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Wednesday, May 4, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 4, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

STU SHOULDICE

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate today a gentleman from the riding of Oxford for doing his part to protect mother earth.

Mr. Stu Shouldice from Woodstock was recently inducted into the Recycling Council of Ontario's Waste Reduction Hall of Fame. Mr. Shouldice and his family regularly recycle 95 per cent of their household waste.

Mr. Shouldice was reported to have said that increased recycling by all levels of government depends on the will of the people and how badly we want a pollution free world for our children.

I congratulate this gentleman on behalf of this House and on behalf of all those who can learn from the example he has set.

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[*Translation*]

GARDA FAMILY

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, on April 6 last, Citizenship and Immigration Canada served the Garda family with a departure notice taking effect in a few days.

Today, I learned from the office of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration that the minister will not intervene in favour of the Garda family. This is extremely disappointing. The minister must spare the Garda family the humiliating torments suffered by the Maraloï family. He must defer the notification of deportation as long as it has not been proven that the Garda family does not have to fear for its life, should it return to its country.

Since the beginning of this whole process, several years have gone by and the Garda family is now well integrated in my riding of Châteauguay, and we will do everything we can to keep it.

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[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I recently received a copy of a letter sent to Revenue Canada by Mr. Barrie Carter, a constituent of mine from Smithers, British Columbia. It reads:

Please find enclosed two post-dated cheques to cover taxes owing. However, I think it only reasonable that the minister of revenue assure me that my money will not be spent on golfing trips by government officials on government jets.

Like all Canadians, I do not object to paying my share of taxes providing the money is spent in a reasonable manner. Therefore the minister should have no trouble making that assurance to me before the cheque dates become due.

This letter underlines the hostility that is generated when Canadians see their hard earned tax dollars spent in a frivolous or cavalier manner.

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CONTRAVENTIONS ACT

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, as we head toward Victoria Day weekend and the beginning of the traditional tourist season I would like to share with the House public concern over Bill C-46, the Contraventions Act.

The Contraventions Act received royal assent October 15, 1992 but to the disappointment of many Canadians it has not yet been proclaimed.

The act sets out a ticketing procedure for dealing with minor federal offences. The act will allow enforcement officers to properly police Canada's inland waterways and ensure that residents and tourists can enjoy summer water activities in a safe and secure manner.

The reason given for this delay has been the need to co-ordinate the bill's implementation among the provinces. I have been told that this process which has already taken 18 months will take at least another 12. This delay of two and a half years means that more of my constituents will be at risk on the waterways. It is unacceptable and I urge the Minister of Justice to expedite the process.

S. O. 31

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of National Nursing Week, May 9–15, 1994.

The theme this year, “Nurses Make the Difference”, catches the essence of the great contribution that this profession makes to the health care of all Canadians.

Since the time of the first nurse in Canada, Jeanne Mance, nurses have remained the keystone of the Canadian health care system.

I commend all nurses in Canada for their high levels of commitment, skill, dedication and caring service to our people.

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BOSNIA

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address once again the horrific circumstances that children in Bosnia live with day after terrible day. I have been asked by the children in my riding of Provencher what we can do to help them.

During World War II Canadians helped to evacuate children from danger zones for their safekeeping. Currently a number of European nations are actually helping to evacuate children of the Balkans. Canada has yet to take this step.

This is indeed one way we can help the children of Bosnia. It is my greatest hope the government will take the steps necessary to help preserve those most innocent in the Balkans during this, the year of the family.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, on March 24 last, in Tunisia, Dr. Marzouki was arrested and jailed after declaring that he would run for president.

(1405)

His arrest can only be explained by the fact that he had denounced certain undemocratic electoral rules and given interviews to western newspapers.

Dr. Marzouki, who is a former president of the Tunisian Human Rights League, is well known in Quebec for his many conferences and publications on human rights and democratic development. It is therefore extremely shocking to learn that his fundamental freedoms have been violated.

Consequently, the Bloc Québécois demands that the federal government put immediate pressure on the Tunisian government to free Dr. Marzouki.

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[English]

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): On Sunday, May 1 in the *Ottawa Sun* the Canadian Police Association accused the Minister of Justice of using selective use of statistics and disputed his claims that there was no law and order crisis in Canada.

Statistics Canada figures show that in 1961 just before we stopped imposing the death penalty, there were 233 murders for a murder rate of 1.2 murders per 100,000 population. In 1992 there were 732 murders for a rate of 2.6 per 100,000.

Canadians know this is a massive increase in the number of murders despite the justice minister's reassurances to the contrary.

Over 90 per cent of my constituents are telling me they believe in capital punishment. If Canada is a true democracy then our laws should reflect what the majority of Canadians want. I ask this government for a binding referendum on the death penalty.

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HAMILTON WEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of Hamilton West for responding so quickly and vigorously to the questionnaire in my spring householder. In less than two weeks I have received nearly 2,000 responses and they are still coming in.

In addition to providing detailed comments and opinions on a number of important issues such as doctor assisted suicide and peacekeeping, many people seemed to appreciate the fact that someone was actually listening and interested in what they had to say. These are people like Norma who wrote: “I just want to say I appreciate your efforts at getting feedback from Canadians and I feel like there is someone in Ottawa who is actually listening to us”.

With all the chirping that is going on about direct democracy from the members over there in the third party, and in this day and age of laptop computers, voice mailboxes, megabeemoth information superhighways, is it ever comforting to know that so far good old-fashioned pen to paper seems to work best.

I would like to point out that this form of direct democracy is available to each and every one of us. I encourage all members of this House to use it.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to draw attention to a Tory legacy of waste and gross excess in government publications.

We are all accumulating dozens of annual reports from crown corporations and government agencies for the 1993 fiscal year. Each attempts to outdo the other in flash, ostentation and wanton waste.

One of many flagrant examples of excess is the 1993 report of the Royal Canadian Mint. At only 26 pages it is over one-quarter inch thick on glossy card stock with four colour pictures of management and partial clear coating on select sections. The cover is richly embossed in gold foil. It is impossible to recycle and literally must have broken the mint to produce.

CMHC whose purpose is to maximize housing assistance for Canadians in need produced an annual report that is outrageous with exotic half-page die cuts, expensive graphics and heavy coloured stock.

We must denounce this type of waste. We must encourage simple economical reports that set the tone of this new government and reflect the frugality and practicality that all Canadians are expecting of us.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL FOREST WEEK

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, this is National Forest Week. The aim of this national event, which is celebrated each year across Canada, is to heighten public awareness of the importance of our forest resources.

Our forests are a key part of our country's economy. No one knows the value of our forests better than the residents of Quebec's rural areas. I am thinking here, of course, about the residents of the Gaspé region. For generations, sawmill operators, Canadian forestry workers and their families have earned their living from our forests.

Throughout our history, an entire people has benefitted from the use of this great Canadian natural resource. Efforts to develop and regenerate our forests must continue.

(1410)

Therefore, I call on Canadians to reflect upon the importance of our forests, Canada's treasured heritage.

