Canadians against risks to health presented by consumer product and disease.

Accordingly, the third Health Canada priority is safety and health protection. There has been a great deal of attention to this area in the past few weeks as we have taken on the challenges of SARS and West Nile virus. The work here goes much further. For example, it includes our legislative responsibility to regulate the safety and efficacy of therapeutic products. This is a function that brings together varied commitments and responsibilities. We are working to respond to the needs of Canadians for quick access to new drugs, treatments and medical devices while at the same time protecting Canadians against the marketing of unsafe and ineffective products.

We are increasing our focus on emergency preparedness in a time that continues to be volatile so that we are prepared to respond to potential threats related to bioterrorism or an outbreak of an emerging or re-emerging infectious disease. This scope of responsibility is reflected in the wide range of activities undertaken in the federal government's response to the recent outbreak of SARS.

I want to say a few words about the work that Health Canada is taking in relation to West Nile virus. Health Canada was a key and instrumental partner with the provinces and local public health authorities in the fight against SARS.

● (1905)

Again, let me commend those on the front lines, especially in the city of Toronto, as we controlled and contained that outbreak and became a model for the WHO in relation to how other countries could go about controlling containment. However, in the world in which we live we now have a new challenge posed by West Nile virus.

In close collaboration with the provinces we are moving forward with national surveillance, attention to the safety of Canada's blood supply, and diagnostic testing. We continue to invest in public education, partnerships with first nations communities at risk, and the assessment of commonly used pesticides and insect repellants.

Let me briefly touch upon our fourth key priority in our three year business plan which is balancing the health agenda. This commitment is based on a simple reality that factors ranging from our living and working conditions to our community support networks and to our individual health practices all combine to affect the state of our health. The more we can effectively influence these factors and take action on disease prevention, health protection and promotion, the more we can improve the long term health of Canadians and reduce the burden on our health care system.

Supply

Accordingly, the 2002 Speech from the Throne included a commitment to encourage healthy living, physical activity and illness prevention. We are engaged in transforming that commitment into action with a particular focus on building a collaborative healthy living strategy. The resulting strategy will provide the support Canadians need to improve their health and reduce health disparities.

The final priority set out in the report on plans and priorities is improving accountability to Canadians. It is one that I have implicitly incorporated throughout my comments this evening. Accountability is critical in demonstrating to Canadians how well we serve them using their tax dollars.

The federal health agenda is based on partnerships achieving results. While there are clear and well known areas of direct federal responsibility in health, we are taking action across our agenda with a clear commitment to working with others: with the provinces and territories; with health professionals and workers; with colleagues in other countries; with researchers; and with communities and individual Canadians.

We have an ambitious agenda, but given the importance of health issues to Canadians and to the quality of life for everyone in this country, an ambitious agenda is precisely what we should have. I am confident that the plans and priorities described in this year's main estimates document will go a long way toward meeting the needs of Canadians.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for her speech. It is true that there are those who think that absence makes the heart grow fonder, but this evening affords us the opportunity to ask the minister some questions since she has been a rare sight in the Standing Committee on Health in recent years.

As you know, there is no issue more important than health. This is shown in opinion polls, moreover. It transcends any partisan considerations and reflects a social phenomenon. It is not uncommon for us to meet constituents who are 97, 98, 99 or 100 years old. Now as well as referring to the elderly, we also refer to the old elderly. This will, of course, present a challenge for public administrations in the way they will organize the health care system.

Of course, health care delivery is not a direct federal responsibility, except for the aboriginal people, armed forces personnel and some other specific categories. It is a provincial responsibility.

I have a few questions for the minister. In the last budget, for 2003, \$34 billion was announced over five years for health care modernization and reform. If I counted right, the federal government used the occasion to announce—I have re-read the budget documents in the past two days—nine new health care initiatives. This leaves potential for interference, which the Bloc Québécois will be keeping a close eye on. The minister tends to be somewhat centralist, as she knows.

I will mention each of the funds because our constituents may not know them as well as we do. They may not have had the opportunity to read the budget documents, which can be a source of personal growth if one does not rush through them. I will list the nine funds,

and I will ask the minister to specify what the role of these funds is and how much was allocated to Quebec. I would greatly appreciate it if she would be kind enough to send my office a list of the projects approved.

Again, in order to make sure we all have the same information, there are nine funds, nine initiatives that were announced with the \$34 billion.

First, there is the health information technology fund, with \$600 million. I think that this fund will include telehealth, among other things.

Second, there is \$15 million for the Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment.

Third, there is \$20 million for patient security. I do not really understand what the purpose of this is; this would be an opportunity for the minister to provide details.

The fourth initiative is the governance and accountability fund, for \$115 million.

Fifth is \$15 million for the national immunization strategy. The minister referred to this earlier in connection with aboriginals, but I would like her to clarify.

Sixth is \$15 million for the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. From what I understand, if I read the budget properly, this is only for 2003.

Seventh is \$80 million for pharmaceutical management.

There is an issue of great concern to me, so much so that I submitted to the Standing Committee on Health a mandate concerning the whole issue of drug costs. As we know, drug costs are increasing by 15% each year. Even if the Romanow report, on page 203, says that there is no relationship between patents and the cost of drugs, the fact remains that, as parliamentarians, we will have to look into this.

I think that the role of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board and all the new drugs put on the market which have little therapeutic potential raise issues that will have to be reviewed.

Eighth is \$30 million for health planning, coordination and partnerships.

Ninth and last is \$89 million in connection with health services provided in official language minority communities. I think that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs also intervened in this respect.

My first question is this: could the minister update us on these initiatives and tell us how much of this funding went to Quebec? If this information is available—I understand that it is rather specialized information—she could send it to me at my office.

I have another question for her. The national HIV/AIDS strategy was implemented under the Conservatives. The annual budget for this strategy is \$42.2 million, and it has not been increased in 10 years.

Supply

•(1915)

Could the minister tell us what she intends to do about the strategy? I would imagine that she will agree that, in certain major urban centres, AIDS is the primary cause of death among individuals in a certain risk category.

There are my questions for the time being. When I have more time, I will ask more. I would appreciate answers that are both short and to the point.

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I take the hon. member's admonition seriously. His first question was not short. Let me deal with the second question first and then I will come back to his lengthier question because that will take me some time if he wants me to go through all the funds.

In relation to HIV-AIDS, the hon. member is absolutely right that our strategy at the moment is an annual amount of \$42.2 million. In fact that amount has not been increased over these past number of years. I have gone on record whenever I have met with national or local HIV-AIDS groups, for example from my own province of Alberta and my own city of Edmonton, that there is no question after the evaluation is done, which is ongoing at this very moment, I will be arguing very strenuously with my cabinet colleagues that we must increase the amount of money that goes into our annual national HIV-AIDS strategy.

I simply think that we know more today; science has helped us understand more about pharmaceutical interventions that help people live better lives and help them live longer while suffering with HIV-AIDS. We know there are gaps in our strategy. We know that more research needs to be done. We know that we need to put more emphasis on community support networks and support for families when a family member is suffering from HIV-AIDS.

I do not have to be convinced that more money is needed on an annual basis for the strategy. That is clear. It is a case of making sure that we do the evaluation which is required by Treasury Board, but more important, which is required because the community groups themselves are involved in that evaluation in identifying the gaps and the omissions. We must build on the good work that has been done especially by community based organizations and move forward.

The health committee is looking at this issue. I look forward to any recommendations that its members have for me in relation to how they think the strategy should be enhanced and built upon for the next phase.

The hon. member in his question worked through a number of funds that were identified in the first ministers accord in February. I do not know whether he wants me to go through them all, but I will identify a few and the hon. member can tell me to stop anytime he wants and I can send the information directly to his office.

He mentioned health services and official language minority communities. There is \$89 million over five years to implement a training and retention initiative for health professionals and a community networking initiative to improve health services to minority official language communities.

At this point I will take the opportunity to congratulate and thank the chairs of the two committees. Hubert Gauthier from St. Boniface General Hospital in Winnipeg chaired the francophone minority committee on behalf of Health Canada. Eric Maldoff chaired the English speaking minority committee in relation to the provision of health services. Their work and the work of colleagues within the government led to a budget provision that the member has rightly identified to assist both official language minority communities in relation to the areas I have outlined.

The member mentioned pharmaceuticals management. Budget 2003 provides \$190 million over the next five years to improve the timeliness of Health Canada's regulatory processes with respect to human drugs as an element of the overall health reform package. Access to safe, effective, new human drugs requires timely, efficient and scientifically rigorous review in all phases of the product cycle, including reviews and approvals by Health Canada.

This is an area to which I personally am very committed. We need to assess our existing drug approval process. We need to figure out how we move forward to ensure we have a globally benchmarked drug approval process that is second to none in the world, not only in terms of timeliness but obviously in terms of effectiveness, safety and cost effectiveness. That \$190 million will help us discharge those kinds of obligations.

•(1920)

The hon. member mentioned nine funds. I have details in relation to all nine, but I get the sense that the hon. member does not want me to go through all nine. I would be happy to send the information in writing to the hon. member's office for his consideration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Chair, I accept the minister's idea, particularly since I asked her a question on the funding for Quebec because she was listing what had been passed in the budget, which we already knew. I know that she meant well by sharing that information with us.

I will, however, raise some other questions because this is such a golden moment, to have a direct contact with a minister who was not know for faithfully attending the health committee. I will ask two more questions, if she is agreeable.

I contacted her about cigarette smuggling. I had received information that this was a common practice in certain parts of Canada, including some reserves. I was on the committee when we revisited the whole matter of mandatory labelling. I presented her with examples of cigarette packaging that did not meet the labelling requirements, as the standing committee required. The minister looked into this, and was suppose to get back to me. Perhaps she could take advantage of this opportunity to bring us up to date and reassure everyone, manufacturers and consumer associations alike, that there will not be two standards, that everyone will be subject to the same laws and regulations.

Supply

I have a second question on this aspect. The previous Government of Quebec was one of the best that ever served. I know my good friend, the member for Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles, may feel otherwise, but it was a good government. We will judge the new one according to what it comes up with. Can the minister tell us whether she has had representations to indicate whether the new health minister was any more kindly disposed to the reproductive technology bill than the old?

She will recall that, although serving as a go-between is not my style, I forwarded to her a letter in which the Government of Quebec opposed Bill C-13 on reproductive technologies. Has she received any representations that would indicate that the new government is any more in favour of it?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, there are three things.

The hon. member raised the question around Quebec's allocation from various funds. Again, I can send him the details, but let me make it clear for example that the health reform fund of \$16 billion over five years is a per capita fund, so it is easy to work out Quebec's allotment. The medical equipment fund is a per capita fund, therefore it is easy to work out Quebec's share of that fund. Some of the other funds or spending items that the hon. member identified are third parties. Canada Health Infoway receives an additional \$600 million. That goes to Canada Health Infoway, which is an entity separate and apart from the government, but one where dollars will be spent in the provinces, including Quebec, to build on the good work around things like electronic patient records and telehealth. That is ongoing.

I want the hon. member to be aware that some of the funds are per capita, which are easy to work out. Other items he has mentioned are third party entities. The dollars go there and certainly funding of specific projects will take place in the province of Quebec as in other provinces.

The hon. member referred to the cigarette packages. The member was very wise to bring this to my attention and I thank him very much for doing that.

Just the other day I had the opportunity to see some of the packages and the hon. member is absolutely right. They do not meet the labelling requirements.

After he brought it to my attention some time ago, I asked my department to begin an investigation because there are a host of issues involved with those packages of cigarettes, only one of which is around labelling. Labelling does of course speak to the fact that there are no health warnings on those packages as it relates to the dangers of cigarette smoking. Also, as far as I can tell, there is no indication of the substances; there is no information around what is contained. I think we probably have a safety issue in relation to the tobacco leaf, where it came from, how it was grown, whether it was sprayed with various things.

There are a host of issues that we need to look at in relation to those packages. I have asked my department to follow up on that. I thank the hon. member very much for bringing that to our attention.

The hon. member asked me about the creation of the agency in relation to our assisted human reproduction legislation and the

important challenge that many couples, a growing number of couples, face around infertility and their desire to start a family. There will be an agency created as proposed in the legislation. In fact this is the first time there will be any regulatory framework in this area. It is an area that needs some regulatory framework. The agency will be created as proposed in the legislation.

In Quebec, I have not had the opportunity to speak to the new minister of health, Mr. Couillard, in relation to his views around this agency, but I will be meeting with Mr. Couillard tomorrow in Montreal. I will certainly be more than interested in knowing the views of the new minister of health in relation to the creation of this agency.

• (1925)

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Chair, the minister should seek my presence more often. I am easy to work with and I am sure that in these types of discussions, even though I do not pretend to be an expert, I could help. I respect her desire for intimacy with the new minister, and I mean political intimacy, of course.

I would like to go back to the issue of the Krever commission. I think that the minister was not responsible for the Krever report at that time; she was Minister of Justice. You know how important the Krever report was to all parliamentarians, especially the first recommendation contained in the report. This commission of inquiry cost millions of dollars, but it was necessary. We know what happened in blood banks in the late 1980s.

The Krever commission recommended that there be a no fault compensation package. This recommendation created a lot of hope for Quebecers as well as for Canadians. The former Quebec minister, Pauline Marois, a most endearing woman—who, I should add, knows what the future has in store for her—and the previous provincial government had introduced a compensation package, a fund for those people who were infected through blood transfusions.

If I have had one disappointment in my public life, it was seeing how this government showed no empathy and no consideration for those who were infected. My question to the minister is this: what is she waiting for to follow up on the first recommendation of the Krever report, which calls for a compensation package for all those who were infected, regardless of the chronology of events? It would be a great act of humanity that would enhance her stature as a minister.

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, again the hon. member has raised a very serious question, one on which I do believe the government has shown some considerable humanity and compassion to choose his language.

We have committed approximately \$1.4 billion for compensating and assisting people infected with hepatitis C through the blood system. We as a federal government have paid \$875 million to fulfill our financial obligations to claimants under the 1986 to 1990 hepatitis C settlement agreement. In fact, this all flows directly from Krever.

An hon. member: Respond to the question.

Supply

Hon. Anne McLellan: I am responding in terms of what we as a government did. I understand the hon. member wants us to be more sensitive. In essence he is suggesting that our compensation plan has been inadequate. What I am saying is that in fact the government has committed over \$1.4 billion by way of compensation and assistance.

Not only have we paid the \$875 million to fulfill our financial obligations to claimants under the 1986 to 1990 settlement agreement, we also have put aside some \$525 million to provide care and improve blood regulation and surveillance. The \$525 million is largely to provide care for those individuals who were infected with hepatitis C before 1986 and after 1990. An important component of that funding is the undertaking agreement which provides a transfer of \$300 million to the provinces and territories for health care services to help ensure that individuals infected with hepatitis C do not incur out of pocket expenses.

Our plan is sensible. It is compassionate. It provides care to people living with hepatitis C.

• (1930)

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Chair, I appreciate this opportunity to ask the minister a number of questions. The challenge for me and my colleagues in the federal New Democrats was to decide on which particular issues we wanted to hone in on this evening because there are so many that we could raise in the course of 20 minutes. What I want to do is to put a number of issues on the table to the minister and then invite her to respond to them.

Before I get to some of the key questions I want to raise, I want to follow up on a question that my friend Mr. Ménard raised, and I believe that as we are in committee it is appropriate to use names.

The Chair: Just a moment, please. I just want to be clear that we still must make reference to each other's riding.

Mr. Svend Robinson: Very well, Mr. Chair.

I want to wish the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve bon anniversaire.

The member raised the issue of tobacco and labelling of cigarette packages. I want to ask the minister just to follow up on that, a very specific question.

Some time ago the minister's predecessor, the now Minister of Industry, promised to move ahead on the issue of the deceptive labelling of cigarettes with labels like "light" and "mild". That was a long time ago, in fact a number of years ago. I am wondering when the Minister of Health will finally honour that commitment and move ahead on this important question.

Why does she allow tobacco companies to continue to market in this deceptive and misleading way, labelling cigarettes as "mild" and "light", when she knows that this has an adverse impact particularly on younger people? When will she finally take action to put an end to this deceptive marketing practice that her predecessor promised to act on a long time ago?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, the hon. member is right in that my predecessor did indicate that he was going to take a look at the whole question of the "light" and "mild" descriptors on tobacco

product packaging. After that, consultations were put in place and research has been done in relation to a number of important areas.

I am going to be quite candid with the hon. member, as he would expect. We want to make sure that when we move in this area, we have the science to back up the decisions we take. Otherwise we know full well that we will be spending a lot of time in court and a lot of taxpayers' dollars. What I would like to do is make sure that we have the science in place and we have done the research so that we have a compelling argument in relation to the descriptors "light" and "mild" and therefore, we can withstand any challenge, including a charter challenge, in relation to these descriptors.

Let me tell the hon. member that I take this issue very seriously. My department takes it very seriously. I would be wrong if I said that the scientific inquiry is over. In fact, we do not have all the answers as a matter of science at this point. I am also looking at the experience of the European Union. It has taken a somewhat different approach in terms of how it has dealt with these descriptors. I am looking at the experience of Brazil. I am looking at the approaches of various countries and then what tobacco companies do—

Mr. Svend Robinson: Delay, delay, delay.

Hon. Anne McLellan: No, because then tobacco companies respond to those approaches. What I want to do is narrow the field, so that when we move we move in an effective way that deals with the real problem.

• (1935)

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Chair, frankly Canadians are appalled at that answer. We do not need endless scientific research to know that these labels are misleading. That is the issue here. We know very well that these labels imply to those who buy those cigarettes, mild or light cigarettes and so on, that somehow they are less hazardous to health than other cigarettes. That is simply not the case. I wonder how much longer it will take for the minister to show the kind of leadership that Canadians are looking for on that.

My first question to the minister is with respect to the issue of the health council that was promised by the first ministers. We were told that it would be in place by May 5 which was over a week ago. Then the minister said that it would be in place by the end of this month. Now I have heard her say a few more weeks.

Could the minister clarify just what the timeline is on that? Just as important, would the minister clarify what her objective is with respect to the composition of this council? Will she assure the House and Canadians that this will not be a body that is dominated by government, but in fact will be a body that is independent of government that can ask the kind of tough questions that have to be asked, for example, around the issue of public funding going into private for profit health care? That is the first question regarding the powers of the health council, the timing of it, and what she sees as the key issues concerning the composition.