S. O. 31

MEMBER FOR YORK SOUTH—WESTON

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for York South—Weston declared yesterday that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service should investigate the activities of the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois.

Such a declaration is totally unacceptable. It seems the requirements of democracy are too much of a burden for some members who would like the federal government to illegally interfere once again in the major decision Quebec is about to make.

Quebecers remember. They remember the arrests without warrants, the wiretapping, the break and enter searches which occurred during the days when the federal government readily mistook, some would say deliberately, legitimate and democratic aspirations for illegal actions.

I truly hope that the member for York South—Weston is the only one in this House to wish for Quebec and Canada to relive such a dark period of their history.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are astonished that the Department of Canadian Heritage is giving away 70,000 tax dollars for a study of riddles.

Student tuition fees are increasing steadily. Workers are forced to take wage cuts. Someone with a brain tumour can wait over a month just to get a CAT scan.

Why, when we face such serious problems, would any government minister allow such a senseless waste of our tax dollars? Is there not anyone in charge who cares that we are losing ground on health care, education and financial stability?

This government seems to think that Canadians are cash cows to be milked to fund every silly program that comes along.

The only riddle this government should study is why the finance minister seems unable to understand that frivolous spending hurts job creation and funding for health care and education.

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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CODE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate with South Africans the birth of a new democratic South Africa, Canadians are proud of the role we played in maintaining economic sanctions against the old South Africa.

Oral Questions

That pride is called into question by some of the things that have been said recently by the Prime Minister and the Minister for International Trade in which the linking of trade to human and political rights has been seriously downplayed.

At the Marrakesh meeting to sign the new GATT agreement, which brought the World Trade Organization into existence, the minister was quoted in the *Financial Post* of April 9 as saying that he was reluctant to follow the American proposal for an international labour code.

Without such a code, the world's multinationals will be allowed to prey even on the child labourers of the developing world and the process of globalization will certainly continue on its present race to the bottom.

I call on the Minister for International Trade to overcome his conservative inhibitions, to see labour as a trade issue and to take the lead in designing an effective social and labour code under the World Trade Organization.

Globalization without global community and global standards is nothing other than moral anarchy.

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INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my riding of Brant I had the privilege of announcing that the city of Brantford would be the first Ontario municipality to receive funding under the Canada-Ontario infrastructure works program.

With 15 per cent unemployment, one can imagine the open arms with which the announcement that \$12 million would be spent locally in our community to restore our infrastructure and get our people back to work was received.

Brantford is not the only municipality that feels so strongly about this program. Fully 630 municipalities in our province have made applications for funding.

I would like to congratulate our government for working so expeditiously with the province and with the municipalities to get this program up and running. I would like to say to the Prime Minister how honoured I was to make the announcement, effectively an announcement that makes good his promise to help get Canadians back to work.

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SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to this House that I have just returned from South Africa where I was a member of the Canadian observer mission to witness the election that took place last week.

Our team was dispersed in different parts of the country. I observed in seven areas of the eastern cape around East London, Transkei and Ciskei, including the second largest black township in the country. We visited polling stations in hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, churches, schoolrooms, as well as city halls. We witnessed voter registration and saw evidence of voter education.

From our observations we determined the elections to be fair and free of intimidation and violence. A majority of the electorate was in a position to vote and did so. Logistical, administrative and inadequate distribution of materials were challenges which did not daunt the voters' enthusiasm to cast their ballots.

(1415)

The South African people are to be congratulated for their tremendous achievement toward the goal of democracy.

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CARMAN LEMCKE

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians during the 1950s and 1960s watched the television series "The Andy Griffith Show".

Just recently I had the pleasure to honour the retirement of Carman Lemcke, police chief of Shelburne, a town in my riding. During Mr. Lemcke's 37-year career he never wore a gun. Carman is the longest serving police chief in the province of Ontario and possibly Canada.

One humorous story is the tale of hands-up-Harry. Two bank robbers tried to make a withdrawal while Carm was working in his front yard. Mr. Lemcke went to the local hardware store, borrowed a rifle and set out on foot to capture the two robbers. The getaway car left early leaving hands-up-Harry to become a story regularly told in Shelburne.

On behalf of myself and the people of Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe I would like to wish Carman and Rose a happy, healthy and long retirement.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN HAITI

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. This week, the UN is to consider a draft resolution proposed by the U.S. to issue a 15-day ultimatum to the Haitian military junta and reinforce the trade embargo. At the same time, President Clinton took a tougher stand by clearly evoking the possibility of armed intervention to depose the military rulers he rightly accuses of killing innocent civilians.

Oral Questions

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who has just arrived. Can the minister give an update on the negotiations at the UN concerning the ultimatum proposed by the American president and can he indicate whether Canada supports this proposal?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, naturally, we hope that a solution will finally be found to the long-lasting impasse in Haiti. We are making every effort to support the elected president, Mr. Aristide; we think he should return to his country. We think, as the American president said, that General Cédras and the chief of police of the city of Port-au-Prince must resign. We continue to believe that a total embargo is the only effective way to subdue the military.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Canadian policy is to suggest and try to convince the allies to impose a tougher military embargo. So far, however, the American president had not clearly stated his position, in particular on increasing the pressure he wants to exert on Haiti, since he is now hinting at armed intervention.

I ask the minister whether the Canadian government endorses the idea of armed intervention as proposed by President Clinton in case the Haitian military rulers refuse to comply with the proposed ultimatum.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in response to questions, the U.S. president stated that he was not ruling out any option, any alternative. I must say that Canada did not contemplate the possibility of armed intervention, whether multilateral or unilateral, as we are convinced that stiffer economic sanctions would overcome the military junta and that it is appropriate to impose effective sanctions, which involves the participation and co-operation of the Dominican Republic in particular. We think it is still possible to make the military rulers resign without having to resort to armed intervention.

(1420)

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, according to the dispatch I read, President Clinton went further than what the minister said. He did not simply say that he was not ruling out any option, he specifically said that he was not ruling out the option of armed intervention, which is an important distinction when a U.S. president makes statements on such vital issues.

I therefore ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs whether he can tell us today if his government received assurances that the proposed reinforcement of trade sanctions will not lead to an increase in black-market activities controlled by the military junta and the Haitian police.

[English]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that Canada supports the return of President Aristide to Haiti.

We believe that a total embargo could bring about the withdrawal of the military people who are holding a suffering population hostage.

If the Americans and a number of other countries through the United Nations pass a resolution to bring a total embargo against Haiti, it is possible the embargo will not be a very long one. It will become very clear to the military people that they cannot stay there and they will resign in the following hours.

It is time to show unequivocally the military people there that they cannot perpetrate the denial of the vast majority of Haitians who voted freely for President Aristide.

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[Translation]

TAX FAIRNESS

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, in a decision handed down yesterday, a court ruled that alimony received for child support should not be taxable. In fiscal terms, this is a decision with major financial implications. Yesterday in the House, the Minister of Finance was rather vague as to what his government intended to do about this decision, stating, and I quote:

—our biggest concern is financial support for children and tax fairness.