I will put the three other questions and then perhaps she can respond to those. The second question is, how does the minister respond to the damning critique this morning of the President of the Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Dana Hanson, with respect to the failure of the government to move ahead on a public health system? Dr. Hanson said:

Supply

It has become abundantly clear that Canada's public-health system is ill-prepared to deal with rapidly spreading infectious diseases, let alone the more insidious chronic diseases that lie at the root of most morbidity in our society. Canada's public-health and acute-care systems do not have sufficient disease surveillance capacity to adequately anticipate such events, nor the health-care workforce flexibility to respond to sudden health crises or calamitous occurrences.

The auditor general said the same thing to the minister, as she knows, and her predecessor in 1999. How does the minister respond to these criticisms and what will she do to ensure that finally we see some federal leadership in the important issue of establishing a national public health strategy?

The area of medical marijuana is an area in which many Canadians are absolutely disgusted at the fact that the government has recognized that some Canadians in fact do need marijuana for medical purposes and that marijuana actually helps them to relieve the agony and the pain of some illnesses. Yet the government is in many cases forcing these people to obtain their marijuana illegally.

Does the minister not recognize that? I have been contacted by a number of Canadians on this issue. Permits have been issued to allow Canadians to grow their own marijuana for medical purposes, but in many cases people have to obtain the seeds or the plants illegally.

I want to ask the minister very specifically, why has the government not introduced legislation to allow Health Canada to produce safe and legal marijuana with standard THC content for patients that need it or at the very least to allow them to provide patients with seeds or plants so they can produce their own and not have to get it illegally?

The minister knows this is a concern. Some people using medical marijuana actually thought that the marijuana that was being grown in Manitoba would be made available to them. We were told that this was for research purposes, so that was not the case. Therefore they go to the back alleys and to illegal sources for that marijuana. Why is the government not acting on this important issue?

I have two other brief questions, one is on genetically engineered foods. I asked the minister on March 25, why will the government not move ahead and agree to the concerns of over 80% of Canadians who want mandatory labelling? They want to know what is in the food that they are eating. It is time the government stopped shilling for the biotech industry and allowed for mandatory labelling.

● (1940)

In her response to me about genetically engineered food and mandatory labelling this is what the minister said:

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.

The minister is completely out to lunch there. She said they are working with a board to see if we can get mandatory labelling and that we already have voluntary labelling. Could the minister clear that up and give some indication that she knows what she is talking about on this issue and explain why it is that, given the collapse of the voluntary process and they are trying again this week, she will not move ahead on mandatory labelling?

Finally, there is mental health. It is a scandal that mental health is not a government priority. The minister will know that there are only

10 professionals within Health Canada dealing with the issue of mental health. That is an outrage. Mental health should be a far higher priority. The minister knows that mental health problems result in the second highest hospital admissions after heart diseases and stroke. It is the top billing of general practitioners.

I want to ask the minister, when will she start taking mental health concerns seriously and when will she work with the Canadian Mental Health Association to put mental health issues front and centre in the health agenda in this country. I look forward to the responses.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, as I indicated in my comments, at the request of the minister of health from Ontario, who we all know has been working very hard on the front lines of SARS for these past number of weeks, the health council postponed a scheduled provincial-territorial-federal health minister's conference call to deal with the council.

I spoke with my co-chair, who is from the province of Nova Scotia, and she and I agreed that under the circumstances we wanted to ensure all our colleagues had the opportunity to participate. I would hope that no one would disagree that we should be willing to provide colleagues the opportunity to be prepared to participate in that discussion. That is why the meeting was cancelled from its scheduled time. However, I have made it plain, as has Minister Purves, that we hope to reschedule that conference call and in fact I would like to be able to do that some time next week.

Regarding the composition of the health council, the hon. member is right that we must ensure, as the first ministers' accord indicated, that stakeholders and public experts are represented in relation to the composition of the health council. This cannot be a council that is overburdened with government representatives. It is a council on which we have a wide variety of members representing different perspectives, backgrounds and abilities as it relates to health care in this country. One of the key aspects of whether this body will be credible or not is in terms of who is on this body and we cannot overburden it with so-called government representatives.

I did not read the comments this morning of Dr. Dana Hanson as condemnatory of public health in this country. Dr. Hanson and the CMA have expressed views before as they relate to public health infrastructure, and I take very seriously their constructive input into the public health infrastructure of this country. That is an infrastructure that needs to be national. It is an infrastructure that needs to be built by provinces, territories, local public health authorities, and the federal government. That is why we are working toward and have improved the integration of our public health infrastructure.

For example, since September 11 we have put in \$102 million directly into public health programs in order to enhance our capacity to deal with a range of public health measures, not just bioterrorism but other kinds of challenges such as SARS. This funding supports more advanced equipment in our labs, which we saw at work during the SARS outbreak, training for emergency health providers, stockpiles of drugs, vaccines, and emergency supply locations across Canada, and real-time information sharing on disease incidents.

Supply

This speaks to what the Auditor General and others have spoken about in terms of enhanced surveillance and how we do that surveillance. It follows that when we get the information from local public health authorities, that information must be shared so that everybody in the public health chain has that information and can work with it, and use it in ways that they see fit.

I also want to point out that coming out of our experience with SARS, I have asked Dr. David Naylor, who is the dean of the faculty of medicine at the University of Toronto, to head up what I describe broadly as a lessons learned exercise. Part of Dr. Naylor's recommendations and his committee's recommendations will be to deal with the public health infrastructure: what works, where the gaps are, and what we need to move forward. I have put in my own two cents worth, which is not unusual for me some would say, in relation to the fact that maybe we need a CDC-like national entity in this country that would become the focal point or the go-to place for a host of health issues, including infectious disease control.

Next is marijuana. I want to clarify this issue because there is a lot of misunderstanding. The hon. member has taken the opportunity to ask me on many occasions whether I and my department are discharging our obligation around drug approvals and medical devices, whether we are making sure we have rigorous clinical trials in place, and whether we are analyzing the results of those clinical trials to determine medicinal benefits and adverse effects.

• (1945)

I would expect the hon. member would demand exactly the same of me in relation to any claim around medicinal marijuana. The clinical trials have not been done to date. I have asked my department to search globally. The clinical trials that we are doing now in Toronto and in Montreal under the auspices of the CIHR, our open clinical trials, will probably be the most comprehensive clinical trials ever done in the world in relation to whether there are medicinal benefits from marijuana. We are the Department of Health. The hon. member would be outraged if we let somebody use some product for an alleged medicinal purpose without the clinical trials.

I will not be criticized for doing clinical trials to determine the medicinal benefits. In the clinical trials, both closed, in Toronto and Montreal, being run at McGill in the case of Montreal, marijuana is provided to those who are participating in the closed trials. The open trials can involve anyone who has an exemption under our regulatory regime. If they wish to participate in the open trials, marijuana will be provided to them so they do not need to worry about source of supply. Anyone who has an exemption, applied for and granted, can receive to participate in that open trial marijuana provided by us and marijuana, might I add, that has been tested and standardized so we know exactly the product with which we are dealing. We will be able to draw medically sound and scientifically based conclusions from those open trials.

I do apologize to the hon. member. I got my mandatory and my voluntary mixed up in the answer. Let me clarify for the hon. member and anyone else. We are working with the Standards Board in relation to voluntary labelling, and the hon. member says it is a failure. I and my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, are not ready to throw in the towel. We have asked, and my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, has even provided additional resources for the work to continue to see if we can reach some agreement around voluntary

labelling. However I understand that this is an important issue and I just want to reassure the hon. member that Health Canada, along with the CFIA, has a rigorous process in place for evaluating the safety of foods derived from biotechnology. We are not waiting for labelling to do that. That is part of our obligation.

Our regulations require that these products be reviewed by Health Canada prior to being sold in our country to ensure that there are no safety concerns. We will continue to examine our review processes for biotechnology derived products.

• (1950)

Mr. Svend Robinson: What about mental health?

Hon. Anne McLellan: The hon. member is probably aware that we participated in a fact finding exercise which recently resulted in the report on mental illnesses in Canada. This is the first statistical overview of mental illness in Canada and I would be the first to agree with the hon. member that this is a very serious question. Some people call it the orphan of the health care system. We are not different. It is true in other countries as well. That is no justification. We all realize that we need to ensure that mental health is integrated as a key component of our health care system.

I take heart from the fact that for example in my own province of Alberta, mental health is now integrated into the health regions so they can develop an integrated approach to both physical and mental health. Obviously that will be something interesting for us all to look at.

Let me also point out that the Canadian Institutes of Health Research dedicated over \$30 million in the past fiscal year to fund research projects in universities, research institutes and teaching hospitals across our country that ultimately aim to improve the mental health of Canadians.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Chair, I was going to say it is a great treat to have the Minister of Health in the House tonight, and I suppose there are other words I could have used as well to be generous, but to have the parliamentary secretary, my colleague from New Brunswick, and her officials here is even better. I hope I can keep my questions short for the minister so I can get a few of them in. I think this one will start out in sort of a generous tone.

One thing suggested by Romanow was vesting more transparency in the transfer of moneys from the federal government to the province. To be honest, the provinces try to minimize that amount of money, the federal government tries to maximize it and there are all kinds of smoke screens all over the place. One of them is this idea of tax points. I guess in all honesty many of us, health officials included, have a hard time identifying exactly how much money flows to the provinces and when.

As evidence of that, one of the most confusing answers ever given on the floor of the House of Commons was to me by the Prime Minister in question period in February, after the agreement with the provinces, about old money, new money, so on and so forth. I will not quote the Prime Minister because it is quite confusing and I would not want to confuse the Chair.

Supply

The fact is we can do a lot to improve that. Does she agree with Romanow? I want to remind the minister that one of the suggestions we had in the last federal campaign was to include that sixth principle of health care. If we are to have another principle of health care, it should be full transparency so we could eliminate those types of petty arguments that really do nothing to help fix the system. Could the minister respond to that?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, the hon. member raises a very important question. That is why, starting in 2004, we will have a Canadian health transfer, CHT, which will make absolutely plain to Canadians and to each of the provinces and territories how much money the federal taxpayer is sending to the provinces. That Canadian health transfer will include both the cash and the value of the tax points so it will be absolutely clear to Canadians, as it relates to those two components which have made up heretofore the Canadian health and social transfer, the amount of money either in cash or tax points being transferred to the provinces.

For fiscal 2003-04 that amount of money, including and reflecting the increase through the health reform fund and the cash increase, will be \$38.8 billion. That includes the tax transfer, the cash and the new money for this coming fiscal year, which flowed out of the health reform agreement.

However the hon. member raises a really good point. Canadians want to know how many of their federal tax dollars, be it cash or tax points, are going to support health care. We are going to create a health transfer. It will be completely transparent and Canadians will know and be able to say to the provinces that this is how much cash they have and this is the value of their tax points. They then will be able to ask the provinces how much is their total health care expenditures, how much of it is federal and how much of it is provincial tax dollars and what are Canadians getting for that?

The federal government is putting in more money every year. "Am I getting better health outcomes" is the kind of question to which expanded reporting will provide an answer. Canadians have a right to those answers. Canadians want those answers. Things like the Health Council will help provide those answers and analyze where the money goes and whether we are getting better health outcomes for the dollars that are spent.

• (1955)

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Chair, my colleague from Burnaby—Douglas mentioned the article that appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* today by Dr. Dana Hanson. Dr. Dana Hanson is my doctor and he is from New Brunswick. He is now the president of the Canadian Medical Association. He was somewhat critical of the government in terms of how it acted in light of the SARS crisis, and I think I can use the word crisis without raising too much ire, and suggested that the government could do a better job. The member was right in raising the fact that he was somewhat critical.

There is a lot of uneasiness in the country in terms of how the minister responded to that. This is one of the occasions where we can look eyeball to eyeball and talk honestly without the normal interruptions in question period. I think some people were disappointed in how the minister responded to that. I know it is easy to be critical but the fact is some of her own cabinet colleagues

criticized the minister on her being invisible on the file in terms of leadership.

That leads me to the point that Dr. Hanson made today. We know we have made some mistakes. I would like the minister to at least stand in her place and admit some of the shortcomings because there were some. He has suggested ways that we can be prepared for the next crisis which will occur. In fact we may be looking one in the face now and not recognizing it, and that is the West Nile virus. We are coming into the summer season. In a sense the minister will have a second chance because that could be a crisis, although we hope it will not.

What has the minister and the department learned in terms of responding with their provincial colleagues to prepare us for that next potential crisis, whatever it might be?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, first let me say in relation to a comment the hon. member made that I know what my job is and my job is not useless photo ops. My job is letting front line responders do what they know how to do and my job is making sure my department is working with the Ministry of Health in Ontario and front line public health responders to make sure we have all the resources on the ground integrated in a way that controls and contains, in this case SARS, to protect the public health of Torontonians and Canadians. Forget the photo ops, boys, this is too serious. What we do is make sure that we are fulfilling our obligations as a federal department of health as it relates to the public health of Canadians.

The other thing I would say is that I find it very interesting that in spite of Dana Hanson's column, and I have the greatest respect for Dana Hanson, centres like the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta have nothing but praise for the work that Canada did, for the way the three levels of government worked together. In fact it indicated that it wants to work with us in relation to our national strategy and thinks that it would be very useful to participate with us and have a North American strategy.

Again, Dr. David Heymann, who heads up the communicable diseases division of WHO, although I do not have his quote directly in front of me, said something to the effect of how Canada did everything right.

That does not mean that it was not a public health challenge. Of course it was. That does not mean that there are not lessons to be learned, because of course there are, which is why I asked Dr. David Naylor to put in place a lessons learned exercise.

The hon. member raises an important question about what we do learn for the future, because we know there will be new public health challenges whether it is West Nile or some re-emerging infection or disease or some new disease such as SARS, which eight weeks ago we knew nothing about. But today, because of the state of our public health infrastructure, scientific and otherwise, and those of some other countries, we know an awful lot, we know about control and containment, we know what works and we can share that with the rest of the world. Dr. Naylor will help us build for the future, which is what is important.

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And yes, I think there is not a country in the world that would not say we learn from every one of these public health challenges and it is our obligation to learn and build for the future, just as we learned after September 11, a bioterrorism challenge. It spoke to our public health infrastructure. I am sorry: September 11 was a terrorist situation, not a bioterrorism situation. We learn from that. We see what works, what we need to integrate, where the omissions are. That is why we spent \$102 million since September 11 doing just that: to enhance our capacity to deal with a range of public health measures, not just bioterrorism. As I indicated earlier, a lot of the things we have done, and that \$102 million, help us deal with things like SARS and will help us deal with West Nile.

One of the most important things we have done is that we have upgraded our labs. We have put more advanced equipment in our labs so that we are able to deal with things like the epidemiology of SARS. We are able to deal with things like the confirmatory test that is done in relation to West Nile virus. We are able to share those results with the rest of the world. We are able to work on a diagnostic test and we are able to work on vaccines in partnership with researchers in Canada's great universities like UBC and elsewhere.

I would say that I have great respect for Dr. Hanson's point of view. I take his message as being that one learns from every public health challenge. We learn where the gaps are, where we can integrate and where we need new resources. It is our obligation to learn those lessons and build for the future and that is what we will do.

• (2000)

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Chair, the minister is prepared and she has her officials here, but I still disagree with some of what she said.

Following September 11, the Americans passed what they called the public health security bioterrorism response act. Having that passed was one of the reasons that the Centers for Disease Control was able to come to Canada and assist us; it was simply because the United States passed that act in a speedy fashion. Here in this place, still languishing in Parliament, as the article in the *National Post* tells me, we have the Canadian public safety act, which would allow us to deal with bioterrorism or diseases like SARS in the same capacity that the United States can, will and does.

As evidence of how inconsistent the government is on this and where the message still does not appear to have come through, I am looking at page 30 of the minister's own estimates for the year 2003-04. I would like the minister to take a look at it and respond. It is under the heading in section 4, "Priority: Protect the health of Canadians by enhancing emergency preparedness and response capability".

That is pretty clear, is it not? Let us look at the budget for that. This year, 2003-04, it is \$432.9 million. I believe we are talking millions. In this world of ours is it not something to think that we have come from the pipeline debate when C.D. Howe was in trouble in this place for saying "what's a million" to now saying what is a billion? We are looking in this case at \$432.9 million. It is interesting with this plan that the minister has in the making that it appears as if the department in the year 2004-05 is going to be spending less, not more, and in the year 2005-06 less still, at \$307 million.

How can the minister stand in her place and tell us that we are going to be doing more when she has less money to do the very thing that she is talking about under the heading of emergency preparedness? Can she explain that one?

• (2005)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Speaker, first let me indicate to the hon. member, because he is referring to some article that appeared in the *National Post* today, that we have all the legal authorities necessary to—

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Chair, on a question of clarification, I did use one particular quote but no, it is not out of the *National Post*. It is established fact. I did refer to one line out of that when I paraphrased that line, but that is common fact in terms of what happened in the United States. We are not just taking the word of a reporter. That is a fact. That was passed in the U.S. legislature, in Congress, and we have not done the same thing here. That is the point.

Hon. Anne McLellan: We do not need that legislation, Mr. Chair, because we have all the legal authorities now required in existing legislation to do the things which that legislation speaks to. I guess we could pass legislation that is redundant, but I do not think everybody on the other side would be very keen on that.

In relation to the money being spent, the hon. member is right that the fiscal profile as it appears here goes down, because in fact for the numbers in the lead-up, for example, plan spending in 2003-04 includes a one time expenditure for the procurement of smallpox vaccine. We do not intend to carry that forward in 2004-05 or 2005-06. They are one time expenditures that do appear, for example, in 2003-04. The other thing I want to point out to the hon. member, for example, is new equipment in labs. Again, it is a one time expenditure and therefore as we ramp up one may see the numbers go up as we make those one time expenditures, but they are not continued in the fiscal profile further out.

The other thing I would say is that if Dr. David Naylor and others decide and we agree, for example, that one wants to move to a kind of national, CDC-like, public health go-to focal point, then clearly I would be going back to cabinet and I would be talking to cabinet about that. I would be talking to cabinet about the resource implications. Then it would be up to the government to decide whether or not it wished to proceed in that way and provide me with the additional resources.

I am sure, and I will be quite candid, and I have no doubt that I will be going back to cabinet after Dr. Naylor's recommendations and seeking additional resources to enhance our public health infrastructure. I think that will probably happen. Whether it is a CDC-like entity or something else, that will then be reflected in the out years.

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Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Chair, everyone in this place disagrees with the minister, including people outside of this place, such as the Auditor General. If we go through the Auditor General's report of September 2002, we see that she steps through this in chapter 2, line and verse, where the federal government is completely lacking in resources and the ability to respond to a crisis. If we look at that report from September 2002, we see that it is almost as if the Auditor General could see an issue like SARS coming down the road and was suggesting that the government was not capable of dealing with it.

The jury has already come in on this one. As a result of how the government handled this, last month for the first time in how many years we had 19,000 job losses in this country. Last Friday when I put the question to the Minister of Finance, it was answered by the Minister of Industry who admitted that yes, SARS did take a toll on the Canadian economy and that in fact we lost jobs. He admitted that we lost jobs. We lost 19,000 jobs and are still counting. Many experts are suggesting that because of the way the government handled this there are more job losses to come.

The fact is that we are ill-prepared to deal with the next emergency that may or may not be around the corner and the fact is that the minister's answer is simply not good enough because the record speaks for itself. The government was unprepared, she was caught flat-footed and it cost Canada 19,000 jobs and 24 lives.

• (2010)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, nothing could be further from the truth. I guess the hon. member will say what he wants.

What is really interesting is that when SARS came here nobody knew anything about the disease. In terms of infectious disease control, it is remarkable how quickly everybody put in place the public health control and containment measures to succeed.

It is people like him who create the problem. They talk of failure, whereas everybody else in the world talks about the success story. This disease, which no one had control over and which no one knew anything about, landed here and within weeks we had it under control and contained. We are a model to the rest of the world. People, such as Dr. David Heymann, have said that Canada did everything right, including the screening of passengers as they left.

He can talk about failure and he can denigrate all the work that everybody did at all three levels of government but the rest of the world is not with him. The rest of the world, the CDC, the WHO and others, are saying that in a terrible, tragic situation of a new disease nobody knew anything about that we were amazingly successful in relation to control and containment.

Yes, tragically some people lost their lives. However no one is perfect and we will learn important lessons and build for the future.

However, because of the degree of readiness and the degree of cooperation among the three levels of government, we are able to say that only 24 people died. Those 24 deaths are a tragedy but, thank goodness, more people did not die because of the level of preparedness and the ability to put in place a plan to control and contain the disease.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is real pleasure to speak this evening to an issue of

importance to the people in my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant. I am speaking about first nations health care.

The minister is well aware of the significance and the importance of health care to the communities in both the rural and remote portions of Canada and the important role that Health Canada plays in delivering health care services to these communities.

The hon. member across the way said that it was substandard health care. Frankly, I would agree that our aboriginal communities have many difficult problems and one of those problems is in the area of health care. I also believe that the Government of Canada can and should do more in this area.

We on this side are continuing to dialogue with the minister and the department to make sure that the proper resources are brought forward in this area, which I think we in Canada have been lacking for a number of years. However the hon. minister will know that there are success stories.

Before I go on I must inform the Chair that I will be splitting my time with the member for Mississauga South.

First nations and Inuit health care is provided by the Department of Health through Canada's first nations and Inuit health care branch. It tries to improve the health outcomes of first nations and Inuit. It also tries to ensure availability and accessibility of quality health services and support a greater control of the health system by building partnerships, which I believe is critical.

As the hon. member across the way said, there are challenges. We on the government side recognize those challenges. I know the department and the minister are working very hard to make sure the health services provided to the aboriginal and first nations communities are at a standard that is expected in other parts of this country.

As I said earlier, I think much more effort needs to be made. I know the Minister of Health agrees with me in that area. In fact, the population that Health Canada serves includes 721,000 status Indians, eligible Innu and Inuit residing here in Canada. Of those, about 397,000 are living on reserves or in Inuit communities.

Our challenge is to ensure that those others, those who live outside the communities that are the responsibility of the provincial departments of health, are still provided those services and have access to those services.

It is important to note some of the unique characteristics of the services that we do give to our aboriginal clients. For instance, the population of first nations is growing at a rate of about 2.2% a year. This is more than 2.5 times the Canadian rate. The aboriginal population is also on average younger.

In addition, 70% of first nations and Inuit live in communities with populations of less than 1,000. In fact, some have less than 500 people. These are small communities in remote parts of the country. As I have said, there are challenges in these communities.

However, despite these demographic statistics, the general health of our aboriginal people is better today than it was 50 years ago or even 10 years ago. These overall improvements, I believe, have been attributed to the noticeable improvements in their living conditions and in investments in disease prevention, but more particular, the importance of investing in public health in these communities.

● (2015)

Canadians still need to recognize that there is a significant gap in health status between our first nations and Inuit compared to the broader population. As I have said again and again, I believe much more needs to be done.

To address this gap Health Canada's first nations and Inuit branch has undertaken an extensive analysis of the situation and the services needed in these communities. Results from this analysis noted that rising drug costs and a shortage of health care professionals are specific challenges being faced by these communities. It is not a challenge that is unlike other parts of rural Canada, but it is particularly significant in the remote parts of this country where it is hard to get a health care provider to provide the service. We talk about distance learning and distance medicine and I know there are things we can do to help deal with these problems. Health Canada, in partnership with other departments, is looking at unique ways in which we can deal with the situation of the remote parts of the country.

It is such factors that really challenge Canadians today and challenge Health Canada in its ability to provide effective health programs and services to our first nations people. However I believe that the important groundwork has been laid.

When the premiers and the Prime Minister came together for the recent 2003 health accord, which was endorsed by all of them, they looked at health care for Canadians and particularly our aboriginal peoples. It constituted an important milestone in recognizing that there are specific aboriginal health care needs. It should be noted that the first ministers understood that they needed to work together to address the gap in health care services between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians.

It is also critically important to know that Health Canada is committed to continuing this collaboration, particularly with first nations people themselves. Who knows better about their communities and the people within their communities than the first nations themselves?

Mr. Chair, coming from the same part of Ontario that I come from and representing the largest native reserve in the country, the people of the Sixth Nations, the Grand River or the New Credit, I am sure you know how important it is to dialogue with the people of our first nations in order to understand better those things we can do to help improve the livelihood of these aboriginal communities. Health Canada needs to continue to support a collaborative approach to health care across this country. There are important aspects of what is needed to be done that is known among first nations and Inuit people themselves.

On behalf of my constituents I will continue to dialogue with the minister and work with her departmental officials to make sure that all Canadians, not only in my communities but all communities

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across this country, rural and remote, have equal access to the health care services that the Government of Canada can provide along with the provincial departments, and make sure that first nations' voices are heard within this dialogue.

● (2020)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am pleased to participate tonight in this dialogue with the Minister of Health on the estimates and thereby on a broad range of matters.

I specifically want to address an issue relating to fetal alcohol syndrome. In the middle of 2000 a national advisory committee on fetal alcohol syndrome was struck. There is a little bit of background to it and I hope the minister will be able to enlighten the House as to where we have been and where we are right now.

Fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects are probably one of the least known impacts on children. In fact when I became a member of Parliament I had never heard of fetal alcohol syndrome. I am an educated person and have spent nine years on the board of a hospital and I have three children. I thought that we would have had every opportunity in a vibrant community to have been apprised of this, but I was not. When I came here one of the first things I asked was that I be put on the health committee, because I wanted to know more about the very critical area of sustaining Canada's health care system.

When I joined the committee I looked at some of the past reports of the health committee. One of them was "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: A Preventable Tragedy". When I read it, it just sold me. It just took my heart. I have been working on this issue for some time and I continue to work on it.

Fetal alcohol syndrome has been talked about by many of the NGOs and by Health Canada. The line they have been using for so long in their documents is that fetal alcohol syndrome is the leading known cause of mental retardation in children. FAS is the leading known cause. It struck me one day that fetal alcohol syndrome is not the cause of anything; it is in fact the result of drinking during pregnancy. However we do not want to say that as it is not politically correct. It would stigmatize women who drink during pregnancy and who have an FAS child, so we say that fetal alcohol syndrome is the problem.

I did some research and I wrote a little monograph. I made some suggestions. At one point real progress was being made. The suggestion was made that we have a national advisory committee on fetal alcohol syndrome. The then minister of health asked for my review of the specifications for this national advisory committee. It was the traditional one person from every province and territory with a balance of gender, aboriginals and people who knew about FAS, et cetera. I had seen this time and time again. I was so alarmed that I wrote a letter on April 13, 2000 to the special assistant to the Minister of Health saying "I have to let you know that I have a big problem with this. We need people who can deliver solutions".

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I laid out a three point program. The first aspect was to develop an information package on fetal alcohol syndrome so that everybody across Canada would be singing from the same song sheet.

The second aspect was to establish within the group those who were problem solvers, those who would develop a comprehensive strategy directed at the prevention of fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects.

The third aspect was to determine how to handle those who had the problem already. After someone has the problem, what do we do in our social program system, our criminal justice system, our health system and throughout all of society, because people with FAS and FAE are an integral part of our community.

The minister went ahead to establish the national advisory committee on fetal alcohol syndrome. I said in the letter that we needed targets and we needed to have deliverables, otherwise we would have another false start. My fear is that we have had another false start.

I suggest to the minister that this is an issue where we cannot allow any more false starts. We have to pick up the ball and recognize the significant impact this has on all Canadians, not just those who have children who suffer from FAS. All of us can be part of the solution. I hope that in the remaining time the minister will have some words of wisdom for the House.

• (2025)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I acknowledge the member's longstanding interest in fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects. He has done a tremendous amount of work and research in the area. He has really increased the level of awareness certainly in our own caucus in relation to the causes of FAS-FAE and the devastating effects not only for the children born with FAS-FAE but also for their families and the larger community.

The hon. member is right in that Health Canada did strike a national advisory committee. The committee is to provide independent strategic advice and expertise to Health Canada on FAS-FAE and promote collaboration and partnerships across disciplines and sectors. As I understand it, the committee consists of 18 members representing those sectors, including health, addictions, corrections, education and research, and it has representation from first nations and Inuit.

The hon. member is probably right that we need to do more and we need to do better. I must also give credit to my colleague the Minister of Labour, who has taken up this issue because she sees its effects in relation to homelessness which she deals with. When dealing with homelessness we look at the people who are on the streets, who are homeless either temporarily or unfortunately, more permanently. Many of them have mental health issues. Many of those mental health issues are related to FAS-FAE. My colleague the Minister of Labour and I have been talking about this, and she deserves credit for pulling together across government a range of interested departments to talk about how we can do a better job of integrating our responses.

For example, there is additional funding to deal with FAS-FAE on reserve. We received new funding of \$10 million in 2002-03 and \$15 million on an ongoing basis has been approved to expand FAS-FAE

programming for first nations on reserve. We need to work more effectively with those communities to understand what the exact needs are and how we reach those people, how we reach people who may become pregnant and if they are pregnant to reach them and tell them they cannot drink or do drugs once they know they are pregnant.

We also know that the problem extends well beyond the aboriginal community. Recent studies would indicate that the fastest growing group of people who are a challenge to us in relation to this are middle class women in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties where perhaps social drinking is a part of their lives. We need to get the message out to them that one drink is one drink too many if they are pregnant.

The hon. member has raised some very important issues in terms of how we as a federal government can get our house in order and then how we link to the provinces, to communities and to grassroots organizations that are on the front lines. If the Minister of Labour were here she would say that the money has to get to the front lines; the money has to get to the grassroots community based organizations that know what is happening in those communities, that know who their client groups are. I could not agree more.

The hon. member also probably agrees that we have to rethink what we are doing in this area. While we are getting new resources, are we actually getting better results? Those are very serious questions. I would be the first to say that we have to do better; everybody has to do better.

I applaud the three prairie provinces for the prairie network on FAS-FAE. We are linked into that in certain respects but again we need to work more closely with those kinds of networks that are closer to the grassroots and the communities.

There is a whole lot we could be doing to re-order the way we all work in meeting the challenge of FAS-FAE.

• (2030)

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask for a ruling from you. The last time we participated in a debate such as this, there was a convention that the question, if it were about a minute, the response would be about a minute. If the question was very short and technical, some latitude would be given.

Could you rule as to whether we are dealing under the same circumstances tonight?

The Chair: The Chair does not want to sound evasive, but it is very difficult and I do not think members would want the Chair to decide as to the technical merits of a question in terms of what length of reply would be suitable. As members themselves have heard earlier this evening, some members have chosen to ask several questions and have allowed the minister to answer them. Certainly if it is one question for one answer, I will monitor the situation. Thus far I am satisfied that the questions and answers have been somewhat reasonable.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, let me give the minister a little test and see if she can respond to that.

Does the minister agree with the labelling of alcoholic bottles to prevent FAS, yes or no?

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Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I wish life were as simple as yes and no. It would be easy to say yes, but my goal is to determine what the most effective strategies are in this regard. Some work has been done in other countries that would indicate that labelling does not get at the real problem.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre raised this issue when she had a private member's bill in relation to this. My department is working in relation to this question. What I have to decide is whether that is the most effective way to deal with the FAS-FAE challenge. Maybe it is, but so far we have not made that decision and so far, evidence is fairly inconclusive in terms of what the benefits are in relation to that labelling.

As I have said before, I am open to continuing to look at this issue. The only thing I am interested in is what are the most effective strategies. Let us not pat ourselves on the back and say "We have put labels on something so we can all go home now because we have discharged our societal obligation". No. I think we have to decide what the most effective strategies are.

• (2035)

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, I would like to return to the issue of the former finance minister and his speech about the health accord. I am going to read a quote from that individual. He stated "In terms of health care, we have not dealt with waiting lists. I think we have to deal with that". This was talking specifically about the accord.

I want to know from the minister in relatively short terms, does she agree with that statement that the accord does not deal with waiting lists?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I do not agree with that statement.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, that response was terse and straightforward and I thank the minister.

Let me change subjects for a moment. Joanne Meyer, an individual that the minister's predecessor hired, was hired in suspicious circumstances. We had a report from the minister that did not answer the central question. I would like to ask her now, why was Joanne Meyer not hired under her own company instead of being hired under a car restoration firm?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, as I indicated to the hon. member some time ago, we did a full review. In fact, the hon. member felt that it was taking too long and I certainly understand his frustration in that regard, but one of the reasons it took the time it did is that we did a fulsome review of all the contractual relations of this named employee in relation to the Department of Health.

The review found that all services contracted for were provided. The companies involved, and I think this gets at the member's point, had the legal authority to enter into contracts for the services required and they had the capacity to provide those services. I think that at least in part answers the question.

Our question was in terms of the entities that entered into the contracts. Did they have the legal capacity to enter into those contracts and were the services contracted for provided? The answer to both of those questions is yes.

Mr. Grant Hill: With respect, Mr. Chair, that does not answer my question, so let me ask it again. The report did not answer the central question and it leaves some Canadians suspicious.

I will ask again, why was this individual not hired, as she was once, under JM Enterprises, her firm, her name, her corporation? Why was she hired under three different contracts with three different companies?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, honestly I cannot speak to motivation in this context. All I can do is what we did, which was review the record of contractual services and determine whether there were illegalities or deficiencies in relation to those contracting procedures. We determined that the companies involved had the legal authority to enter into the contracts for the services required. They had the capacity as legal entities to provide those services. There was a determination that all services contracted for were provided.

I know that it is probably somewhat unsatisfactory to the hon. member but I cannot determine or speculate in relation to anyone's motivations. What we do know is that the legal capacity was there and the services were provided.

• (2040)

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, let me reinforce the fact that response still does not answer my question. I did not ask her to speculate, I asked her to find out why. She has not done that.

We talk about deficiencies, per diem rates paid above the maximum rates payable. We also talk from an administrative point of view about deficiencies in the contract files. This has done nothing other than to raise more suspicions.

Since I cannot get any further with that particular question, let me turn now to hepatitis C. One point one billion dollars was set aside for the victims between 1986 and 1990. That grew to \$1.4 billion with interest. How much of that money has been spent on the victims between 1986 and 1990?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, as of March 2002, the latest date figures were reported by the administrator, approximately \$220 million had been paid to claimants in benefits. As I have indicated, the settlement agreement is administered at arm's length from government by an independent court appointed administrator responsible for deciding claims.

As of June 2002, approximately \$900 million was left in the fund but this is not a surplus. The funds belong to the beneficiaries of the trust. One of the things people have to understand is that payments out of the fund may continue up to 70 years. This is a progressive illness and people may, not in all cases, get progressively worse in terms of being sicker. Payments can continue in relation to the health of an individual claimant and those payments could continue for some significant time.

Therefore, as of March 2002, which I believe are the latest reported number from the administrator, \$220 million has been paid out to the claimants. The first actuarial report on the sufficiency of the fund was assessed by the courts in June 2002, and I think everything was found to be in order.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, on the same subject, from that \$220 million, how many victims have been compensated?

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Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, the first payments were issued to claimants June 20, 2000. In a report issued by the joint committee after the administrator's second year of operation, as of March 31, 2002, over 7,300 claims had been received. As of March 31, 2002, 5,400 claims had been paid, and 1,900 are in process awaiting the submission of further information or the completion of trace back searches.

These numbers refer to claims, not claimants. One claimant may have more than one claim.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, those numbers equate very well with what victims' groups have said. Many provinces compensated all victims of tainted blood with hepatitis C; in other words more than just those between 1986 to 1990.

Does the minister think that those provinces are right or wrong to have done what they did?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I am not going to comment on the correctness or not of that which provinces choose to do. That is clearly within their domain.

I can however indicate that what we did was the right thing to do. We were interested in ensuring provinces had the means to provide care to those people infected pre-1986 and post-1990. I think we all remember the phrase became care not cash.

Provinces can take whatever approach they want in relation to those particular claimants. Our approach was to transfer some \$300 million to the provinces and territories for health care services to help ensure that individuals infected in those two periods identified did not incur out of pocket expenses.

• (2045)

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, carrying on with that same subject, how many victims outside the 1986 to 1990 time frame are there? We were told during this debate that there were between 40,000 and 50,000 victims. I will not lead the minister but I would like to know how many she thinks are outside the 1986 to 1990 period.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I do not have the number of people who have made claims pre-1986 and post-1990. We would probably have to get that information from the provinces, which I can undertake with my provincial colleagues because the funds were transferred to them. It is their obligation to provide care and that would be on the basis of identification within the provincial health care system.

Therefore I could ask the provinces for those numbers.

Mr. Grant Hill: That will not be necessary, Mr. Chair, because the number is between 5,000 and 6,000 people.

If we take the 7,300 which the minister has identified between 1986 and 1990 and take those 5,000 to 6,000, it is easy to see that the numbers of victims totally in Canada are somewhere between 10,000 and 12,000.

There is \$900 million left in the compensation fund. The minister says that the disease may get worse in the future and that is true for a small proportion of people. However \$900 million will take care of plenty of those problems.

Could not that money or a large portion of it be used to compensate those outside 1986 to 1990?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, no, it cannot under the terms of the court settlement. Those moneys were set aside for a very specific and agreed to purpose, for those between 1986 and 1990.