Can the Minister of National Revenue clarify what the Minister of Finance means by concern for tax fairness? Are we to understand that the government plans on making child support payments no longer taxable?

[English]

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the member rightly points out, the decision yesterday is perhaps one of the more important decisions in the equation dealing with child support payments.

Under the Canadian judicial system we have 90 days to consider the decision and what actions the Government of Canada with the assistance of the Minister of National Revenue and the Minister of Justice will take. The Minister of Finance will be revealing that decision and will speak to the House at the earliest possible convenience.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of National Revenue. Will the minister undertake to review the Income Tax Act to ensure, in real terms, greater fairness in the tax treatment of families, with tax fairness being a central concern in the context of the International Year of the Family?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. David Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this issue is foremost in tax fairness. As the House knows, it has in front of it motion M-14 from the member for Nepean on the issue of child support. It is a votable motion and the minister and the government look forward to hearing the wishes of the House on this issue.

The minister and other members of the government are quite happy to meet with members of the whole House to talk about this issue. There is also a federal-provincial-territorial task force on the question of child support. We consider this input to be also very important in our consideration.

* * *

(1425)

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

As the Prime Minister is aware there is increasing evidence that Canada's health care system is in trouble: hospitals being closed, long lines waiting for surgery, provinces rationing services. At the root of the problems are inadequate arrangements for financing health care.

Does the government acknowledge that health care financing needs to be completely reformed and that Canadians are now prepared to accept substantive amendments to the Canada Health Act?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Health and on behalf of the Government of Canada I would like to commit the government to our full support for the Canada Health Act. It is a very important instrument in ensuring that every Canadian has access to health care, not because of the size of their wallets but because of the size of their health problems.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I gather that the government and the Deputy Prime Minister will not concede that Canadians would rather have major changes in health care financing than to suffer further cuts in services.

For example, a Compas opinion survey on this subject is being released in Toronto today. It reveals that 58 per cent of Canadians are prepared to accept health care financing mechanisms not permitted by the Canada Health Act, even including user fees, in order to save health care.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister accept that the Canada Health Act should be amended to permit the provinces greater flexibility in health care financing?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think the member is on very dangerous ground when he chooses to pursue policies because of polls.

I have a copy of another poll done by Insight Canada Research. This poll is from last month and states that only 16 per cent of Canadians support user fees.

I would suggest to the member that he take a look at the red book commitments of the Liberal government. We will be meeting with our provincial counterparts in June to examine the whole issue of how we can better deliver health care, but we do not see user fees as a solution to the problems of Canada's health care system.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, we could argue all day about the validity of polls.

I suggest to the ministers that if they contrast alternative financing mechanisms with the alternative of losing the service, a majority of Canadians favour the alternative financing mechanism.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister this simple question. If the choice is between further cuts in health care service or changing the financing provisions of the Canada Health Act, which alternative does the government prefer?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is a false choice.

If we look at one area of health which is of great concern to women, it is in the whole area of birthing. Anyone who has gone through the process knows that birthing is a natural part of life. It is not necessarily a medical problem. Provinces across the country increasingly are looking to alternative birthing methods, including the use of midwives. It has recently been embraced by the province of Ontario, including les services de sages-femmes dans la province de Québec.

It is a creative way of delivering a service to healthy women to have babies in a healthy fashion. This creative way actually saves money for the system.

That is what my counterpart, the Minister of Health, is going to be examining with her provincial colleagues when she meets with them in June.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I permitted the last question but I would prefer in future if questions were not hypothetical and a little more direct. If that could be the case we would do better.

* * *

*[Translation]***REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Oral Questions

Yesterday at the annual meeting of the World Health Organization in Geneva, the Minister of Health said that the misuse of reproductive technologies like cloning and genetic engineering to choose a child's sex must stop.

(1430)

Does the Minister of Justice agree with his colleague, the Minister of Health, who at that prestigious forum emphasized the importance of criminalizing some reproductive technologies such as genetic engineering and cloning?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I said as recently as last week in this House, the Department of Justice is working with the ministry of health examining the 300 recommendations that came from the royal commission on reproductive technologies in February. Very few of them actually deal with the justice system to the extent to which they recommend changes, for example, in the Criminal Code.

Representatives of justice and health are preparing recommendations for cabinet arising from the royal commission and touching upon all of the issues in relation to reproductive technologies.

Rather than deal piecemeal with this or that part of the proposals, my approach to date has been to await the completion of the work of those officials and bring forward to cabinet policies that we believe are in the public interest and that act upon the recommendations of the commission which spent a long time looking at these complex questions.

In response to the hon. member, I say that rather than identifying policies a bit at a time we are looking at the recommendations as a whole. We will be coming forward through cabinet with the government policy probably in the fall of this year.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that the government's slowness in acting to regulate and control new reproductive technologies proves that this issue is not a priority for the government, despite the minister's statement in Geneva, and that its inaction will have a major impact on ethics and research?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that conclusion follows.

First, it is a matter of priority. For example, we have designed topics and background materials for the meeting of deputy ministers in mid-June. Deputy ministers of health across the

country will be meeting. We will be consulting them with respect to their views and the provincial and territorial perspective on some of these issues. We will be preparing discussion papers over the summer to elicit the views of the research community on some approaches we can take to the recommendations of the royal commission.

It is a matter of priority. It is not something we are going to act upon next week. We are going to consult. We take the issue very seriously. We will come forward with policies probably late in 1994 to deal with these issues. They are matters of concern and of substance, but we are going to deal with them methodically.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Health I would like to direct this question to the Prime Minister.

The Speaker: As was mentioned before in Question Periods, it would be preferable if the matter of whether members are here or not is not mentioned. Would the hon. member please put his question.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about women's health.

A recent Halifax *Chronicle-Herald* article detailed the case of Mary, a single mother who was waiting for orthopaedic surgery. During this time she has been unable to work because of severe pain. In Mary's words: "They are all talking about prevention but the fact that I have not had surgery is an example of not using prevention".

If this government is serious about prevention as a means of solving our current health care crisis, why does it continue to rely on rationing of essential health care with its huge cost in human suffering to shackle Canadians to an obsolete Canada Health Act?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Liberal government is strongly committed to the establishment and accessibility of health care across the country.

If we actually followed the member's advice and torpedoed the Canada Health Act, the difficult situation that patients are facing now across the country would be exacerbated because what we would end up with would be one system where if people had money they could get the operation and another system for those people with no money. We will not support that system.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about torpedoing any act. We just want to make it better so that Canadians will have better health care for always. The system is broken. To fix the system we need innovative, cost effective and compassionate solutions.

Oral Questions

(1435)

We cannot do this under the current act. Does this government care more about the Canada Health Act or the health of Canadians? What solutions does this government offer today? We want answers, not rhetoric.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, one of the principles of the Canada Health Act is universality. One of the things that is banned by the Canada Health Act is user fees.

When the member talks about rhetoric, he suggests that we make the Canada Health Act better. The fact is that the five principles upon which the Canada Health Act is based are the very principles which have many countries around the world looking to Canada as one place where you can get care no matter what the size of your pocketbook.

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*[Translation]***INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In a letter to the Prime Minister, dated April 26, 1994, the chairman of the Kanesatake Chamber of Commerce blames the carelessness of the federal government particularly for the collapse of native businesses and for the alleged misappropriation of federal subsidies by the band council, in an unstable situation where public security is concerned.

Since the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce is accusing the Kanesatake Band Council of misappropriating federal subsidies, would the Prime Minister make public any information he might have on these allegations?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, perhaps after Question Period my good friend can show me the letter, we can talk quietly and I can give him whatever information I have.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I hope I have better luck with my next question, which deals with business.

What real measures does the Prime Minister intend to take in order to alleviate the alarming financial difficulties Kanesatake businesses are faced with, given the unstable public security situation caused essentially by the carelessness the federal government has shown in matters under its jurisdiction?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that it was not this government that brought the army out. It was not this government that would not negotiate.

This government is bringing the Mohawk people here to Ottawa and dealing with them. The government of Quebec is bringing the Mohawk people to Quebec City and dealing with them. We will deal with the reeves, we will deal with the mayors and we will deal with the people. We do not create problems, we solve them.

* * *

ABORIGINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Yesterday the minister said that rank and file aboriginal people in Manitoba want self-government. What I am hearing from more and more aboriginal people is that they have serious concerns about the accountability of self-government. However, many of these people feel too intimidated to publicly speak out.

Can the minister explain how he was able to determine the view of rank and file aboriginal people and how they are directly involved in the negotiation process?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, dealing with the specific question, how do I know I am dealing with the rank and file? At the meeting where this was discussed two weeks ago there were 60 chiefs all elected by the rank and file. There were 400 people, all from Manitoba, all accountable to the rank and file. They almost unanimously after getting their direction from the chiefs, from the rank and file, want self-government. They have been waiting 150 years for it and they are ready to move on it.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that many aboriginal people are afraid of self-government because they do not know if or how their individual rights will be protected.

With regard to the self-government agreement now being negotiated in Manitoba, can the minister explain if and how these individual rights will be protected and how aboriginal leaders will be held accountable by the people they purport to represent?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member suggests that the aboriginal people are not ready for self-government. Might I remind the hon. member that they have been held under the Indian Act in a situation of paternalism and assimilation since 1850, acts that we passed here in Canada.

(1440)

It is our doing, incorrectly, in bringing in the Indian Act that has caused this paternalism and this fear. We are trying to break that because we have created it. In the four years that I hope we are here and I am in this ministry that Indian Act that was passed is going to be gone.

* * *

[Translation]

MIL DAVIE SHIPYARD

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Yesterday, the Quebec Minister of Industry and Commerce had a secret meeting with the federal ministers of Industry and Transport. According to the daily *Le Droit*, the review of drug patent legislation, the high-speed train issue and the construction of the Magdalen Islands ferry were on the agenda.

Can the Minister of Transport tell us if, during that meeting, he gave a positive reply to the Quebec Minister of Industry regarding the awarding to MIL Davie of the contract for the construction of the Magdalen Islands ferry and the multipurpose smart ship?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, during the meeting with the Quebec Minister of Industry, we discussed of course the need to provide an adequate ship for the transport of people, goods, trucks and cars from Prince Edward Island to the Magdalen Islands. We informed the Quebec Minister of Industry that the government of Canada intends to ensure the safety of people making that trip, and we hope to soon be able to make a decision, in co-operation with the Quebec government, as to how we can best help these people who urgently need adequate and safe services.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, this answer is exactly the one I was given last January 18.

Now that the Minister of Transport is in possession of MIL Davie's business plan, as the Minister of Industry said Monday in this House, will he recognize that the two contracts for the "smart ship" and the ferry are essential to MIL Davie's survival, and when can we hope to get an answer regarding these two issues?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first, the hon. member will certainly realize that the Department of Transport is not responsible for the smart ship issue. However, those who are familiar with MIL Davie's history understand how important that industry is for workers.

As regards the ferry between Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen Islands, the priority for the Department of Transport

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and the government of Canada is to ensure the safety of Magdalen Islanders and others who use the ferry.

Obviously, the decision as to whether MIL Davie's recovery plan will work must be made by the Quebec government and the company itself, which is trying its best to solve its problems. There is no doubt that discussions will continue. I want to assure the hon. member that the issue of safety for people who currently travel on a ship which is causing enormous problems, the *Lucy Maud Montgomery*, must be settled and this is something we want to do as quickly as possible. The link with the future of MIL Davie makes things more complicated, but we try to be as understanding as possible.

* * *

[English]

RWANDA

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, as you know it is increasingly difficult to remain indifferent to the situation in Rwanda. Yesterday the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, asked the Security Council to reconsider its decision to reduce UN forces in Rwanda.

My question which follows that of the hon. member for Rosedale and other interested members in this House is this: Is the minister willing to support the Secretary-General, take the lead of the Security Council and ensure an adequate world response to this immense tragedy?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I want to assure him that Canada is certainly actively pursuing various avenues with other members of the UN to try to help the people in Rwanda.

(1445)

Brigadier General Dallaire, a Canadian, is in charge of the UN forces there. He is certainly pursuing all avenues to try to bring the factions to their senses and to stop them killing each other.

We do not belong to the security council. Therefore it would be difficult for us to lead the discussion there. I take the recommendation of the member in good spirit. Certainly Canada, through some members of the security council, could pursue initiatives to try to lead to a greater presence of UN forces there.

More important, when the factions have stopped this terrible slaughter, Canada will be ready to move in with humanitarian assistance to help rebuild that country.

* * *

NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Oral Questions

Yesterday the chairman of the National Parole Board confirmed that the vice-chairman of the board's prairie region was involved in five decisions to release convicts who, once released, went on to murder seven people.

Given the minister's comments that his first priority is to achieve safe homes and safe streets for Canadians, could he please tell Canadians what action he is to take in this regard?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the information in question is something that concerns me greatly.

I am proceeding to get all the facts surrounding the individual's participation in these decisions. Once I have these facts I will be discussing the matter further with cabinet colleagues.

I want to add, as I have informed members of the House, that it is my intention on behalf of the government to bring forward before too long legislation to create an accountability system for members of the parole board.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that. While we are waiting for that system of accountability, while we are waiting for this amendment, and since we obviously have parole board members presently releasing dangerous offenders into the community, is the minister prepared to put a moratorium on paroling dangerous offenders before other innocent victims die?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the cases the hon. member has been referring to took place, if I am not mistaken, three to five years ago. I am very concerned about these cases. I want to work and I am working to try to ensure that these kinds of cases are not repeated.

The parole board is an independent judicial tribunal, something akin to a court, operating under legislation passed by the House. I want to see what authority I have to make sure that the parole board functions properly.