I want to go back and reiterate for people that while it seems as if there is a large amount of money remaining in the fund, no one should think of these funds as a surplus. Payments to claimants out of the fund may continue for as much as 70 years, either to new claimants who have until 2010 to apply or for new or continuing payments to those who have already qualified. Some claimants will be receiving loss of income payments for a very long time from the settlement agreement. Other claimants can make claims for additional compensation as their disease progresses.

Therefore the \$900 million is there by court order and agreement of all the parties, and it is there to be disbursed over a number of decades in the future.

Mr. Grant Hill: Mr. Chair, of course that was a political decision that was made by government, not by other parties.

I will change the subject one more time. The Romanow commission was followed by many participants in the health care system with interest. Romanow suggested raising the federal share of health care to 25%.

Does the minister agree with that proposal?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, we as a government feel that we put on the table a large amount of new money through the first ministers accord reached in February. I think \$34.8 billion over the next five years is a significant amount of money to help transform our health care system, to stabilize it and to sustain it well into the future.

I am less interested in percentages. There are different ways we can arrive at those numbers. I have great respect for Mr. Romanow but there are others in the provinces for example who would disagree with the formula that he put in play in terms of 25% on what.

Therefore for me it is more important to think about the health care system and what that system needs to renew itself and sustain itself and to ensure that the federal government is doing its fair share. That is important to me and that is something which needs to be assessed on an ongoing basis.

• (2050)

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask a question with regard to the estimates on the Romanow report. I think the 2000-01 estimates showed \$7 million for the cost of the Romanow study.

Could the minister tell us what it accumulated to in the final analysis and how much Canadian taxpayer money went into that report?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, the total amount that was set aside for the Romanow commission was approximately \$15 million. It is my clear understanding that Mr. Romanow brought his process in under budget. The exact number I could get for the member. I do not have it here this evening. However he brought it in, as I understand, under budget.

Supply

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Chair, it is nice to say that but we are talking about estimates here tonight and I would have thought that we would have that information. Could the minister get that for us? I would certainly appreciate that.

I would like to shift to one other topic since my time is very short. I want to get into the SARS situation, but before that there is a smallpox situation. I think the Americans are working aggressively to vaccinate some of their frontline workers. We are in a process of doing that as well. I think there were 500 frontline workers who we were attempting to vaccinate but we pulled back on that I understand, and I am not exactly sure why. What I hear is it is because of liability and we are not sure whether we will stand between them and a bad reaction.

Is that in reality what is happening? Could the minister enlighten us as to why we are not vaccinating frontline workers?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, with respect to not vaccinating frontline workers, we would and will vaccinate frontline workers. There were a very small number of Department of Foreign Affairs employees offshore in certain parts of the world who were offered on a voluntary basis, and obviously it is always voluntary, the opportunity to be vaccinated, and in fact a very small number of them I believe were.

In terms of frontline responders, it is still our intention to make the vaccination available to frontline responders on a voluntary basis. We have some of those within the federal government. The provinces and territories actually have the vast majority of frontline responders. They will need to identify those responders for us and then the vaccination will be offered to them on a voluntary basis. That is the approach that we are taking.

I talked to my colleague Tommy Thompson, the secretary of health in the United States. Mr. Thompson and the government of the United States had a very ambitious plan to vaccinate large numbers of so-called first line responders. There was very limited take-up in relation to that plan. Part of the issue was the possibility of an adverse reaction. The other problem was in terms of a compensation scheme for those who suffered from an adverse reaction. The United States government has moved to look at the kind of compensation scheme which could be put in place to deal with that situation.

Clearly, we are looking at the same kind of issues. Whether we reach the same resolution is something that has not been decided. However we are aware of the small number of people who are adversely affected and therefore we want to do our homework. Right now—

Mr. Rob Merrifield: It was a very short question.

Hon. Anne McLellan: No, actually, it is quite a complex question.

The Chair: I will borrow from a suggestion from the hon. member for Macleod earlier. I will allow a final question of one minute and an equal response time for the minister.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Chair, it will not take me a minute to ask the question, and I appreciate the Chair's indulgence. It is really a very important one.

Whether we vaccinate frontline workers is not as quite as important as whether we actually have the vaccine available to us. I know the minister was looking at putting it out to tender and purchasing 10 million doses.

Could the minister inform Canadians as to exactly where we are with that and why the delay? I think this was supposed to be done last January.

● (2055)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, there is no delay. The vaccine is being produced right now. I believe we will have more than the 10 million doses because of arrangements worked out with the manufacturer.

We are in a position, if required, to vaccinate frontline responders right now because DND has a stockpile of smallpox vaccination that would be made available to, among others, frontline responders if a situation presented itself.

However, the procurement is over. The company is producing the smallpox and we will—

Mr. Rob Merrifield: How about the antidote?

Hon. Anne McLellan: And VIG, which is the antidote that goes with the smallpox vaccine. We will have both and it is being produced right now.

Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time tonight with the member for Winnipeg South Centre.

I would like to take the opportunity this evening to report on the contribution that Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency is making to increase the pest control options that are available to Canada minor use crop producers, contributions for which the tender fruit producers, grape growers and vegetable growers in my riding of Erie—Lincoln are most appreciative.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency, PMRA, is responsible for administering the Pest Control Products Act in order to ensure that human health and the environment are protected by minimizing the risks associated with pest control products while enabling access to pest management tools, namely, these products and sustainable pest management strategies.

Minor use pesticide products are those used in such small quantities that manufacturers find the sales potential is not sufficient to seek a registration in Canada. This is a challenge to the growers of minor use crops who consequently have access to a limited number of products registered for their crops. Growers of similar crops in the United States have access to a wider variety of newer, reduced risk technologies to control pests, which gives them a competitive advantage in the global agricultural market. Canadian growers are demanding access to the same products as their American neighbours to level the playing field.

Health Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are working together to meet the needs of Canadian growers and to reduce the risks of pesticide use. The government's initiatives are centred around making more reduced risk and minor use pesticides available and collaborating to develop strategies to reduce reliance on pesticide use, thus reducing health and environmental risks.

Supply

The intent of the reduced risk and minor use registration programs is to encourage pesticide manufacturers to file submissions for registration of these products in Canada, particularly if they are registered in the United States. The PMRA and the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, currently have joint review programs for reduced risk chemical and biopesticide products that have been in place since 1996.

This program was designed to encourage manufacturers to submit products for registration in Canada and the United States at the same time. The U.S. EPA and the PMRA review these submissions jointly and share the evaluation work.

To encourage the availability in Canada of reduced risk products already available in the U.S., the EPA criteria and designation for reduced risk are now accepted in Canada. In addition, as an incentive for making such reduced risk products available in Canada, the PMRA has shortened the timelines for review for these products.

New funding initiatives have also been announced to meet the needs of Canadian farmers for minor use pesticides. In May 2002, the Ministers of Health and Agriculture and Agri-Food announced \$7.3 million in new funding aimed at reducing the risks of pesticides through the re-evaluation of older products and introducing new, lower risk pesticides. The agency is using funds to collaborate with AAFC to develop and implement commodity based integrated pest management strategies aimed at reducing reliance on pesticides and, in turn, reducing risks.

Furthermore, in June 2002 a further \$54.5 million in funding over six years was announced to allow AAFC and PMRA to give Canadian growers better access to minor use and reduced risk pesticides. AAFC will develop a minor use pesticides program, similar to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's interregional research project number 4, or IR-4. As part of AAFC's new program, a minor use pesticide centre will be established to work with stakeholders, generate data for pesticide evaluations in conjunction with the U.S. IR-4 program and prepare submissions for review by the PMRA.

The PMRA's funds from this announcement will be used to ensure that the agency has the resources required for the timely review of these new minor use and reduced risk submissions. All of these activities are essential in providing growers with faster access to a broad range of safer minor use pesticides.

The PMRA appointed a minor use adviser-ombudsperson to facilitate the registration of minor use pesticides in Canada. Her role is to liaise with growers, the AAFC, the U.S. EPA and IR-4 to encourage harmonization with the U.S. regarding products for minor use. The minor use adviser position at the PMRA is modelled after the very successful minor crop adviser position in the EPA, in that she reports directly to the executive director of the PMRA.

One of the most important functions of the minor use adviser is to serve as a liaison between the PMRA and Canadian growers and to bring their concerns to the attention of PMRA's management. The minor use advisor has met with many grower groups across Canada to obtain information about their crops and to provide them with information on the minor use pesticide registration process.

● (2100)

Her meetings with growers and provincial minor use coordinators have also assisted in developing a process whereby their needs are identified and priorities for data generation are set. AAFC can then generate the field trial data necessary to get priority minor use products registered and into the hands of Canadian growers.

Since the announcement of significant investments for minor use pesticides in 2002, I am pleased to announce the results of our efforts. In fiscal year 2002-03, the PMRA approved more than 754 minor uses, of which 385 were specifically for agricultural crops.

Harmonization with the U.S. EPA is also important in ensuring that reduced risk and minor use products are available in Canada. Previous pesticide harmonization efforts with the U.S. EPA, such as the joint review program, have been quite successful. Currently, more than 50% of submissions received for new active ingredients are reviewed jointly or work shared with the U.S. As of October 30, 2002, 32 registrations were completed through the joint review program, and there are currently more than 24 submissions in process.

Thanks to this program, the number of submissions each year increases as more pesticide manufacturers develop their products for joint entry into Canada and the United States. This ensures that products, including those used on minor crops, become available to Canadian and U.S. growers at the same time. This is a considerable improvement over the past, when there have been significant delays before industry filed submissions for registration in Canada for products already registered in the U.S.

The PMRA looks forward to continuing to improve the situation for Canadian growers and for Canadian consumers in making available more minor use and reduced risk pesticides. PMRA will continue to work with growers, provincial minor use coordinators, AAFC, the U.S. EPA and IR-4 to achieve this goal.

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is my pleasure to take the opportunity this evening to discuss some of the initiatives the Government of Canada, through the Department of Health, is taking to ensure that the health system is more responsive to the health needs of women and ultimately to improving the health status of all women in Canada.

Supply

The Government of Canada established the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health and the Canadian Women's Health Network, funded through Health Canada, to provide easier access to health information, resources and research, to promote and develop links to information and action networks, to produce user friendly materials and resources, to provide forums for critical debate, to act as a watchdog on emerging issues and trends affecting women's health, to encourage community based participatory research, and to promote women's involvement in health research. The Women's Health Network works with the centres of excellence to increase communication, information sharing and interaction among all interested groups and individuals. These relationships ensure that women are present and involved at the grassroots level.

How much does gender really affect health? This is indeed a provocative and very important question. The centres are generating significant research which explores the social determinants of health and which will serve researchers, policy makers, and women themselves. Many studies demonstrate the connection between income and health. And as one researcher, Patricia Kaufert, has said, "locating health in the social condition of people's lives is an idea which can be dated back to the origins of the public health movement".

Gender is indeed a critical lens by which to examine health trends in the broader population. In addition, it permits important questions to be asked. I want to bring to the attention of the House the important study done by the Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg. It is called "Poverty is Hazardous to Women's Health". The study explores the many ways in which poverty can lead to ill health, including lack of access to affordable housing, transportation, food and non-insured health benefits such as medication.

Recently in the consultation process undertaken by the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, the synergy and initiative of these collaborative efforts was evident. Women came to the table and shed light on issues that affected them as women most dearly. The circumstances of women as caregivers were presented. Home care from the perspective of the person receiving the care and home care from the perspective of informal caregivers were subjects of research that was presented. The enormous challenges of home care, both social and economic, were highlighted by the commission's report and recognized by the following:

Many informal caregivers are more than happy to provide care and support their loved ones, but the reality is that care giving is becoming an increasing burden on many in our society, especially women.

Turning to other initiatives, Health Canada focuses on a number of initiatives ensuring that pregnant women and women with babies and young children are getting the help they need to ensure good health. There is a folic acid awareness campaign to encourage women of child-bearing years to be aware and an initiative to support postpartum parents.

The Canada prenatal nutrition program enjoys widespread success across the country. The CPNP funds community groups to develop or enhance programs for vulnerable pregnant women. Through a community development approach, the CPNP aims to reduce the incidence of unhealthy birth weights, improve the health of both infants and mothers and encourage breastfeeding. CPNP enhances access to services and strengthens inter-sectoral collaboration to

support the needs of pregnant women facing conditions of risk. As a comprehensive program, the services provided include food supplements, nutrition counselling, support, education, referral and counselling on health and lifestyle issues.

Based on the enhancement from the 1999 federal budget, the budget for the non-reserve portion of CPNP is \$30.8 million as of 2002-03. Of this, \$27 million goes directly to communities in the form of grants and contributions.

● (2105)

There are currently 350 CPNP projects funded by PPHB, serving over 2,000 communities across Canada. In addition, over 550 of these projects are funded in Inuit and on-reserve first nations communities.

There are many other initiatives that have been undertaken by the government that will affect the health of women. In this year's federal budget we saw a \$16 billion investment over the next five years to provinces and territories for a health reform fund targeted to primary health care, home care, and catastrophic drug coverage.

We saw the budget invest \$5.5 billion over five years in health initiatives, including diagnostic medical equipment, health information technology, and the creation of a six week compassionate family care leave benefit, a very important initiative.

There is the \$45 million investment over five years to assist in the national immunization strategy which will result in the improved safety and effectiveness of vaccines, and the efficient procurement and better information on immunization coverage rates. Immunization provides one of the most important preventative health measures.

Finally, we saw an increased investment in the budget for research and innovation. In the next five years \$925 million has been tagged for this purpose. An additional \$55 million annually will be provided to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to advance health research in Canada through its network of 13 virtual institutes.

It has been said that life is for doing, learning and enjoying. A prerequisite for that is good health. I am pleased that the government is working in collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure that women from all corners of the country, regardless of their background or circumstance, have access to quality care in a timely, responsive manner.

Supply

• (2110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Chair, for those watching us at home, we are now engaged in a process that has us sitting as committee of the whole; we are not examining a bill. A little earlier, some people from outside asked me this question. What we are doing this evening is examining the funds allocated to the Department of Health, which amount to just over \$2 billion, of which \$1.4 billion will go to aboriginal peoples.

I will have five questions to ask of the minister and I will ask them all at once to give her time to reply.

In the last budget, for 2002-05 it was planned that an additional \$8.2 billion would be invested in health initiatives, of which \$6.5 billion would go directly to the provinces.

There was one interesting point. The budget said that there would be an additional \$2 billion in 2003-04 if the financial situation was positive. I would like the minister to tell us if she is optimistic that, in addition to the amounts budgeted, the provinces could have the \$2 billion that the Minister of Finance and member for Ottawa South promised to reserve for the provinces. Is the minister optimistic today?

My second question is this: 50% of the budget allocations we as members are voting on will go to the first nations. I understand that the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility for the first nations.

Thirty years ago, when the Laurendeau-Dunton commission report was released, you could see that those who were in poor health, those whose lifestyle factors ranked them at the bottom of the development scale, were the aboriginal peoples. We may wonder; this is quite a lot: 50% of the budget of the federal health department goes to the first nations. When we look at the first nations, when their spokespersons appear before us—the parliamentary secretary will remember that we had the opportunity to discuss dental health among first nations people—one does not have the impression that the situation is improving in proportion to the energy expended and the desires expressed by the hon. members. We all hope that the first nations will be able to achieve a much better quality of life than they have now.

There is, of course, the bill on first nations governance that should not be forgotten. That is a very, very bad bill. It absolutely does not permit the tools of development to be given to the first nations, but that is not this minister's fault, despite cabinet solidarity. I saw her applauding in Edmonton when the former Minister of Finance said he was not in favour of the bill.

It was quite a display for the minister in contrast to the stoicism and self-control she has been used to in her profession, as a lawyer. I saw her applauding like crazy in Edmonton when the former Minister of Finance announced he would not implement this legislation.

I want the hon. minister to know that I will not give up on this issue. I would like her to update us on her understanding of her department's role as far as the first nations are concerned. This is very important; half of the budget concerns the first nations. There is

much catching up to do, as I said. At the time of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, the first nations ranked last in terms of development, and I do not think that they are faring much better today.

Allow me to digress to say hello to constable Baronette and his spouse, Nicole Sabourin. Make sure he gets a warm welcome home tonight because he is working hard here. He is on duty on the hill, and he is a little tired. We may be sitting until midnight, and all constables deserve our friendship in these difficult times.

This brings me to my third question. I have a little criticism for the minister on another topic besides aboriginal health and the contingency reserve, to which I hope the extra \$2 billion promised to the provinces, if the economic conditions permit, will go. As everyone knows, as part of our work as members of Parliament we make representations to the federal government. Sadly, I have a case to submit to the minister without getting into the details, for her to take under advisement.

• (2115)

I am talking about the case of Dupuis-Magna Cosmétiques, which has been asking for the past seven years for a new drug to be approved.

As a member, I have been trying to talk to a public servant for the past two months, and I have not yet been able to do so. I will not get into the details, because I do not want to cause trouble for anyone. But I find it strange that someone has been trying for seven years to obtain approval to market a product available in Germany and the United States. Unfortunately, I get the feeling that Health Canada's bureaucracy is causing problems for this individual. I hope that the minister will also provide guidelines so that all parliamentarians have access to public servants. It is not normal that, as a member, I have been trying for two months to speak to someone, and I still have not been able to do so.

I am coming to my final question. It concerns the Romanow report. I want to say a few things about this. This report was criticized by several provincial governments, including the Quebec government, which had created the Clair commission.

It would be interesting to know one thing. Can the minister tell us something? In the Romanow report, there is a presumption that the provinces are not accountable, that they are not responsible and that they are mismanaging the health care system. It is difficult to understand how the federal government, which is not an expert in health care, except when it comes to aboriginals, the armed forces, research and epidemics, could be demanding a greater role and how it could have more expertise than the provinces.

I want to ask the minister the following question. Each province, in my opinion, has accountability mechanisms in place. There are parliamentary commissions and question periods in each legislature. I want the minister to give us a list. Were many violations of the Canada Health Act by the provinces brought to her attention? Could she enlighten us in this regard?

Should she not distance herself from the Romanow report, which is a tool in nation building? Should she not say that, as Minister of Health, those who know the most about health care are the provincial governments and not the federal government?

Does the minister recall that when the hospital insurance system was created in the 1960s, the federal government contributed half of health care spending? Today, the federal government contributes 14 cents of every dollar spent on health. Can the minister distance herself from the Romanow report, and commit to respecting the 50-50 ratio and stop trying to use the health care system for nation building?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for that series of questions.

I want to clarify one thing first. My hon. colleague from Yellowhead took umbrage with the fact that I did not know in relation to the main estimates the dollar amounts in relation to the Romanow commission. It has been pointed out to me by my hard working officials that the Romanow commission is in PCO's estimates and not in my department's estimates.