However I think the hon. member should rethink his suggestion because it implies a course of action that may impede the protection of the public in the long run rather than help it.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The October 26, 1992 referendum was held in Quebec according to the Quebec legislation on referendums and paid for solely by the Quebec government. However, through its taxes, Quebec paid for part of the federal government's expenses, and the previous govern-

ment had promised to reimburse this sum which amounts to \$26 million.

My question is this: In all fairness for Quebec, has the minister decided to grant this request which has been presented several times to the federal government, and more precisely in this House, on January 28 last?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, the previous government had not come to a final decision regarding the reimbursement of referendum expenses incurred in Quebec, and neither have we.

* * *

(1450)

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Last week, in response to a question on the future viability of the Canada Pension Plan, the minister stated: "It is certainly actuarially sound and has sufficient contingency funds within it". Yet according to a recent OECD study on public pension plans we in Canada would have to dramatically increase contributions or increase the pensionable age by 16 years to age 81 to make our plan actuarially sound.

Could the minister explain the huge discrepancy between his statement and the OECD report?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, when I made the statement last week we were talking about a report that pertained to the immediate situation of the fund which is actuarially sound. It is in full reserve and there is no contemplated need for major changes.

The OECD study he refers to is one that projects a substantial change in the population of Canada over the next 20 years when there will be a much larger proportion of people at retirement age. It is for that reason the Minister of Finance announced in his budget that we would be establishing a major white paper, green paper or task force to look at a number of options that have to be considered in relation to those changes in population.

I hope the hon. member will have something constructive to offer when that paper is put forward.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, there are two reports now including the one he referred to last week that suggest we need big changes in the Canada pension plan if it is to remain solvent.

Certainly we will be participating in any discussions on the future solvency of that plan and we would like to offer something.

I would ask the minister to make it clear, first of all, that we have a problem today with that. I would encourage him and his government to show some leadership by bringing forward a discussion on this matter as soon as possible so that Canadians could be assured something is being done about the plan and their future pensions will be safe.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat if I might that in the budget of last February the Minister of Finance clearly stated that we saw a need to look at the whole question of security in retirement programs for Canadians because of changes taking place in population and other factors.

The Department of Finance, the Department of Health, and my department are presently preparing the kinds of facts and figures so that Canadians can have an honest, rational and open debate.

We would hope to table it in the fall, as soon as it is ready. At that point in time I would welcome the participation of the hon. member and all other members of the House because I think it is an important issue.

It is important for the hon. member to recognize and not to create any false sense that the system as it is presently constructed is under any kind of threat. It is a very sound system but we must prepare for the future.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Lately, some people have delighted in saying that relations between the provinces and the federal government, and specifically between Quebec and Ottawa, have broken down completely.

Can the minister advise us today on the status of federal-provincial relations and tell us what steps he intends to take to co-operate with the provinces and to reassure Quebecers that federalism is indeed alive and well?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because it gives me an opportunity to put a number of issues discussed over the past few weeks into perspective. Within a federation, it is natural for conflicts to arise between the federal government and the

Oral Questions

provinces. I feel that this government has been relatively successful in recent months at resolving conflicts.

For example, not only do we have the infrastructure program which has been a success across the country, and particularly in Quebec, but we also have a number of agreements such as the St. Lawrence action plan which provided an additional \$191 million to the \$526 million infrastructure program. This extra money will be spent in Quebec. We have also negotiated agreements on the Sainte-Marguerite River, the Montreal Botanical Garden and, most important, on equalization payments.

* * *

(1455)

AIDS VIRUS IN PRISONS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General, and it is not a planted question. In June 1992, the Solicitor General mandated a committee of experts to make recommendations on preventing the spread of the AIDS virus in prisons. The main conclusion of the report tabled a few days ago is that the most important thing to protect inmates' health is a vigorous AIDS information campaign.

Does the Solicitor General share this conclusion and what directives does he intend to issue and what measures does he intend to take to apply them in the actual prison environment?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, as the hon. member said, the expert committee on AIDS in prisons tabled its final report. At that time Correctional Service Canada published a detailed response. I support the conclusions in that response which among other things includes a vigorous program of information.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, since January 1992, condoms, rubber dams and lubricant have been made available to prisoners. According to the committee, the next step is to provide bleach and instructions for cleaning syringes used in tattooing.

Does the minister share this forward looking approach to prevention in a prison setting?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I support the response of Correctional Service Canada which includes a pilot project in that direction.

Points of Order

There are certain parts of the committee report which Correctional Service has not accepted and I think for good reason. This is all set out in detail in the response of Correctional Service which, as I have said, the Minister of Health and I support.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice who has been musing about banning private ownership of handguns.

The 1,054,000 registered handguns in the country have a value of at least \$300 million. Is the hon. minister considering compensation, or will big brother be going door to door and confiscating what is now legally owned property of Canadian citizens?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have made clear that I am going to work with my colleagues in caucus and cabinet to bring forward proposals to achieve stricter gun control in the country. I think there is broad support for more effective control, and that includes particularly handguns which are not used in hunting.

Dealing more specifically with the question the hon. member has asked on compensation, that is one of the issues we have to look at. This party and this government are coming to these questions with an open mind. We are going to be sensitive to the ownership rights the hon. member has referred to and compensation is a matter we are going to be dealing with.

I am aware of the issue. I do not have a response today because caucus has not dealt with it, nor has cabinet. However, I can assure the hon. member that the process is going to be undertaken and that we are going to develop a position on this very important issue.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, for 20 years I had an occupational permit to carry a handgun as a field geologist in the mountains of British Columbia. I rarely used it. I rarely carried it but as a free man, as a Canadian, I had the right to make that personal decision myself.

There are legitimate reasons for civilians to own these weapons. To some working people, including timber cruisers, prospectors, trappers, bank messengers and the like, they are tools, not toys.

Will the minister listen to the advice of his own backbenchers and thoughtfully reconsider his position?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have three points very briefly.

First there is no right in the country to bear arms. The ownership of firearms is a privilege which is accorded by government under certain strict circumstances.

(1500)

I do not wish to make light of the point made by the hon. member but the fact is we are not after those persons. Let me put it this way. The object of any such measures would not be to make life more difficult for those who have legitimate reasons connected with their occupation to carry firearms. Rather, it is in recognition of the fact that the use of firearms, handguns in particular, in the commission of homicides has risen from 33 per cent to 52 per cent in the last four years.

We will be thoughtful in the development of our policies through caucus, which is going to discuss these matters, and cabinet, which will form the policies that we will bring forward to the House.

* * *

*[Translation]***HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Yesterday, Lebanese Canadians demonstrated on Parliament Hill against actions in Lebanon that they consider oppressive and contrary to human rights and freedoms. I would like to ask the minister what the Canadian government's position is regarding these accusations?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have read the Amnesty International report and asked our ambassador to raise this issue with the Lebanese officials. When I receive further information, I will gladly pass it on to this House and to the hon. member in particular.

* * *

*[English]***PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

The Speaker: I wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Anne Edwards, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources for the province of British Columbia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the same point of order I raised yesterday.

After making the request of the Speaker of the House, I consulted the recorder for *Hansard* who sits in the House during Question Period and I was assured that person heard the remark made and noted the remark on her paper. Yet it does not appear in *Hansard*. In my opinion that raises questions about the procedures of the House.

Routine Proceedings

Again, I find the remarks offensive and insulting, particularly coming from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister. I would ask the Speaker again to have that member apologise and withdraw the remarks.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member makes reference to the fact that the comments did not appear in *Hansard* and somehow draws some references to the staff of the House of Commons.

Certainly from the perspective of the government staff of the House of Commons, in particular those people who record comments, they are doing a terrific job and should in no way be under any kind of a cloud because of this kind of comment.

That being said, what I said yesterday which I will withdraw if the Speaker finds it offensive, when there were questions raised and insinuations made about the status of the role of Indian chiefs in certain provinces, accusing them of everything ranging from assault to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. I think I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say at the beginning that if the statements were made she would withdraw the statements. Is that correct?

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, what I said was that the questions involved were racist. If the Speaker finds offence at my characterization of a question I will so withdraw any comment.

The Speaker: The withdrawal of course is accepted categorically as it was said.

I wish to assure the hon. member that the procedures of the House were followed to a T. I informed myself of this. I would like to go to the next matter.

* * *

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the parliamentary librarian for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1993.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

(1505)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs relating to the list of members of committees.

With leave of the House I intend to move for concurrence in this 20th report later this day.

* * *

NATIONAL LIBRARY ACT

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-26, an act to amend the National Library Act.

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

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I believe I am moving with the unanimous consent of the House, seconded by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General, that the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

PETITIONS

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition that has been signed by over 100 residents of Saint John.

The petitioners pray and call upon the House to consider an inquiry into the time it is taking to process the applications of immediate family members who have been deported. Under the 1994 immigration plan the time required to process applications involving immediate family members has been reduced to less than six months.

Routine Proceedings

Mrs. Lovella Szezenor-Grey from Saint John has undertaken the sponsorship of her husband, Antonio Grey, who was deported to Guatemala on April 21, 1993. Over a year has passed since Mrs. Szezenor-Grey started the proceedings with immigration for the return of her husband. I urge the House to look into this matter to expedite Mr. Grey's application.

This petition is presented with my concurrence.

CRIMINAL CODE

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition signed by many people from the constituency of Beaver River.

The undersigned residents of the province of Alberta draw the attention of the House of Commons to that whereas under section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada convicted murderers sentenced to life imprisonment without chance of parole for 25 years are able to apply for review after only 15 years, and whereas the murder of a Canadian citizen is a most reprehensible crime, therefore your petitioners request that Parliament repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada as soon as possible.

[Translation]

POSTAL SERVICE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit a petition on behalf of citizens of Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha! who want cuts in postal services to stop. These petitioners ask that postal services be restored to past levels.

(1510)

PLIGHT OF THE ELDERLY

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of submitting a petition signed by more than 600 residents from my riding of Québec-Est and the surrounding region.

The petitioners want to draw the attention of Parliament to the plight of the elderly in Quebec: 53 per cent of men and 82 per cent of women who reach the age of 65 need government assistance to make ends meet; 40 per cent of seniors aged 65 and over are entitled to the guaranteed income supplement, which merely keeps them at the poverty level. Moreover, only 5 per cent of people aged 65 and over have an annual income exceeding \$50,000.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to refrain from taking any measure to reduce any benefit, pension, social program, assistance or existing advantage for seniors, or to impose any tax or other levy having the effect of reducing their income.

I fully support this petition and I urge the government to act upon it.

[English]

KILLER CARDS

Ms. Jean Augustine (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a number of petitions from several of my constituents. These petitioners call on the House to amend the laws of Canada to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of killer cards and to advise producers of killer cards that their products if destined for Canada will be seized and destroyed.

TOBACCO PACKAGING

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition, approved by the Clerk of Petitions, from my riding of Carleton—Charlotte.

This petition, presented to me on Friday afternoon past, states: "We the undersigned, being residents of the province of New Brunswick, draw the attention of the House to the following: That the Minister of Health is proposing legislation requiring plain packaging of tobacco products consumed in Canada, action which we feel is ill-considered and likely to have detrimental effects on ourselves and our community without demonstrable benefits to Canadians. Therefore, your petitioners request that Parliament refuse to enact any legislation requiring plain packaging of tobacco products to be consumed in Canada".

ETHANOL

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present petitions of several hundred names from my riding of Kent requesting the continued exemption of the excise tax on ethanol fuels.

The petitioners cannot understand why the government is delaying this when in opposition it demanded the banning of MMT and the withdrawal of the excise tax on ethanol.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my honour to present a petition bearing 494 signatures. I understand that these signatures were collected at one point in the space of two days.

The petition states: "Whereas there is no statistical evidence that existing gun control laws have any negative effect on criminal activity; whereas existing and publicly proposed gun controls carry the potential for confiscation of lawfully owned property by law-abiding citizens; wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to turn its attention with respect to firearms control away from law-abiding citizens to the criminal element and allow the holder of a valid firearms acquisition certificate, whether or not a course or test was taken to obtain it, to renew the said certificate without the necessity of a course or test".

Government Orders

I concur with this petition.

[English]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have three petitions which I wish to present today from the residents of the hamlet of Kenilworth and area.

The first petition calls upon Parliament to change the Young Offenders Act to ensure that transfers for violent offenders to adult court be improved and to increase the penalties for those convicted.

WITNESS PROTECTION

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for improved witness and informant protection through the formation of a separate government agency.

KILLER CARDS

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, the third petition deals with the issue of serial killer cards.

(1515)

SERIAL KILLER BOARD GAME

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table petitions signed by 480 people pursuant to Standing Order 36. These petitioners call upon Parliament to ban the importation into Canada of the serial killer board game. This brings the grand total of signatures I have so far tabled in this House on this issue to 109,940.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the notice of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

WAYS AND MEANS

INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)) moved that a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act, the income tax application rules, the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Unemployment Insurance Act, and certain related acts laid upon the table Friday, April 29, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA WILDLIFE ACT

Hon. Douglas Peters (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that Bill C-24, an act to amend the Canada Wildlife Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honour to be introducing today for second reading, legislation to conserve and protect Canada's wildlife, in particular amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act.

Of all the responsibilities of Environment Canada one of the most important is the stewardship of wildlife.

Canadians care very deeply about wildlife. One of the most powerful values that all Canadians share is our tremendous pride in Canada's environment and magnificent natural heritage. Canadians everywhere have a strong desire to protect and restore the various ecosystems that make up our environment. No component of our natural heritage is more precious than Canada's wildlife.

The beauty of wild plants and animals, the idea of free creatures living in nature are very appealing to all of us. We value wildlife for many other reasons as well, for example, as a source of recreation, as an important social economic resource, as an integral aspect of the lives of native people, even as a potential source of medicines as yet unknown.