Therefore, it would be unreasonable to expect us to have that documentation, but I stand by what I said earlier. It is my clear understanding he brought the commission in under budget.

Mr. Réal Ménard: But that is not my question.

Hon. Anne McLellan: The member asked a question concerning the additional \$2 million. That is contingent upon there being a surplus in January 2004 and then a decision being made between the finance minister and the Prime Minister as to whether or not we would be in a position to provide those additional dollars.

That was made very plain to the first ministers at the time of the agreement. Obviously we are looking at some nine months down the road. We have done a remarkable job in terms of the economic state of this country, but it is not for me to say eight months away from the date whether or not it is likely to happen. As the Minister of Health I hope that it does happen.

The member also raised the issue of aboriginal health. The total expenditures for 2003-04 in the main estimates are \$1,588,000,000. The hon. member is right. It is a substantial part of the federal Department of Health's budget. The Government of Canada is strongly committed to the well-being of aboriginal Canadians and we know that aboriginal Canadians too often suffer from poor health. They are among Canadians who have some of the worst health. This is an issue we all need to take very seriously, the health committee does, and it is an issue that we all need to address.

I am pleased to say that we have received in budget 2003 an additional \$1.2 billion over the next number of years to help us in terms of delivering health care to Canada's first nations and Inuit people.

The hon. member asked why a significant number of aboriginal people suffer from bad health, for example, chronic diseases such as diabetes. Adult diabetes is increasing at an alarming rate in our aboriginal communities. Part of it is the predetermination of health. Part of it is in terms of healthy living, good nutrition, physical activity, healthy body weight, and ensuring that kids have good nutrition, start healthy eating and good living habits at an early age. Part of it is education and information. And let us face it, part of it is poverty.

Supply

We know that the better off people are, the better their health will be. We must deal with these determinants of health. We must understand that until we deal with the social and economic conditions of poverty, it will be harder for aboriginal peoples to enjoy the same quality of health that other Canadians enjoy.

I want to reiterate the fact that we take our commitment to working with aboriginal peoples in improving their health very seriously. This is not just a health issue. It is also a predetermination of health issue. This means we must work across a broad range of federal departments including our provincial colleagues and local communities themselves.

I will look into the member's specific complaint in relation to the medical device which he outlined. I believe it is classified as a medical device within our department. I will certainly look into that for him. I apologize if he or his constituent have not received a timely response. I will take the matter up right away.

In terms of the provinces mismanaging the health care system, I do not think Mr. Romanow said that the provinces mismanaged the health care system. Mr. Romanow talks more positively, as we all do, about the importance of accountability on the part of all of us, whether it is the federal government, the provincial or territorial governments in ensuring Canadians know how much money is being spent on health care, where it is going, how it is divided between physicians, hospitals, and so on, and what we are getting for it. Are we getting better health outcomes for those dollars?

Mr. Romanow is encouraging all of us to do better in that regard. In fact, some of the provinces have been leaders in areas like the PIRC process and prediction indicators, where we are able to compare apples to apples across provinces and within provinces.

● (2120)

CIHI is a collaborative endeavour where information is provided to residents of provinces so they can make assessments concerning their health care system. The provinces are working very diligently in relation to accountability. Mr. Romanow is suggesting that we build on the good work that is being done to ensure that we are even more transparent and accountable.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Madam Chair, I enjoy listening to the minister. It is always an experience in personal growth. She is a font of information. Even though she may wander in her comments, she can always be brought back to the subject at hand.

The Romanow report takes the position that the federal government is best placed to come up with initiatives in health, but we believe that the provinces are better able to do so. The best test of this is that we believe, as does the National Assembly, in the five principles of the Canada Health Act, with a few subtle differences on the issue of portability.

I would like the minister to give us an update on this. Have there been any violations by the provinces that she could share with us? Second, does the minister agree that there is a paradox in Canadian federalism, in that the money is in Ottawa, the provinces have needs, but the federal government is cutting back in terms of its commitment?

Supply

Those who saw the public health care system being set up recall the commitment made by the federal government to pay 50% of the costs. Today, it pays 14 cents for every dollar spent on health care. Yes, there has been some increase, but it is not 50-50.

Can the minister make a true commitment and say that she will work very hard to convince her cabinet colleagues so that, in the not too distant future, the 50-50 funding will be restored, which was the objective of those who built our public health care system? I would appreciate short, meaningful, precise and honest answers.

• (2125)

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, the hon. member asked me a question concerning compliance and monitoring infractions. He also asked me a question regarding funding. I categorically reject the 14¢ argument of the provinces. If the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve goes to the Department of Finance or the Department of Health website, but I direct him to the Department of Finance website, he will find there our presentation of the federal government's total contribution to the funding of health care in this country. It is not 14¢. The range could be anywhere between 36¢ and 42¢ of every dollar for health care.

The hon. member asked, is that fifty-fifty? He must understand the nature of the original arrangement. It was not fifty-fifty in terms of all those things on which the provinces spend money today. That was never the original understanding. We must go back to first principles and understand what the original cost share agreement was about and what it applied to. Mr. Romanow sets that out very clearly in his report.

The hon. member was kind enough to raise this question. He was talking about the provinces and monitoring. I want to make it plain to everyone here this evening that Health Canada's approach to resolving possible non-compliance issues emphasizes transparency, consultation and dialogue. Issues are resolved through consultation and discussion, based on a thorough examination of the facts.

It seems to me that it makes a lot more sense as opposed to becoming confrontational with provinces. It should not be necessary to withhold dollars, as we have had to in certain circumstances, and thereby deny provinces money. The approach we would like to take is to work with a province in a collegial and consultative fashion, determine whether the allegations of problems are real and if so work with the province to investigate and determine how the problem can be dealt with. However, if at the end of that a province does not cooperate or if we think there is still a problem, we will withhold dollars. We are withholding dollars right now, for example, in the case of Nova Scotia. We have withheld dollars in relation to other provinces at other times.

I worked with my provincial and territorial colleagues on a dispute avoidance and resolution mechanism. This mechanism can be used in situations where a province and the federal government cannot agree through negotiation and consultation. That dispute resolution mechanism can be put in place to resolve a dispute with a panel of third party experts. It is a tribute to how well we all work together that the dispute resolution mechanism has not been used to date.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Madam Chair, I would ask my friend, the Minister of Health, to whom I wish all the best, if she can undertake to table, for the benefit of all members of this House, the original agreement.

I maintain that, for hospital and medical services, it was 50-50. I am thinking here of the position of the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier and of all government members. There is someone here who is unwittingly misleading the House. Personally, I maintain that the funding was 50-50.

I am asking the minister in a friendly way to show intellectual rigour and to table the agreement. We will read the agreement because all premiers, including the Conservatives, the Bolsheviks and the sovereignists, said that it was 50-50. The federal government is the only one saying that the original agreement was not 50-50.

Since I know that the minister does not want to mislead the House, what she has to do is to table the original agreement. I do not know if she has it in her briefcase. If not, she can go to her office to get it and table it tonight. I will bet her a beer that it was 50-50.

• (2130)

[*English*]

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is always a good time to look at health estimates and I think it is a good time for us to remind Canadians that we are ever vigilant in terms of getting value for their money when it comes to health. It has been an exciting year in terms of Canadians having an opportunity to speak and I think it was important for us to listen in the way we did. It really was about core Canadian values.

I think there are mainly four questions that will come out of this year of the cottage industry of commissions, particularly the Romanow commission. I think we understand that it is going to be extraordinarily important to understand that pieces of legislation will never protect the Canadian badge of honour in terms of our most treasured social program, that only when Canadians can have confidence in the system will they then be able to relax and not demand to pay.

What would be the strategy to restore the trust in the public system? I think we also then want to know what the strategy is to ensure that governments are accountable to Canadians. Do they know where the money is going? Do they know what value they are getting from the money? Are they getting healthier? Is the system getting fairer? As the minister knows, this is where we were dinged by the WHO in terms of the gap. Are we learning and investing in innovation to get a better system? Are we striking the right balance between treatment and prevention?

I think there is a third question Canadians have. How do we keep listening to them? If we do not want to have a commission every two years, how do we make sure that Canadians know that we will continue to listen to them, that we will continue to understand the trade-offs that they know must be made and that we will be able to continue to listen to their priorities and follow with a system that is relevant and responsive to their needs?

Supply

I think their fourth question is this: How do we keep more Canadians healthier longer?

In being able to answer that, I think the minister began tremendous work in her original work on the social union framework agreement. When the minister was in charge of it, I think all of us were thrilled with what came out of it in terms of transparency, accountability, asking citizens to set priorities and the ability to report to Canadians in a regular way. I think the first ministers accord then underlined how we would continue to do that.

Out of the first ministers accord, there are four areas that I think need to be interpreted and strengthened. On the minister's behalf, I would like to help her interpret them in the way I think that would be. In the recommendations, I think that this idea of Quebec council's on health and welfare with a new mandate would collaborate with the health council, but obviously I would hope that the minister, following the Quebec election, will now be able to re-engage the Quebec government with the ability to actually be full partners in the health council, including reporting on the performance of its health care system and health care in a pan-Canadian way that includes Quebec.

We want to make sure that in its statement the accord and the council would monitor and make annual public reports. We hope that means the council is free to report on anything relevant to the health of Canadians, not only that which is explicitly mentioned in the health accord.

• (2135)

We also are interpreting that publicly reporting through the FPT ministers of health obviously means that the council would be truly independent and a trustworthy council which reports publicly, leaving the governments the dissemination of the information to their constituents, but it must be a report that is transparent to all Canadians. Also, in including representatives of both orders of government, experts and the public, we assume that in the accord this means that although governments will select their representatives they will not be government officials, elected or non-elected; they will be government nominees who will act independently and are faithful to the terms of reference of the council, as the council of maritime premiers chooses its regional appointees.

I think that what Canadians expect from this council is an independent, trusted body that advises Canadians on the state of their health and on the performance of their health care system. The council must earn its moral authority by celebrating excellence, pointing out the opportunities for improvement and telling the truth. It must make recommendations, not policy. It has to be more than our collective conscience and the council must ask for good quality data and encourage a learning and collaborative culture that promotes ongoing dialogue.

We hope that what will be supported is a council that uses information of the same quality and reputation as that of Statistics Canada, that it will interpret that data with the rigour of the Auditor General and that it will make recommendations as important as those of the Bank of Canada. We think Canadians must see that the health council of Canada has an important mediating effect on the previous intersectoral tensions that have hindered the progress toward an integrated system of health maintenance and care in which the public

good and cost effective, world class results are paramount. We think that the data coming from CIHI is good as it is, but we hope that the council will be able to commission the new data it will require and the research that is not currently available from places like the CIHR.

What we hope is that the collaborative culture that we have seen in this recent SARS outbreak could be practically bottled, such that we would never again see the spectacle that came out of that first ministers meeting where people actually were calling to deal with the next prime minister, those kinds of absolutely inflammatory statements. It has to be an ongoing relationship.

As we have discussed, we would love to think that we could move the fed-prov relationships into something like the VISA model, where feuding financial institutions are able to come together on a common IT program, a common governance and even decide what colour the card is. It is amazing to think that if feuding financial institutions can do this we are unable to do this as a country.

It is important that the federal government go to the table, as the minister said, as the fifth biggest provider of health care in this country, with our own problems in aboriginal health, the military, veterans and correctional services, and we go there to share best practices and to learn from one another. The council is not to be big brother. It is not to be a watchdog. It is to be a place where positive—

• (2140)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for St. Albert.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I did think this was an opportunity to question the minister about the estimates of her department. We have been listening to this ad nauseam and I wonder where the question is.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: I have Graval for you.

Mr. John Williams: She has Graval for me and a question for the minister, right?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I want to thank the hon. member. The hon. member for St. Albert is of course within his right to bring that to the attention of the hon. member for St. Paul's but at the same time the hon. member for St. Albert would have to let the Chair hear what is going on in order to bring attention to the fact that the hon. member has not asked the question.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, there were many questions in there for the hon. member, but he was so busy talking he did not hear my questions.

What I think has been a very exciting time in terms of understanding that what is to be instead of the "gotcha" kind of politics which the member, who is still talking, is very adept at, is really to change the governance into—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for St. Albert on a point of order.

Supply

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I want to point out that I am not proficient at all in gotcha politics, but I am interested in a question for the minister on the health issues of today.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for St. Albert will also have his chance. The next block of questions is for the Alliance.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, one of the things I think we need to learn is that we need a learning culture. I think there are simple things like knitting a sweater or following a recipe, there are complicated things like using physics to get a rocket on the moon and there are complex things like raising a child.

As the members opposite would understand, for every complex problem they have a simple solution that is wrong.

So it is in understanding the complexity of health care, understanding that Canada led the way on the social determinants of health, and understanding that it is only in our ability to view health as a complex adaptive system with feedback loops and continuous improvement that we are going to be able to provide Canadians with the quality of health care and the healthy quality of life we all know they deserve.

I hope that as we look to this council the ugly rumours that the council will have three or four staff members rather than the 30 or 40 staff members that the councils of the ministers of education have, I think that as we think of the kind of quality of chair that we are hoping for, Madam Minister, I am sure that the quality of chair we would want for this council would need a proper secretariat for support.

Then the secretariat must have the capacity to continue an ongoing dialogue with Canadians, as was evidenced by the Romanow commission. The idea that we have to be able to keep talking to Canadians about their priorities and their concerns will really allow us to be the learning culture, to be able to adapt the best practices for consulting and engaging civil society and to be able to also keep talking to the health professionals and the wellness and other practitioners, educators and other stakeholders.

I am wondering about a legislative framework. I am wondering whether there would be a way, by enshrining the health council, that we could begin to look at adopting Romanow's six principles of accountability. I think we actually have to move on carrots and sticks instead of sticks. We should look at the kind of clearing house that could be possible with all the great things that are happening across the country. Maybe once a year when the health council has its annual general meeting, we could have a conference, Madam Minister, where the best things that are happening across the country—

• (2145)

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I really appreciate and enjoy the intervention by the member for St. Paul's, but I would like to hear the response by the Minister of Health. I really would like to hear a question here so that we can—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order please. That was not a point of order. That was a point of debate. I may remind the hon. member for St. Albert that the hon. member can use her 20 minute slot in every which way she wants. She can ask or not ask a question as she

pleases. Could we show some patience? The hon. member for St. Paul's has another six minutes.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Chair, as we move forward and look to the area of health care for which we have the most responsibility, we actually are very embarrassed about our performance in aboriginal health, as the previous member talked about. If we talk about closing the health gap for our aboriginal people, if we think of bottling what we learned in the SARS episode, my main question for the minister would be how we could move to a public health infrastructure that would use all of the good hospices of a health council, use all of what we have learned from Marc Lalonde and forward. Does the minister see a place for CDC north? Is there a way that we could track how we are doing? How could we move forward as the Canadian Public Health Association has asked for in its meetings this week?

That is what Canadians want from us. They want a trusted voice that would be able to communicate to all Canadians but also provide the leadership that allows the kind of collaboration that is needed. We know that is the only thing that will work in this country.

It is too bad the member for St. Albert is going to miss my big question.

Mr. John Williams: I am back. Don't go away.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett: You are supposed to have a drum roll, but I just asked the question.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, I want to thank the hon. member for St. Paul's for her very thoughtful and provocative discussion.

The member asked a series of questions which some hon. members missed because they came in late. Her series of questions get to the heart of some of the more important issues in terms of how we rebuild the confidence of Canadians in our health care system, what we are learning and how we use what we are learning, our research and innovation to have a fairer system. Are we striking the right balance between prevention and treatment? Are we listening to Canadians? They are very important issues.

If we have learned anything coming out of the Romanow report and other reports and discussions that have taken place in other places it is that Canadians value their public health system very much. They value their publicly financed health care system. Canadians want to know that their politicians and their health care professionals, but especially their politicians, are acting in ways that will renew and sustain that health care system for them in the future. Saying it is not good enough. We have to have mechanisms by which we can enhance that public confidence.

The hon. member spoke so eloquently about the health council, which is very important to her and very important to all of us who are committed to enhancing public confidence, to increasing transparency and accountability in our health care system. They are committed to answering some of those questions. Do we have a fair system? Can we make it fairer? What are we using all this new research and technology and innovation for? Are we getting better health outcomes? How is it distributed within our society? Does everybody have access to it and if not, on what terms?

Supply

A health council could help us answer a lot of those questions. It is not just about how many dollars we spend and where the dollars go. It is about some of the other issues in terms of the health outcomes. It is about what our dollars are being used for in terms of ensuring that we are learning and that we are rebuilding Canadians' confidence in a way that reinforces fundamental values.

The hon. member asked specifically about public health infrastructure. We have talked a lot about that this evening. This is very important. A number of reports have been done in relation to how we need to move forward in building a national public health infrastructure. It is not a federal public health infrastructure. The hon. member was very careful to talk about the importance of collaboration within our federation. It is not a federal public health infrastructure. We have a piece; the provinces have a piece; front line, local public health officials and workers have a piece.

It is how we in the federal government need to show leadership and take up the challenge. We have to show the lessons we learned from SARS, the lessons we learned last summer from West Nile, the lessons we learned from September 11. Those lessons will enhance our public health infrastructure.

We have learned from September 11, but we will learn much more from SARS. We will learn whether or not we need a CDC-like institution in this country, a go to place, where it does not matter whether it is a local government, a state government or a federal government, it is a place we can turn to for the assistance, advice and the answers to certain questions.

The hon. member asked very serious questions. She raised some very important issues in relation to the future of our health care system, the heart of which is the confidence that Canadians have in it.

• (2150)

Mr. Monte Solberg: Madam Chair, I want to pursue a line of questioning that started a long time ago but has since dropped. It has to do with what happened in 1995 when the government arbitrarily cut spending on health care.

I want to remind the minister that at the time when the government cut spending, it did so without consultation with the provinces. It just went ahead and did it. The provinces obviously did not agree, but the provinces are charged with the responsibility of providing health care services to Canadians.

The reason I want to raise this is I want to make reference to the fact that recently the member for LaSalle—Émard went out west and wanted to talk about western alienation. He was wondering why we have western alienation in Canada today. I wonder if it might have something to do with the fact that the government arbitrarily withdrew from agreements with the provinces to provide what is arguably the most essential service the province could provide, which is health care. The federal government just pulled out and left the provinces holding the bag.

I wonder if the minister might understand how this contributes to a sense of western alienation. It is not just western alienation. It happens in Newfoundland as well. I wonder if she might understand how this leads to a situation where provinces are openly talking about collecting their own income tax. In that way they could ensure

that they kept the money that was supposed to go to them for things like health care services. They would get that first, take it off the top and send the remainder to Ottawa.