This government and Environment Canada take the responsibility for wildlife very seriously. We are taking action to fulfil those responsibilities on a number of fronts.

We are modernizing and strengthening federal wildlife legislation. At this very moment the government is drafting regulations which will enable it to proclaim the wild animal and plant protection and regulation of interprovincial and international trade act. These regulations are very important and will significantly strengthen Canada's ability to protect its wild plants and

Government Orders

animals from poaching and smuggling and are now being developed under a consultative process that includes all stakeholders which is the way this government functions.

As members will recall, on Monday we debated amendments to strengthen the Migratory Bird Conventions Act, one of the cornerstones of wildlife protection in Canada.

In addition Canada and the United States are on convergent tracks in preparation for formal negotiation of amendments to the migratory bird convention.

(1520)

Let me now turn to the Canada Wildlife Act. The Canada Wildlife Act was passed in 1973. It authorized the federal government to undertake research studies on wildlife and in collaboration with the provinces carry out a vast array of conservation activities to help wildlife, including the protection of species threatened with extinction.

While the act adequately responded to our needs back then, amendments are certainly required in order to reflect our needs today. To date wildlife conservation has focused on certain species or specific groups of species.

[*Translation*]

Today, we generally agree that we need a more comprehensive approach to conservation, an ecosystem approach, which takes into consideration all roles and values of ecosystems, including all animal and plant species and their needs in terms of habitat. This is indeed the recommended approach in the document "A Wildlife Policy for Canada" approved by federal and provincial ministers responsible for wildlife in 1990.

This kind of approach is the basis for the amendments proposed to strengthen and update the Canada Wildlife Act.

[*English*]

For example, the current Canada Wildlife Act defines wildlife as all non-domestic animals. The updated act will expand the definition of wildlife to include all wild organisms. The new definition is consistent with wildlife policy for Canada. It will better enable a shift in research and conservation efforts toward a true ecosystem approach. It also puts the act in line with the convention on biological diversity which was ratified by Canada in 1992.

The modernized Canada Wildlife Act will provide an extended framework to help protect all species in our ecosystem. It is important to note that with provincial agreement the new act will help preserve habitat. We found out through hard experience that it is almost impossible to save a single species of plant or animal in the wild without first preserving its habitat.

Close to my own riding of Moncton we have seen this borne out. The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve has been established at Marys Point. A sister reserve in South America has been established to protect the habitat of semipalmated sandpipers among other migratory species of birds.

It is a healthy habitat that permits the survival of species. That is what the ecosystem approach is all about. You cannot talk about saving the eagle without also talking about water quality, about fish population and other habitat.

This applies to Canada's marine environment as well. Traditional wildlife protection has focused on terrestrial wildlife species and their habitats. The marine application of the present act is set out at the 12-mile territorial sea limit. Critical wildlife habitat, however, including areas important to seabirds and breeding and feeding grounds for whales extends far beyond the 12-mile limit.

The modernized Canada Wildlife Act includes provision for the establishment of marine national wildlife areas out to the limit of Canada's 200 nautical mile territory. Regulatory authorities related to activities in marine protected areas would be established.

The extension of the Canada Wildlife Act to the 200 mile limit could help us significantly in sustaining the biodiversity and other associated benefits of marine ecosystems.

No legislation can be effective if it cannot be applied and enforced effectively. Therefore the modernization of the Canada Wildlife Act will improve the administration and enforcement of the act in a number of ways. All of the administration and implementation provisions of the act are being updated, streamlined and made consistent with other federal conservation laws.

Some of the more significant of these revisions deal with enforcement. Penalties are being toughened to reflect the serious nature of crimes, such as poaching and the destruction of protected habit that threaten Canada's wildlife heritage.

(1525)

Potential maximum penalties under the Canada Wildlife Act are being increased to a possible fine of \$25,000 or a jail term of six months, or both. The act will provide more flexibility to the courts and enforcement officers in ways that will improve compliance and enforcement.

For example, revisions to the act will provide authority for the issuing of court orders and will enable conservation officers to issue tickets for certain offences. This will give more options in dealing with offences and punishment so that the best and most efficient means are available to respond to the violations.

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At the same time where a violation is of a minor nature, such as a record keeping violation, a ticketable offence can be created. Rather than requiring a court appearance, an officer will be able to give a ticket so that the ticket can be paid directly. This will ensure fairness and relate to the severity of the offence.

Community service will become an option in the sentencing of convicted violators. This will encourage judges to assign penalties where they might otherwise be reluctant. If the community service relates to wildlife, as seems very likely, it will provide tangible conservation benefits as well.

It will become possible to use court orders to prohibit the continuation of activities harmful to protected areas. Persons who have damaged ecosystems in national wildlife areas could be forced to pay the cost of remediation. It is under the authority of the Canada Wildlife Act that many areas of key significance to Canada's wildlife are protected.

At present 45 national wildlife areas comprising 287,000 hectares have been set up under the act. Although many diverse species are found in them, most current wildlife areas have been established for their importance as habitat for migratory birds.

Furthermore, our national wildlife areas help Canadians meet many of their international wildlife management obligations. For example, our national wildlife areas help us meet our international commitments under the convention on wetlands of international importance, commonly known as the Ramsar convention.

Canada also has commitments under the circumpolar agreement on the conservation of Arctic flora and fauna component of the Arctic environmental protection strategy, the global convention on biodiversity and a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements to conserve wildlife and habitat.

All of these commitments would be difficult if not impossible to meet without our system of national wildlife areas and the Canada Wildlife Act. The revised act will help us and the international community to do a better job of preserving wildlife heritage.

It is particularly appropriate to be speaking about the Canada Wildlife Act today. I want to use this occasion to call the attention of the House to the fact that Canada has recently received formal notification that the Creston valley wildlife management area has been registered as Canada's 32nd wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention.

Canada is a leading participant in this international environmental treaty that is promoting the conservation and wise use of wetlands the world over. In fact over 30 per cent of total wetland area designated under the convention is located within Canada.

Our network of important protected wetlands now spans all the provinces and territories in Canada. The Creston valley wildlife management area, the latest Canadian Ramsar site, is the first to be designated as entirely owned and managed by the province of British Columbia.

The Creston valley site covers 6,970 hectares on the floodplains of the Kootenay River. It contains fresh eutrophic lakes, ferns and lowland river delta wetlands. The Creston valley is a major feeding habitat for migrating species on the western flyway and regularly supports over 100,000 waterfowl during migrating periods.

I and this government salute British Columbia for nominating this area which is vital to a wide range of international migratory species. Environment Canada is proud to have assisted the people of British Columbia in seeking the Ramsar convention designation for the Creston valley.

Canada has committed itself to setting aside and safeguarding 12 per cent of its total land mass as protected natural space. Our national wildlife areas and the Ramsar convention sites are helping us to set aside that 12 per cent of Canada's habitat as protected areas.

(1530)

What about the other 88 per cent of Canada? Birds are independent creatures. They fly where they want to fly and often the places that are most important to them fall outside our Ramsar sites, national wildlife areas, national or provincial parks.