I wonder if the minister, and also the former finance minister, understand that they in fact are responsible for helping create western alienation because they do not keep their deals with the provinces.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, as is often the case, it is not as simple as the official opposition and the hon. member would suggest. In 1995 as I have already indicated here this evening, the country was facing a serious deficit situation and a debt wall. That had to be dealt with and we did deal with it. In part we dealt with it with the urging from the official opposition.

I have already acknowledged that we were dealing with a deficit and a debt. We had to take measures to bring the fiscal house of the nation back in order.

I take umbrage with the suggestion that there were no discussions with the provinces at the time. I take umbrage with the suggestion that this was simply dumped on the provinces. While we knew the deficit and debt had to be dealt with, and that transfer payments would have to be cut back as well, there were discussions with provincial and territorial finance ministers and governments.

That was the time at which the CHST was crafted. The provinces received additional flexibility which was what they wanted to deal with the fact that yes, there were fewer dollars flowing to them. We know that. That was no secret. We did not hide that fact but it is wrong to suggest that there were no discussions with the provinces in relation to what happened at that time. We were all facing tough choices.

Today we have an economy that is the envy of the world. We have an economy that produces the revenues that permits us to reinvest, be it at the provincial level or the federal level, in health care and other important social services.

I really do take umbrage with the hon. member's simplistic approach to the complex challenge we faced in 1995 and in fact, that which actually happened. All of us, the federal and provincial governments, were fighting to deal with our deficits and debts. All Canadians sacrificed. Now we are reaping the benefits of those sacrifices.

• (2155)

Mr. Monte Solberg: Madam Chair, not all Canadians sacrificed. During that period of time the federal government continued to spend about \$15 billion a year on grants and contributions. The big recipients were big companies. Corporate welfare continued to flow unbelievably during that period of time. I do not accept what the minister says. I think the government could have cut in a lot of other places. I also dispute that the provinces consented to this. They certainly did not.

Hon. Anne McLellan: I didn't say they had consented.

Supply

Mr. Monte Solberg: Now she is saying they did not. She says that they consulted but ignored them because she knows very well the provinces would never agree to that. They would never agree to go ahead with big cuts without changes at the same time to the Canada Health Act, which is where I want to go now.

The truth is that over the last number of years waiting lists for critical surgeries of all kinds have been going up. The Canadian Institute for Health Information specifically points to some examples of that in its 2002 report. If one were to judge a health care system, one would have to judge it by how it serves patients.

I want to argue that the government has done a poor job of providing the provinces with the tools they need to improve health care because it adheres to this doctrine with respect to the Canada Health Act. It has refused to loosen up some of the strictures of the Canada Health Act which make it impossible for the provinces to truly address some of the problems that they face.

Yes, the government has put back some of the money it took out but it has come nowhere near addressing the real reforms that need to be undertaken to ensure those waiting lists go down and are dealt with.

Why is the government so doctrinaire on the Canada Health Act knowing that it is responsible for helping to drive up the waiting periods for people who are facing critical treatments and critical surgeries of all kinds?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, far from being doctrinaire, the five principles in the Canada Health Act, if that is what the hon. member is referring to, are flexible principles that represent Canadian values and Canadian principles.

The hon. member accuses the Government of Canada of being doctrinaire, I would remind him that those five principles were reinforced and endorsed by all first ministers in September 2000 and in fact were reinforced and endorsed yet again by all first ministers in February of this year. It is not us who are being doctrinaire. All first ministers believe that those five principles in the Canada Health Act represent fundamental values that animate our health care system.

Now building on that, if we look at the principles, the principles are not straitjackets. The principles are flexible to reflect the fact that the health care system is large, dynamic and constantly changing, and one must encourage innovation and creativity. Nothing in the five principles of the Canada Health Act prevent that innovation or creativity. That is why the provinces are experimenting in so many different ways around a host of things, including different delivery mechanisms for publicly financed health care.

I would have to take real exception to the comment that the hon. member makes around the five principles of the Canadian Health Act because they seem to be embraced by all our first ministers, as well as most Canadians. In fact, some Canadians would suggest that we add a principle called "accountability".

However the member is right. Health care systems are judged by how they serve their patients, which is why the health accord, and not only the new dollars but the structural change that is embedded in that health accord, is so important. It is only through that structural change that this system will be able to better serve its clients, its patients.

● (2200)

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Chair, I would like to change the subject to something that is really important, and that is be the SARS situation that we have been experiencing over the last couple of months in Canada and around the world. It continues to be out of control in China. I think we should consider that very carefully as we discern what we have learned over the last little while.

In a very non-partisan way, this all started on March 26 when I gave my questions to the minister prior to her coming into the House. I did not want to make this a political issue but an issue that was of most importance for Canadians. We need to do that when it comes to a crisis situation, which SARS certainly could have developed into in Canada, and some people thought it actually had.

On March 26 we asked the minister questions on this so she could get out in front of Canadians and convince them that everything was being done to contain SARS and to protect them from the virus. However, on March 27 a mistake was made when the WHO actually recommended screening at our airports on international flights out of our country. That recommendation was an eyeball to eyeball or direct interview as a screening prerogative or a screening measure at the airports. At that time when the question was asked of the minister, the answer was that it would clog up the system too much even though that was what the WHO had recommended.

I wonder why the minister did not, at that time, apply an aggressive approach rather than a voluntary single sheet of paper that people could pick up or not pick up. Obviously we were too lax and we ended up exporting SARS.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, as I have said on a number of occasions in the House, we were, I believe, one of the very first countries to act upon the WHO recommendation in relation to screening. We acted immediately. The WHO has, throughout this entire process, indicated that it approved of the screening processes we put in place.

I will quote Dr. David Heymann from May 1, just two weeks ago, in Toronto. When he was asked directly, in relation to the travel advisory, he said:

We did not make our decision based on something that Canada was doing wrong. Canada was doing everything right, including screening passengers as they left.

The hon. member can make as much of this as he wants but we took the WHO recommendation seriously in relation to screening. We did a risk assessment on a daily basis as to what we thought was required, both for importation and exportation. Every day we addressed the question of whether our screening measures were sufficient in relation to the risk assessment on that day. Those measures were progressively increased as the public health challenge of SARS moved forward in the City of Toronto.

We continue to enhance those procedures because, first and foremost, after the great job Ontario has done on the front lines, we want to catch any individuals coming into this country. We do not want the importation of SARS into this country after our control and containment measures have worked.

Supply

The WHO is quite rightly concerned about exportation in terms of the rest of the world. We have progressively enhanced these procedures. We also have offered to share what we learn, in terms of our screening procedures, especially as it relates to technological tools of control and containment, with the WHO and the rest of the world.

We do not know how effective infrared machines will be as a matter of public health. Therefore we will be doing that analysis over the coming weeks and months and we will share that with the rest of the world. That is how we learn. We take our obligations seriously, which is why we perform the daily risk assessment and enhanced screening procedures, as needed, on the basis of the risk assessment.

• (2205)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Just on a point of clarification. There is no rule that the answer or the question have to be a certain length of time or of equal weight. That is up to the individual speakers. It is not up to the Chair. Yes, I am here to balance it out but I will not be the one to tell the person asking the question or the person answering the question how long it should take. That would be presumptuous of the Chair, in my opinion.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Chair, we had this debate earlier in the evening. The decision at that time was that if the question lasted a minute then the answer would be roughly a minute. It could not be disproportionate, within certain bounds. My challenge is that that has not taken place this evening.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I want to make the point that there is no rule. If there is agreement that the House wants to proceed in that way, the Chair is at the House's disposal.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I would propose that in order to regularize this debate we ensure that the response by the minister is no longer than the question asked by the member so that we have some rules in the House.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I think we all understand very well that it is easy to pose a question but it might require a complex answer. It is easy to think the question is simple but members know full well that the details for which they are asking sometimes require more time for the answer. That is obvious.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Does the hon. member for Yellowhead want to continue this debate?

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Chair, I just wanted to say that we had this debate earlier in the evening with the previous Chair and a decision was made at that time. However I will leave it at that and hope there is discretion on both sides so we can continue in a civil manner.

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I would like to elaborate on the point. Perhaps the way to proceed is that every time the minister answers a question, the next question should be half as long as the minister's answer.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, we do know that the minister appreciates the opportunity for wholesome and fulsome answers. We know that from her appearances at committee. However wholesome and fulsome answers are not the point. The point is debate. That is why we have five hours in this Chamber rather than five hours in committee. This is debate. I do not think any member of the

opposition or any member of the government should be able to talk for 10 minutes or 15 minutes without interruption. This is about debate. This is about the pros and the cons.

I would suggest, Madam Chair, that you live with the agreement—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order, please. I think the Chair has had enough advice for the evening, thank you very much. Shall we proceed now because we are eating into the time of the hon. member for Yellowhead.

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Chair, I would like to go back to the minister's last answer because she likes to quote Dr. Heymann, the executive director of the WHO. She claims that Dr. Heymann said that Canada was the first to implement screening measures at airports.

I would like to say that it is not so important how quickly this was done, it is how effectively it was done. He obviously felt that it was not done effectively. On April 23 he said that we now had these areas with a high magnitude of disease and a great risk of transmission locally outside of the usual health workers. He said that we were still exporting these cases.

April 23 was the day on which the WHO actually gave the travel advisory to Toronto. The next day, April 24, Dr. Heymann said:

When you see exportation of cases it makes you question whether the control measures going on are effective to control the disease. Possibly Toronto was not able to really control the spread.

When we hear these kinds of comments coming from the same individual, obviously he was very concerned and convinced that we were exporting the disease. The screening measures at the airport were not done appropriately and are still not being done appropriately. The minister has suggested that she is doing everything appropriately and in a timely fashion. I would suggest that is not happening.

We know that someone can leave China, arrive in a third country, and then travel on to another airport in Calgary or Edmonton, for example, without appropriate screening measures in place for SARS. If the minister has learned anything she should learn that we cannot take a passive approach to something as serious as SARS. It could elevate into a national disaster yet. Now that we have it contained, I would ask the minister to please not do that.

Does the minister have the appropriate screening measures in place right now for those third party travellers coming into this country? We know that the SARS virus is out of control in China and, as sure as we are in this place this evening, we are in danger. Will the minister do the right thing and make sure those measures are in place?

• (2210)

Hon. Anne McLellan: As I have already indicated, Madam Chair, during the weeks when the SARS outbreak was at its height, we did a daily risk assessment in relation to the procedures around screening. I have indicated in this House that we are increasing our procedures, especially as they relate to importation. This speaks directly to the hon. member's question around indirect movement of people, say from an affected area like Beijing via Frankfurt, New York or Toronto.

Supply

We are very sensitive to ensuring we do everything that is reasonably possible to prevent that kind of importation of case. That is why I indicated there would be new measures put in place. We are working with the CCRA. Incoming passengers will be requested to fill in forms, not only providing us with travel locator information but answering questions and providing information in relation to the symptoms of SARS. Also they will be expected to answer specific questions in relation to whether they have been in any SARS affected areas or have any symptoms. We will have Health Canada officials working with CCRA officials. If CCRA officials see anything in relation to the response to the questions asked, that person will be pulled out of line and will go to a secondary screening procedure where Health Canada health professionals will be available to ask follow up questions. We are taking very seriously the issue of importation into this country and we will continue to take the steps that we believe are required by the risk assessment.

I come back to the point that there is no system in the world that will pick up every person who may ultimately contract SARS or be a SARS carrier because someone can come from Beijing, New York or Toronto and show no symptoms whatsoever. The incubation period is 10 days. Six days after being here, the person may get a fever and may become a suspect or a probable case. There is no system in the world that could pick that up. That is the reality of infectious disease. That is the reality with which we have to deal.

[Translation]

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to share my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

I would like to stress that Health Canada has adopted an important measure to strengthen its capacity to monitor marketed products. The creation of a new marketed health products directorate, an organization exclusively responsible for the surveillance of marketed health products, clearly illustrates the increased importance of this activity within the department.

● (2215)

[English]

The directorate will have initial funding of approximately \$10 million. Of this \$10 million, \$7 million is new funding provided in the 2002-03 fiscal year to strengthen post-market surveillance activities in the department.

The new organization will consolidate and continue the work previously undertaken in different areas of Health Canada. It will support further improvements in capacity to identify safety hazards and communicate any product related risks to health care professionals and the public in a more timely manner.

[Translation]

Canadians expect drugs and other health products to which they have access to be both safe and effective. Health Canada is the federal authority responsible for pre-market approval of drugs, based on the exhaustive data provided by the manufacturers demonstrating that, during clinical trials, their products were safe, effective and of high quality.

I can assure the House that we take this responsibility very seriously. Canada, following in the steps of other countries, is

placing greater importance on the surveillance of the risks and benefits of marketed drugs. We realize today that our marketed products surveillance activities are as important as our rigorous pre-market approval process.

Surveillance of marketed products provides information on the safety and effectiveness of drugs used in real situations. To facilitate reporting by health professionals and consumers of undesirable effects and incidents related to drugs, Health Canada has set up new toll-free phone and fax numbers.

[English]

Health Canada has been in discussions with the U.S. food and drug administration about gaining access to its data on adverse drug reactions. Data from the United States is particularly useful because of its considerably larger population base. International collaborations like this one augment domestic data and help us to identify public health and safety risks as quickly as possible.

To improve how health data communicates health risks, an electronic mailing list has been created to electronically disseminate the adverse reaction news letter and advisories for health professionals and consumers. This news letter, which has recently been redesigned to present new safety information in a more user friendly manner, is also now being distributed to physicians as a separate attachment to the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I do feel rather terrible that I have to interject, but this is a situation where we are supposed to be able to ask questions of the minister. We have speeches from the government side that seem to go on interminably and yet we find there is no opportunity to ask questions of the minister about the estimates of the department.

Will the member ask a question or will we have a speech that goes on ad nauseam? That is my question.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: The nausea comes from your side.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I would caution members on the use of certain words which may or may not be construed as parliamentary. I will rule if we continue along these lines.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, I also rise on a point of order. I am afraid that my hon. friend's comments are quite inappropriate to suggest that someone is going on ad nauseam. He knows the rules in this place. He knows this a five hour period of time when the minister is here and there are all kinds of opportunities to ask the minister questions. She has been giving answers for several hours already and will be here for more than an hour.

I find his interjection at this point not very helpful. I find it entirely inappropriate and I think that he ought to show respect to members of the House and listen to the comments of my hon. colleague.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: This is becoming a debate and not a point of order. I would not like to eat into the time that the hon. member has available because we have already used up three minutes on so-called points of order.

Supply

• (2220)

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Madam Chair, I was speaking about the adverse reaction news letter and advisories which is a separate attachment to the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. This increases its visibility and ensures distribution to the Canadian Medical Association's 64,000 members.

[Translation]

Health Canada has had a system for monitoring and assessing undesirable effects of drugs since 1965. With its vast experience in this field, the department is in an excellent position, in collaboration with all stakeholders, to improve post-market surveillance of all marketed health products, so that all Canadians will have access to important safety information.

[English]

I would also like to briefly discuss the issue of mandatory reporting. Department officials are conducting a review of the Canadian—

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise again on a point of order. I have to say that this is about the accountability of the minister for her estimates before Parliament. When the member stands and says in a speech that she would like to discuss a point that she may have, it means the minister does not have to answer for her estimates. This is a process whereby Parliament will examine the minister on the estimates of her department. This is not about members of Parliament discussing their position on health care. It is about the accountability of the minister for her department.

I would ask you, Madam Chair, that you stay to the true intent of the reason that we are here for five hours, at 10:20 this evening, which is to discuss, debate and examine the minister on her estimates. That is why we are here.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. As I said earlier, the member knows the rules here. By now my hon. colleague across the way perhaps he has been here in the past for similar meetings of this sort in the House committee of the whole reviewing estimates. He knows full well the process and I am not sure why he wants to delay things this way or try to establish some bizarre precedent.

The fact of the matter is that he can use his time as he wishes, members on this side can do the same and he knows that. Members are entitled to speak during their time. If they wish to fill their time speaking, they may do so, expressing their views and their concerns about the issues at hand, or they can ask questions or do a mixture of both, as they wish.

He knows the rules. I do not know why he is trying to change the rules or set some bizarre precedent but he ought to let the thing go on and not delay it. If he wants to get back to having more questions and having a turn for his side again, then I would think he would want to show respect for members, listen to their points of view, and wait his turn.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Madam Chair, I would also like to simply add, in the minute that remains to me, that department officials are conducting a review of the Canadian adverse drug reaction reporting system, which will examine the barriers to reporting on alternate strategies to increase reporting rates. The new Marketed Health

Products Directorate will draw on additional advice through increased emphasis on involvement of external experts and stakeholder advice and input concerning marketed health product safety and effectiveness.

[Translation]

In the few seconds I have left, I would like to add that the department has worked very hard, not only to respond, but also to anticipate what could happen during such unfortunate circumstances as those faced by Toronto, other parts of Canada, and other parts of the world. The Department of Health is ready—it has been and it still is—to protect the lives of Canadians.

[English]

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I have to point out that this is about examining the minister on her estimates. We have had a speech by the member of the governing party that did not even culminate in a question for the minister, and now we will be moving on to the next speaker which may or may not culminate in a question to the minister, but the minister is absolutely absolved from having to answer questions.

Parliament negotiated an all party agreement that we would have this opportunity to examine the minister of our choice in the opposition about the estimates of the department. That is why we are here this evening, to examine the minister on the estimates. Therefore these debates and speeches, which mean that the minister is absolved of answering the questions, mean that the debate this evening is irrelevant. You should ensure that the minister has questions to answer and that this debate be on—

• (2225)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for St. Albert has made his point but again I would like to remind the hon. member for St. Albert and the other members in the House that the Chair is not here to referee. There perhaps were certain practices in the past in terms of how we examined the estimates but there certainly are no hard rules in either Montpetit or Marleau in terms of how we deal with the estimates. If each member chooses not to ask a question, it is not up to the Chair then to insist that a member from either side of the House ask a question.

I think the hon. member for St. Albert has had five occasions to put his point on the record.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, last year was the first year that we started this new process. There is very little precedent on the books about the procedure this evening. One cannot look at 100 years of precedents and say “This is how we have done it and these are the rules”. This is a brand new procedure and if we allow this type of process of speeches and speeches and speeches, rather than examination of the minister, that will become the precedent.

Supply

Therefore, Madam Chair, you have a responsibility to ensure that the rules that were negotiated by the parties are adhered to, which is the examination of the minister on the estimates that are before the House to ensure that she has the answers and that she can convince the House that we should vote for what she is asking. That is why this is about answers and not about speeches.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The hon. member for St. Albert is right in stating that this is a new practice in the House and that there is no precedent created. As the hon. member knows, the House can choose to revisit the Standing Orders and perhaps put more guidance within the Standing Orders in terms of how the Chair should or should not rule in terms of the allotted time for questions and answers.

However, at the moment and in keeping with the Standing Orders, it is not up to the Chair to tell members how they should proceed.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Chair, I rise today to take part in exactly what the hon. member for St. Albert has talked about, an examination of the estimates of the Department of Health. I will examine the estimates no different than I would as a member of the committee that I sit on, which is the heritage committee. I am no longer a parliamentary secretary so as an ordinary member I also have the right to question my minister.

I rise today to talk about the things that are important to the people in my riding. One of the great things that the opposition members always speak about is accountability for their constituents.

There is a lot of noise from the other side. If the hon. member would just let me speak I would like to question my minister, as we on this side do. We question our ministers in caucus all the time. Let me share with members what we talk about in caucus. We talk about what is important to our constituents.

I would like to talk about mandatory nutrition labelling. With all due respect I cannot ask a question unless I am allowed to say a few things.

I am sure the member, as chair of the public accounts committee, does not stop people in committee from speaking before they have had a chance to speak. In fact, I know he is a member who is very concerned about parliamentary proceedings, and is very concerned that members on his committee have a chance to speak.

Since we are in committee of the whole, I would ask the member to please give me the same common courtesy that he would give the members in the public accounts committee to say what I would like to say and to ask a question.

With all due respect, I know he is a very good chair. I know that tomorrow we do not want to pose a question in question period which is only a 30 second question and answer period. I would like to have a little more time to pose my question to my minister a little more eloquently than they do in 30 seconds.

As I was saying, what is important to the people in my constituency is mandatory nutrition labelling. So that people understand the nature of my question it is important to understand the history. On December 12, 2002, mandatory nutrition labelling was introduced in Canada. New regulations under the Food and

Drugs Act now require that labels of most prepackaged foods sold in Canada carry a standard nutritional facts table.

Why is this important? Because it will enable consumers to make better decisions about the nutritional value of prepackaged foods that they purchase. Why is that a concern? Because we as consumers in Canada buy prepackaged foods. Having nutritional information that is easier to read and on more foods is essential to making informed choices for healthy eating and healthy living. Why is that important? That was one of the priorities of the government. It is not just about health and hospitals. It is about ensuring that we make the right choices in life and that we as individuals make those choices.

Let me talk a little about the nutrition facts tables before I lead up to my question. The nutrition facts tables list the calories and 13 key nutrients contained in a specified amount of food. The extent of the mandatory disclosure of a food's nutrient content and the manner in which information is displayed places Canada at the forefront of nutritional labelling. This is an important priority of the government.

As a member of Parliament I have personally taken goals from the Speech from the Throne that applied to healthy living. Eight months ago I stopped smoking. I did it because it was a time in my life that I had to be an example to my children and to other people. I could not be a member of the government and talk about what I was going to do about health and how I was going to eat properly unless I did something about it.

I would encourage all members across the way, instead of standing up and saying why we are not doing anything about anything, to start talking about how we can all work together for a healthier environment.

● (2230)

Yes, we are here to question the Minister of Health. I commend her for jogging and running 10K races. She is an example of what all Canadians should be doing.

We talk about questions. We do not just have questions in the House of Commons. We have questions and comments. Aside from the fact that she is doing a great job as the Minister of Health, she is also an example to all Canadians, especially young Canadian women.

We do not need to be anorexic. We need to be nutritional. We are part of this nutritional labelling. We are jogging. We are having healthy lifestyles and we are making a difference. We are being leaders in our communities.

Members ask the minister to be accountable. The minister is accountable for everything she does. She is accountable not just with her legislation, but in everything she does.

I am here this evening at 10:35 to commend our Minister of Health for being a leader as the health minister and for being a leader in what she is doing for my community in Toronto. I would ask all members on both sides of the House to applaud and commend her and to thank her for being here to address our issues and our questions this evening.

● (2235)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: On a point of order, the hon. member for St. Albert.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I was not rising on a point of order. I just wanted to commend the Minister of Health for the leadership she has provided to this country and also for running 10K races as the member said.

I do enjoy the friendship I have with the Minister of Health and the conversations I have with her. I would hope that we can get on with questions and answers. That is what it is all about.

We have an hour and a half left. We have wasted so much time. I hope our critics for health care—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, I am pleased to have a chance to participate in this historic debate, an in-depth look at the estimates for the Department of Health.

Five hours is a big improvement over the hour we might have had in the past in committee. I commend the minister for being here. I should let her know, though, that five hours falls far short of the 50 hours or so that we used to grill the minister of health in Manitoba. She may live to regret the day that we have opened up this door.

Let me start by asking about the Romanow report. The first question I obviously have is, why have the minister and the government failed to implement the Romanow report as a blueprint for the future of health care?

I know that is a broad general question but Canadians everywhere are asking us that question. Why would the government spend millions of dollars on an independent commission, spend a great deal of time with Canadians investigating their feelings about health care, ensure that a blueprint evolved from that process, and then end up not doing anything about it?

Canadians are asking us, why did this happen? How did we have this huge process, the expenditure of time, an in-depth look at values, and then a blueprint basically ignored by the government of the day?

Is there an intention on the part of the government to recognize the Romanow Commission report as a blueprint and to begin to implement it at least on a piece by piece basis? If it is not prepared at this point to give whole hearted support for the report, will the government give us an indication of how it views the Romanow blueprint and what it intends to do with it?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, I thank the hon. member for her questions. Even though she is no longer my health critic I thank her very much for her ongoing interest and commitment in the area of health and health care.

I must disagree with the hon. member. Mr. Romanow's report provided much of the guidance in terms of the first ministers accord that ultimately was reached on February 4. It will continue to inspire many of the actions, and form many of the actions that we take and other governments take as we move forward in the months and years ahead. But just to give some specific examples, Mr. Romanow talked about the importance of primary health care reform. He talked about the importance of home care. We must start to look at our health care

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system as a continuum of care and home care needs to be included as an insured service.

What are we doing? We are starting with post acute home care and palliative home care. We are starting to develop that continuum of health care and expanding the basket of things that are covered by provincial health plans. We are looking at the area of catastrophic drug coverage. Mr. Romanow talked about that as did Senator Kirby. It has been identified for us by a lot of Canadians.

Many of the breakthrough drugs and therapies can cost thousands of dollars a month. That is just too much for some families. As we said 50 years or 40 years ago about the fact that we should not have to sell our home or give up our entire life savings to be able to access an acute care hospital, we should not have to mortgage a home, give it up or sell all our life savings to be able to afford something like a \$10,000 a month arthritis therapy, for example.

That is why we are moving on catastrophic drug coverage with the provinces and the territories. The Romanow Commission formed the health accord to a very significant degree. We are moving on the health council. The health council is only one example of the broader principle of accountability which everybody agrees is absolutely key. We are building on the work of CIHI and PIRC, the predictions indicators project.

We will create a health council and expand our prediction indicators. There will be expanded reporting and annual reporting in relation to important aspects of the health accord. It will provide Canadians with the information they need to be able to compare how their health care system is performing in their city, with another city in their province, or a city across the country.

We are reaching a point, based on the good work that is done at the provincial and territorial level, and our own level, where we can now actually compare apples and apples in the health care system. That is really important.

Mr. Romanow also talked about the importance of high end diagnostic equipment. We are still, in relation to some areas, a little bit below the OECD average, but because of what we did in September 2000 we are much closer to that OECD average as it relates to high end diagnostics. We have created a medical equipment fund that responds to that need but also has greater flexibility.

If we talk to a health minister from a province like Prince Edward Island, he would say there are MRIs for 100,000 people and there is no need for another MRI, but that there is a need for beds and basic x-ray machines. That is why we have expanded the medical equipment fund to accommodate those legitimate real needs on the front lines of health care. We have also expanded that fund to permit training because even in well off provinces like my own, Alberta, the health minister would say that there are enough MRIs, but that they are not run to the maximum utility because there are not enough trained technicians and radiologists to maximize the utility. We have increased the flexibility to permit training for either new technicians or radiologists and to retrain existing technicians and radiologists.

I am not here to suggest to the hon. member we accept—

Supply

• (2240)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Order, please. The hon. member for St. Albert.

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, the point is that we do need more MRIs. That is the issue about health care today.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Madam Chair, I appreciate the answer from the minister, however, the facts do not make her case.

Looking at the budget there is a huge gap between what is in the budget for health care and what Romanow recommended. I would simply like an acknowledgement that there is a Romanow gap in terms of the funding of health care. The provinces have said the Romanow gap is \$5.1 billion or \$5.2 billion. Does the minister accept that figure and agree with it, yes or no?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, there are many, including probably some provinces who would not accept Mr. Romanow's numbers because they do not think it is enough. The numbers game is not really that useful to us in terms of understanding what we want our health care system to be; what are our objectives for our health care system; how do we reach those objectives; what do we need to do; what is the money required to achieve those objectives?

People can argue about whether we have exactly the right amount of money or whether it is too little. My guess is very few people would argue that it is too much, except maybe some in the Alliance Party, I do not know. I take the point that there are very few who would argue that it is too much.

Having said that, we think \$34.8 billion is an awful lot of money, new money over the next five years. Money is not the only answer. There would never be enough money for health care without structural change. What we have to do is ensure structural change to make the changes that are necessary to sustain the system. There will come a point when Canadians ask if we have put enough money into the health care system. What percentage of GDP should a province or a nation be providing for health care? Those are legitimate questions. It is not only about the money.

We have put a lot of new money in over the next five years. Let us see what we get for that. I think that is the question Canadians are asking. The Canadians I talk to ask me "How much money was put in? How much money do we spend? Are we getting better health outcomes and if not, why not?"

I do not think it is about more money. Canadians are very skeptical about whether we need to put more money into the system. They want to know how the money presently in the system is being used and what they get for it. Those are really important questions. They want to know whether there is waste and inefficiency and what we can do to restructure the system before they put more of their hard-earned dollars into the system. Those are the questions we should be asking.

• (2245)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Madam Chair, in the budget there is a funding gap in terms of Romanow's recommendations. There is also an accountability gap. We are certainly not suggesting all of the debate on health care is about money but that is an important part considering the government of the day is responsible for significant cuts in the health care system over the last number of years.

My simple straightforward question for the minister should be answered with a yes or no. What is the amount of new money in this budget for health care in terms of the first ministers' agreement for the year 2003-04, the amount of new money in terms of sustaining our health care system?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, looking quickly at my FMM accord funding chart, the total funding increases are \$4.238 billion in 2003-04. It includes the CHST increase, the CHST supplement in this year. It includes the health reform fund; the diagnostic equipment fund; the information technology fund; research hospitals; dollars for governance and accountability. Then we have first nations health at 180 million new dollars this year and we have 312 million new dollars for other aspects of health and health care.

I want the hon. member to understand these are not all transfer dollars to the provinces because we do not accept the fact that the only dollars to be counted in terms of new money for health and health care are dollars directly transferred to the provinces. As I am looking at my FMM accord, the total amount for this year for health and the health care system is \$4.238 billion.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Madam Chair, it is important to distinguish between global new funding for health care and transfers to the provinces since that is so fundamental to our ability to sustain a national system. It is important for the minister to acknowledge the fact that according to her own records and provincial analyses of her departmental budget, only \$2.5 billion is being allocated as new money to the provinces for the year 2003-04.

We have to understand this whole debate. When the minister talks about this huge amount of 34-plus billion dollars going to health care, Canadians know that is a camouflage. We are here today to try to get the facts about what the government is actually spending in terms of new dollars on health care. Let the record show that for the year 2003-04 there is \$2.5 billion going to the provinces as new money. If the minister wants to challenge those figures, she certainly is welcome to.

Let me ask her specifically a question that I tried to raise at the finance committee. I assumed I would get a straightforward answer on this question but failed to do so. Let me put it to the health minister.

What is the value of the cash transfer to the provinces today? What is the percentage share of the federal government in terms of financing our health care system? I would like a percentage calculation based on cash transfers to the provinces, not tax points, not equalization, strictly cash transfers.

I ask this question because it is important for the future of our health care system. It is the glue that holds our system together. I raise it because, as Roy Romanow and others have said time and again, what is important is the actual transfer of cash to the provinces. I want to quote from his report where he said:

Supply

While a tax transfer theoretically should provide stability and predictability, the actual history of tax transfers for health indicates they are quickly ignored and discounted by the jurisdictions that receive them. In addition, there is no guarantee that the revenue generated from tax points will be used for health care. Finally, and most importantly, however, tax point transfers eliminate any possibility of the federal government facilitating future expectations or expansions of medicare or helping to safeguard the fundamental principles underpinning the system.

My question is what is the role at the financial level of the federal government in funding our health care system? What is the actual amount of the cash transfer and the percentage involvement by the federal government?

• (2250)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, for 2003-04 the actual cash transfer is \$19.8 billion.

I completely reject the argument, whether Mr. Romanow makes it or anyone else, that we do not include tax points, which in fact lead to a calculation. If we include \$19.8 billion cash, tax points of \$17.5 billion, plus an additional \$1 billion coming out of our health reform fund for this year, a total of \$38.3 billion in 2003-04 are transferred to the provinces.

Those tax points are important. It is up to the provinces to decide what they use the money raised through those tax points on. That is why they were given to the provinces, to provide them with that kind of flexibility in terms of planning. It is up to their voters to keep those provincial governments accountable. If the provincial voters want the value in cash of those tax points spent on health care, they should be making that case. If they do not, then I would suggest that is a really important public accountability issue in relation to what the value in cash of those tax points is being used for in provinces across the country.

We know there is \$19.8 billion in cash, \$17.5 billion in tax points and an additional \$1 billion in new money from the health reform fund to begin the structural changes that we talk about in the health accord. That is \$38.3 billion in this year as it relates to cash and tax transfers and the health reform fund. Most Canadians would say that is a pretty hefty chunk of change on top of what the provinces spend.

Canadians are asking "What do I get for that in my health care system? Am I healthier than I was and if not, why not? Am I as healthy as the people who live in the province next door and if not, why not?" Those are all really important questions around accountability and it is not all about more money.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Madam Chair, it is certainly not only about more money, but it is important for the federal government to be involved at a reasonable level in the funding of our health care system. Roy Romanow's recommendation, which follows many others, was simply to convince the government in the short term to get the federal share of funding of our health care system up to 25%.

The government's budget and the first ministers agreement do not accomplish that. That is a problem. It may be up to 20% when all is said and done, but it is still a long way from the fifty-fifty partnership that built medicare and it is not close to the 25% recommended by Roy Romanow. That is important for holding the provinces to account and for the federal government to have a say in sustaining, building and creating a national health care system.

I would love to stay on this topic, but I want to change topics very briefly and ask the minister a question that is very important to me in terms of the work I have done in Parliament. It has to do with fetal alcohol syndrome. I am seeking direction from the minister on her intentions to finally implement the motion that was almost unanimously passed by Parliament two years ago to require warning labels on all alcoholic beverage containers indicating to women that drinking during pregnancy could cause harm to the fetus.

When will the minister finally respect the wishes of Parliament? When will she acknowledge the sentiment of Canadians everywhere and take this tiny measure toward helping address the problem of fetal alcohol syndrome? It is not the be all and end all. It is not the final solution. It is part of a solution. It has been recommended for years. It is supported by Canadians. I would like to know today if the minister will give us a date by which she will ensure that the motion is acted on and labels become a reality and that we have some additional tool at our disposal to deal with the very serious problem of fetal alcohol syndrome.

• (2255)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, I cannot give the hon. member a date, but I applaud her for her work in this area. We all acknowledge, as we did earlier, that FAS-FAE is a very serious concern. We are trying to determine what are the most effective interventions. If after our analysis, our work with experts, our research of what other countries are doing, we come to the conclusion that it is an effective intervention, then we will do it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Madam Chair, first, I want to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Oakville.

Indeed, I will take a few minutes tonight to share my passion, my interests and my concerns regarding an important aspect of our health care system, of which, I am sure, the minister is totally aware.

First, it is important to state certain facts to be able to ask questions and see if the required amounts have been adequately invested in prevention. I am obviously talking about healthy lifestyles and prevention, an issue of particular interest to me.

Many things have led to the inclusion of healthy lifestyles in the priorities of Health Canada and of the Government of Canada.

Supply

A growing body of evidence from various countries shows that the human, social, economic and medical costs of avoidable chronic diseases that are non contagious, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes and certain types of cancer, are significant and growing in various countries, including Canada.

The total economic cost of diseases, disabilities and deaths related to chronic diseases in Canada presently exceeds \$80 billion.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 90% of type II diabetes and 80% of coronary heart disease could be prevented or delayed by eating healthily, exercising regularly, not smoking and effectively managing stress.

Allow me to quote some instructive statistics. It is estimated that 90% of lung cancers and 30% of all other cancer-related deaths in Canada could be prevented in a tobacco-free society.

We know that health is not just about treating disease. We must now look into how to redirect our efforts. We must—and I am sure the hon. minister is well aware of this—invest upstream, that is, in the health/disease continuum, to have a positive influence on the quality of life of Canadians.

Naturally, there are, among other upstream investments, integrated and cooperative approaches to health promotion, disease and injury prevention, as well as a complete range of public health activities designed to alleviate the burden of chronic disease on the health system.

As hon. members know, during their September 2001 meeting, the Minister of Health and her provincial and territorial counterparts agreed—I am happy about that—to work together on Canada-wide strategies for the short, medium and long term in terms of healthy lifestyles with a focus on eating habits and physical activity and their relationship with a healthy weight.

They also agreed to organize a national symposium on healthy lifestyles, bringing together government and non-government health organizations, among others. Health specialists, representatives of the first nations and the business community, as well as other stakeholders, will also be invited to participate.

I was also pleased to see that the federal government made a commitment to healthy lifestyles in its September 2002 Speech from the Throne. Furthermore, the 2003 first ministers agreement on the renewal of health care urged health ministers to focus on strategies and healthy lifestyles.

A number of territories and provinces have implemented or are about to implement integrated strategies combining healthy eating, physical activity, preventing chronic disease as well as preventing and fighting diabetes and smoking.

It is absolutely necessary, however, to take a coordinated, Canada-wide approach—

• (2300)

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. My colleague from St. Albert has actually made this point before. I would like to reiterate it. If there is a question we would like to hear it, so that the minister can actually deal with the estimates. This is an

issue that has limited time. We only have half an hour left. It is very important that we get in all the questions we possibly can. It is absolutely absurd for an individual to come in here, give a speech that has been previously prepared and not deal with questions to the minister. It is valuable time and we would like to see this happen.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I appreciate that the hon. member is trying to enlighten the Chair, but I want to repeat what I said earlier. I am not taking any more points of order unless they are on another subject, because the fact is, I did make the point. It can be raised by any member at any time with the Speaker or even with the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. If there has to be clarification, that is the place where the clarification has to take place.

I will not allow another member to again eat into the time that the hon. member has because we have exactly half an hour remaining and we have yet to hear one more member from another party who also has to be given the time allotted to that political party.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Scherrer: These are very important points and it is important to be able to discuss them this evening. This involves a large part of the population and one whole issue we have not yet touched upon this evening. I think it is important to look at the statistics, at how we can address it, and ensure that there is the necessary funding for it as well.

Another equally important aspect of the lifestyle strategy consists in addressing the basic causes of the precarious health status of certain segments of the population, such as the aboriginal peoples, families living in poverty, the disabled, and those in rural and isolated areas.

Integration is an important theme of the strategy. It consists of grouping together the fragmented and isolated approaches for health promotion and the prevention of illness and injury. As well, it involves establishing common groups of risk factors relating to chronic diseases, monitoring the factors that determine individuals' quality of health, and finding new ways of managing promotion and prevention efforts where people live, work, study and play.

It also involves measures to encourage the participation of partners from all areas of knowledge in the health care system and in other sectors and systems that affect health.

If we can succeed in integrating three important areas, policy, research and public health intervention, we will be able to increase the real value of what we are now accomplishing. What this means, in other words, is better value in managing priority health care issues.

The minister no doubt knows that if the country finds a way to manage the resources in our health care system, Canadians will be healthier. Obviously, we are also talking about managing financial resources more efficiently and more effectively.

We all know that an approach based on prevention that seeks to change people's behaviour without addressing their standard of living is not likely to lead to lasting results. One of the fundamental elements of the strategy, and a major challenge, is to recognize and predict links between life choices and health determinants, such as social, economic and environmental influences.

To that end, we need to promote vertical participation of partners within the health care system, but also horizontal participation in other sectors and systems that influence health.

Consistent with this line of thought, as you know, the Romanow report recommended putting more emphasis on prevention and well-being as part of an overall strategy to improve the delivery of front-line health care services in Canada, and providing new funding for research on health determinants.

The report backed strategies to fight sedentary lifestyles, obesity and smoking. Incidentally, just this morning, a French-language paper published alarming figures on obesity among young people and said that more money was needed to fight this problem that is having a major impact on young people.

• (2305)

[English]

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I find it rather unfortunate that I continue to interrupt this debate, Madam Chair, but I have taken a look at the report of the Special Committee on the Modernization and Improvement of the Procedures of the House of Commons, dated June 2001, of which the Deputy Speaker was the chair. Item number 36 states:

We propose that the Leader of the Opposition consult with the leaders of other opposition parties, and that he or she could select two items from the Main Estimates per year, which would each be considered in Committee of the Whole—

Which we are considered to be. It continues:

...for up to five hours. We would expect that this examination would take place in the evening, after the conclusion of the regular sittings of the House, and would be completed by the recess in May of each year. The regular rules regarding Committee of the Whole would apply.

But it also goes on to state:

Such a procedure would permit a meaningful examination of certain Estimates; it would facilitate the participation of Members who are interested in the department or agency whose Estimates were being considered; and by being conducted in the Chamber and televised—

The procedure “would permit the meaningful examination of certain Estimates”.

Madam Chair, it is the intention that we have a meaningful examination of the estimates of the Department of Health tonight and we have the minister here for five hours to answer on behalf of her department. That is the intent of this debate. It is not for speeches by backbenchers of either side of the House. It is for a meaningful examination of the estimates and I say that we should have questions on the estimates and the minister should be responding, or else the

Supply

member who is speaking should be ruled out of order, because that is the intent of the rule.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I would like to thank the hon. member for St. Albert. I will repeat again what I said earlier, but first, on a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, the hon. member knows full well what the rules are that were established by the committee that was struck. He is referring to when it began, but the point is, he knows the rules. He has been to other occasions like this before. He knows members are entitled to speak if they wish to. They can use their time as they wish.

He has had all kinds of time all evening to question the minister. She has answered him ad nauseam. He has questioned her ad nauseam all night long, but if he wants to have a process whereby he interrupts our speakers constantly and we interrupt his questions all night, I am more than happy to have that go on. But I implore you, Madam Chair, not to allow the same points of order to go on. In fact, it seems to me that you have been exceptionally patient in allowing him to raise the same point of order again and again when he has abused his rights and privileges in the House to rise on points of order.

Madam Chair, I implore you not to allow any more of these specious, waste of time points of order from this member anymore this evening.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I will not hear any more points of order, but if I have been lenient it is exactly for the reasons the hon. member for St. Albert has raised. I think there is a need for clarification in terms and I will put that on the record, but that is not the role of the Chair tonight. I think it is the role of standing committee on procedure, or of the modernization committee, to be precise. I would direct the hon. member for St. Albert to speak to his House leader in order to raise the same points that he is raising in the House.

We will take no more points of order.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Scherrer: Madam Chair, how much time do I have left?

• (2310)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: You have seven and a half minutes.

No, excuse me, you are finished because you were sharing your time, but I will give you one minute to conclude.

Ms. Hélène Scherrer: I would like to conclude in one minute.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I will allow the hon. member to take her minute, because you are eating into her time again.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Scherrer: Madam Chair, quite simply, the point I was trying to make—and I think the speech was really quite interesting—was to say how important prevention is and how important it is that money be set aside to invest in physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

Supply

I would like the minister to comment on this, on the amounts that have been allocated in future budgets, on her commitments in this regard, to see whether, in fact, this is also a priority for her.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. My point of order is that when I was speaking and there were points of order it came off my time directly. My point is that if the hon. member had 10 minutes, I would suggest that the clock was used up prior to that.

Mr. John Williams: She's more than used it.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The clock is still running so there are five minutes left on the government side. The hon. Minister of Health wanted to answer a question.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, I just want to refer to what the hon. member had to say about prevention and the importance of healthy living. Let me just briefly say that this is a key priority for my department, because I do believe that we need to invest more money in the front end of health care.

There are two reasons why. One is that there is a better quality of life for everyone if they are healthy and if they are committed to wellness. Also it will help us sustain our health care system. We have to put more attention and more dollars into the front end, into keeping people well, into preventing disease. That is why my department is working with provincial and territorial colleagues around the development of a pan-Canadian strategy as it relates to healthy living.

The first tranche of that healthy living strategy will focus on good nutrition, physical activity and healthy body weights, because we know that those are the foundations of a healthy lifestyle. They are the foundations for a healthy society. Without that, we will continue to see adult diabetes increase and obesity increase. We have seen the pages of the paper these past few days. We see the challenge of obesity with our young people.

That is why the whole area of healthy living and wellness is so important, and it has to become more important to all of us. It has to be inculcated as part of our culture when we think about health and healthy living.

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.): Madam Chair, a meaningful examination of the estimates will show one key figure which is not explained very well, because it is a single line and it is a transfer. It is a \$55 million increase to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Government of Canada's premier agency for health research. Its budget is now \$617 million, more than double the amount it had at the time of its creation in the year 2000. Canadians are justified if they ask what they are getting in return for that money.

There are several ways to look at this. One of the ways is to simply look at the evidence in the recent outbreak of SARS. Funding to Canadian researchers working in areas directly relevant to SARS was acknowledged in a paper in *The New England Journal of Medicine* on March 31, and Canadian researchers at the B.C. Cancer Agency were the first in the world to sequence the genome of the suspected coronavirus that causes SARS. This was all fueled by the analyses that were carried out on samples and the great work that came out of the Winnipeg National Microbiology Laboratory. This

sequencing is a critical first step in learning how to prevent and treat this disease and other infectious diseases.

The CIHR is providing \$500,000 for research that will respond rapidly to the challenge of SARS and is also undertaking longer term initiatives to address infectious diseases. That is just one recent example of that particular budget line in the estimates.

The Minister of Health has led this team, from the federal government's role, of provincial, municipal and federal workers on the SARS front. However the people of Canada should know that it was the funding for research, which is such a large part of the federal government's strategy, under the health umbrella that was underpinning the success of our experience with the SARS outbreak. Despite the deaths, it could have been worse and we should be very proud. I for one am very proud of our minister and her role in that particular situation.

Perhaps the minister would like to tell us of another piece of research of which she is particularly proud.

• (2315)

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, the hon. member makes a very important point around the importance of research. The CIHR is the successor research institution from the Medical Research Council of Canada. In fact it takes a new approach, an approach that is being modelled around the world. It is not only strictly medical research as traditionally understood. It brings together, for example, social scientists, the integration of the social sciences with biomedical research and with economic research. We are getting a better sense of what we mean by health and health care, and what is important to have a health society.

We are also making phenomenal progress in attracting bright Canadians back to this country and keeping the best here in our universities and our research institutes to do great work like the work that was done in this country on SARS.

For example, work is being done by one of the institutes as it relates to the whole question of metabolism, healthy body weights and obesity. It is so easy to say that we know we should eat good things and exercise but that is not good enough. What does that mean in terms of individuals? What does it mean for individual categories of people within our society? In particular, what does it mean for young people? The research being done in areas of body weight and obesity will be so important for our future health and our ability to sustain our health care system.

We can choose virtually any area in Canada today and the CIHR has an institute working in that area, and the work is groundbreaking and world class.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Madam Chair, I would like to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the member for Yellowhead.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before the hon. member continues, I will read what was agreed upon earlier.

—that there is agreement that, when the House is in committee of the whole on main estimates, the 20 minute speaking times will be assigned to parties and that each respective party shall assign speaking time to one or more members within that 20 minute segment.

There is no splitting of time between political parties.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Chair, I thank you for the clarification. Before I ask my questions to the minister, let me also register—

Mr. John Williams: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. The member who has just risen has 20 minutes. He has indicated that he wanted to share it with the member for Yellowhead. Therefore, I ask for unanimous consent for him to share it with the member for Yellowhead.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: The House is its own master and so is the committee. Is there unanimous consent that the member share his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Chair, I want to register my concern with what I see happening here tonight. It is bad enough to have to watch commercials during a good hockey game, but when we have to listen to commercials during the parliamentary process, that is a horse of a different colour.

The minister comes to the House once a year, if she happens to be the lucky or unlucky one to be chosen, to defend estimates. We will only be dealing with two departments. This gives members from all sides a chance to ask pointed questions on the minister's performance and the performance of her department. We listened to prepared speeches time after time from Liberal backbenchers praising up the minister—

Mr. Geoff Regan: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. I think that although there are different rules tonight than there are other times, I am sure the rule of relevance still applies. I do not see the relevance at all to the comments of the hon. member this evening to the questions at hand.

I do not think he has mentioned the word health as far as I know or any topic related to health. I think it is time he do so, that he gets to the point of the evening, that he talks about health care and gets to his question, rather than wasting the time of the House and those of us who are here at nearly 11:30 at night with nonsense about procedure.

● (2320)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Let us be cautious in the language we use in the House. The hon. member has 10 minutes.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Chair, that is not a point of order as the Chair well knows. I have 20 minutes to use, as the members opposite did. We are in the situation we are because of lackeys like that. This is not the way to run the parliamentary process. I want to ensure that is on the record.

I have some questions for the minister. When we talk about delivering health care funding, will the minister tell us how she plans to deal with the provinces, particularly when there is inequity to begin with?

Supply

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a declining population, unlike any other province in the country. It also has an aging population. Because of that, fewer people require greater services, which means we get fewer dollars based on per capita. I know there are adjustments made and I want to have that clarified.

To add to the complication, the population is spread over a rough rural geography in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Consequently, a dollar that goes to Newfoundland and Labrador cannot get the same value as a dollar spent in many other parts of the country. How does the minister plan to deal with that inequity?

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, the hon. member is quite right to identify that virtually all the dollars transferred to provinces for health care, or in fact for most other areas, are transferred on the basis of per capita.

The hon. member I know is aware of the fact that there is an equalization program. In fact equalization is a commitment set out in our Constitution. Equalization is in place to help some of the poorer provinces in our federation to ensure that they are able to provide a minimum level of services for their respective populations

I know this does not meet the entire concern identified by the hon. member. There was a commitment made at the time of the first ministers meeting in February because a number of provinces put the issue of equalization. As we deal with funding per capita largely in the FMM, let us take a look at the equalization formula and see whether it is working. If it is not, how it can be revisited?

That commitment was made at the time by the Government of Canada. That review of equalization will take place. I think that is the best vehicle by which we can hope to deal with the kind of inequities which the hon. member has mentioned.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Chair, I agree with her that the equalization formula has to be revisited but I would rather see it sooner rather than later. It is not just in relation to health care and CHST funding that we want to deal with equalization. It is in relation to the clawback arrangements too that certainly punish a resource rich province like Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have a couple of other questions for the minister. One of the major concerns we have is looking after our senior citizens and those on fixed income. Quite often the drugs that some of these people have to use are not covered by our regular health care plans.

I will give one example. During a visit to one part of my riding, where we have a lot of senior complexes, I spoke to a couple who were probably in their late sixties or early seventies. They had not long retired. They were living in the city but belonged to a small outport where they had a summer cabin. Their joy in life was getting into their little car and going out to the summer cabin to be close to home, to see their friends and whatever.

The gentleman developed Alzheimer's. He was in the early stages and had been prescribed a drug called Aricept which was extremely expensive and not covered by the system.

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The couple used up whatever savings they had. The drug was retarding the advancement of the disease to the point where he could still go out, visit the cabin, feel quite at home and he was kept in pretty good spirits. The cost of the drug however ate into their income and eventually the only option they had was to sell the car. By selling the car of course, they had no access to go to the cabin. It was one of the saddest stories I ever had to sit and listen to.

I am dealing with another friend very close to me who is suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease and also is using a prescribed drug that is in the experimental stages, maybe even pre-experimental stages and probably even being experimented on animals at this stage. It is extremely expensive but seemingly it works.

Consequently the family is only too glad to have this drug which seems to be at least retarding the advancement of the disease. It costs the family over \$1,300 a month. If we picture an ordinary family going from day to day making a very ordinary living, how long can they keep going? The answer is not very long.

What are the answers to these situations?

• (2325)

Hon. Anne McLellan: The hon. member raises a very serious question and one that we hope to deal with through that part of the first ministers agreement that talks about catastrophic drug coverage.

The hon. member has rightly identified that just as 40 years ago we did not want people to lose their homes or have to give up an important asset like a car or other savings to get access to a doctor or an operation in a hospital. Today we do not want people to have to do those things to have access to drugs that will either save their lives or make their lives more comfortable.

Therefore the commitment in the first ministers agreement is to have developed a catastrophic drug plan by the end of fiscal year 2005-06, the exact formula of which ministers of health have to work out. Mr. Romanow had a suggestion for a formula and Senator Kirby had a suggestion for a formula. They are not identical by any means.

Health ministers need to work out the formula by which we determine over what amount or what percentage of income or whatever it is, drugs would be covered by one's provincial health plan so we do not have the kinds of situations that the member has just identified.

Catastrophic drug coverage will become an important new part of our insured basket of services to deal with exactly the kind of situation that the member has just described.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Madam Chair, the only unfortunate thing is that these decision making procedures take a long time and some people suffering from diseases do not have a long time. I do not know in the interim if there is some provision for special cases. It might be something that should be looked at.

I will put two more questions and I will let the minister answer, but before I do, I want to say I appreciate that the minister was here tonight and stayed until the end, despite the fact that she had to be embarrassed by some of her own people. Let me say to her there is no need for it, because the minister can take the hard questions and

she has done a very good job tonight. She should have been left alone by those people.

My first question is in relation to home care. I have always maintained that the best value government gets for the money it spends is in home care. As people become a little bit older, perhaps they cannot look after themselves any more and they need somebody to come in to look after them. As long as they are healthy enough, they should be able to stay in their own home as long as they want to stay there. If home care cannot be provided, then they go to an institution or maybe a hospital where the costs are astronomical, where they are away from their friends, family and surroundings and no one is happy. Quite often they cannot afford to have people come in to look after them.

Government will pay the \$70,000 a year to put them in a nursing home, but will not pay \$20,000 a year to keep them in their own homes where they are healthy, wealthy and wise, as they say, because they feel much more comfortable in their own surroundings. The whole home care provision in our country has to be looked at. It would be cheaper for the government all around.

On the final question I would like the minister's comment because this is a pet peeve of mine. I am not sure whether or not the minister's department has ever checked into the ratio of money spent on those who are poorly educated compared to those who are better educated and have a better lifestyle. I bring this up because it ties in with education. I have been trying to say, and I have heard others, including a couple of leadership candidates, say recently that we have to invest more in education.

We have a choice. We can spend a lot of money helping those who are sick, out of shape, in institutions, in penal institutions, living a lifestyle where they have a meagre income and cannot eat properly or we can educate them so that they contribute to society rather than depend on society to help them, not through their own fault of course. We should invest up front to make education affordable.

Many young people in this country, if they do not live near a university and they do not have parents who can subsidize their—

• (2330)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but we are already at 11:30 p.m. Unless I have the unanimous consent of the House for the minister to answer, I have to cut the debate totally. Is there unanimous consent for the minister to answer?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Madam Chair, in relation to the last point raised by the hon. member, absolutely, there is no question that one's level of good health is directly related to the degree of education, which is usually directly related to one's level of poverty or whether one is well off. Poverty is an important determinant of health. The hon. member has raised an important point.

We need to ensure that people have a good education. We need to ensure that people have a decent standard of living. That helps guarantee better health outcomes. If people are not living in poverty, chances are they can buy nutritious food. Chances are they can provide for themselves and their families and have opportunities for physical activity and recreation. That leads to healthier people and a higher quality of life. The hon. member's point is a good one.

In relation to home care, I could not agree more. Home care has to be seen as part of the continuum of care. That is why the first ministers agreement speaks to home care, including that basket of insured services to provide for home care in certain defined circumstances, especially post-acute when leaving the hospital or in relation to palliative care for those who are dying or terminally ill. That does not cover the whole spectrum of home care. It certainly

Supply

makes an important start in terms of an insured service that recognizes the fact, which is the point the hon. member made, that often it makes much more sense not to have people in hospital, but at home. It is better for them. It is safer for them. They recover more quickly. It is more cost effective.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: It being 11:33 p.m., pursuant to Standing 81(4), all votes are deemed reported. The committee will rise and I will now leave the chair.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24 (1).

(The House adjourned at 11:33 p.m.)

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