We have to make room for wildlife in the other 88 per cent of Canada as well. We have to influence general land use management in such a way that we humans do not drive out the other species with whom we share our ecosystem.

In this regard initiatives such as a North American waterfowl management plan are extremely important. Under the plan three nations, Canada, the United States and Mexico, are working together to preserve populations of wildlife and their habitat. The North American waterfowl management plan is a leading global example of a concept of wiser use that is promoted by the Ramsar convention.

Under the plan, Canada has pioneered new and innovative ways to protect wildlife and habitat in the other 88 per cent. Under the plan concepts of wise use are finding their way into land areas and wetlands not under the direct control of governments.

Numerous organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Wildlife Habitat Canada are effectively promoting stewardship by private ownership. Partnerships have been forged with farmers and many other landowners to protect wildlife and the habitat in our vast food growing regions. It has been shown that many of the practices beneficial

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to wildlife also benefit agriculture, both economically and in such areas as soil conservation.

In effect, the plan is exploring new ways to do business and provide leverage to federal funds. For example, every federal dollar invested in activities under the North American waterfowl management plan is matched by an additional \$6 from other donors of which approximately half comes from American sources. This type of leverage is possible because diverse partners and interests can gather together under the umbrella of the North American waterfowl management plan and develop and agree upon common goals and objectives and put into effect their shared vision.

Shared interests can lead to shared objectives. Diverse people and organizations can get together and find, sometimes to their surprise, that they have things in common and can work toward the same goals. This type of bridge building, of people, organizations and governments working together is precisely the kind of co-operation envisaged by the wildlife policy for Canada and it is very important as we try to discover new and effective ways to take us toward the goal of sustainable development.

In addition to agricultural partnerships, partnerships are also being formed with other major land use sectors in Canada. For example in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland, North American waterfowl management plan agreements are in place. Bowater-Mersey and Krueger-Cornerbrach Pulp and Paper, two large forestry companies, manage and protect tens of thousands of acres of wetlands while maintaining profitable forestry activities.

Clearly the North American waterfowl management plan exemplifies sustainable development in action.

[*Translation*]

Sustainable development is the key to long term economic and environmental health. By keeping wildlife populations in good health, we will be able to contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being of Canada, as well as to the ecological and biological processes necessary to sustain life.

A Statistics Canada study on the importance of wildlife for Canadians reinforces this opinion. In 1991, Canadian residents, and 1.8 million American visitors attracted to Canada by its wildlife, spent a total of \$9 billion on sport fishing and other wildlife related activities.

(1535)

[*English*]

Canadians think that wildlife is important, and we engage in all sorts of wildlife related activities. In fact the popularity of these activities is at an all-time high. Over 90 per cent of Canadians participate in one or more wildlife related activities. We watch, photograph, feed, study and hunt wildlife. The billions we spend doing these things contribute significantly to

national and provincial economies in the form of income and jobs.

Given these facts, given the importance of wildlife to Canadians, it comes as no surprise that Canadians are highly supportive of wildlife and habitat conservation. Given the fact that 83 per cent of Canadians feel that it is important to protect endangered species and declining wildlife populations, it comes as no surprise that Canadians are willing to work together and work hard to try to preserve our precious wildlife and its habitat.

Passage of these amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act will make the job a bit easier. I urge all members to support the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, in the middle of the 20th century, we saw our planet from space for the first time. Historians may eventually find that this vision had a greater impact on thought than the Copernican revolution of the 16th century, which upset the human self-image by revealing that the Earth is not the center of the universe.

From space, we see a small and fragile ball dominated not by human activity and edifice but by a pattern of clouds, oceans, greenery, and soils.

Humanity's inability to fit its doings into that pattern is changing planetary systems, fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards. This new reality, from which there is no escape, must be recognized—and managed.

This introduction, Mr. Speaker, is taken from the very first chapter of the Brundtland report dated 1987. We must, each and every one of us, recognize its importance and never forget it.

We are here today to debate Bill C-24. This bill amends the Canada Wildlife Act, which was passed in 1973, and its purpose, as stated by the department, is, and I quote: "to permit the Government to conduct wildlife research and to undertake various activities related to wildlife conservation and interpretation". The provinces are responsible for managing wildlife, except for most species of migratory birds, fish and mammals.

This bill, in somewhat the same way as Bill C-23, is bringing existing legislation up to date. It is basically an update, with a few new provisions. Nothing indicates, upon review, this bill might infringe upon the responsibilities of Quebec or any other province in Canada. But as I said earlier, we can no longer afford nowadays to ignore the environmental question, particularly with respect to biodiversity.

We need only think of endangered species, as mentioned in chapter 6 of the very important Brundtland report, "Our Common Future". The introduction to this chapter reads as follows: "Conservation of living natural resources—plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the non-living elements of the environment on which they depend—is crucial for development. Today, the conservation of wild living resources is on the agenda of governments; nearly 4 per cent of the Earth's land area is

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managed explicitly to conserve species and ecosystems, and all but a small handful of countries have national parks. The challenge facing nations today is no longer deciding whether conservation is a good idea, but rather how it can be implemented in the national interest and within the means available in each country”.

All of us here in this House today are convinced of the importance of saving endangered species, as the countries which signed the Brundtland report were. The problem is how to do it.

(1540)

It is not necessary to point out that it is vital to humanity to save these species. Just think of agriculture, medicine and industry to see the economic importance of wildlife species. A recent Statistics Canada survey indicated that spending on activities of all kinds related to fish and other wildlife species contributed \$11.5 billion to GNP and created some 250,000 jobs. Protecting endangered species is vital for the whole economy, whence the recent terminology “environment and sustainable development”.

Governments have come to realize that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environmental issues. Everything is interrelated and, again, we must aim for a global vision, a global position on environmental matters.

What about hope in all this? Some people may accuse us of being idealistic and utopian, but one does not have to go very far to come up with several success stories. The decrease in infant mortality rates and the increase in life expectancy rates, in the number of adults knowing how to read and write and in the percentage of children attending school are some of the success stories allowing us to believe in the evolution and improvement of the environment. They seemed impossible to achieve but they were because of the goals set out in the bill. This bill applies to animals, wild plants and other organisms and to their habitats.

We thus want to ensure that an element of the ecosystem essential to the survival of an endangered species is protected too. That is why the term “wildlife” was substituted for the word “fauna” throughout the bill.

Extending the definition of fauna to all wildlife, in accordance with the Convention on Biodiversity ratified by Canada in 1993, makes environmental measures more consistent.

A few examples from “Our Common Future” make us realize the economic potential of maintaining and preserving our ecosystems.

First of all, there would appear to be plants containing hydrocarbons, not carbohydrates. Since some of these plants exist in regions which have become useless because of activities such as surface mining or hydrocarbon extraction, the same

report says that coal, among other minerals, could be regenerated by soil cultivation of hydrocarbons. And, unlike an oil well, an oil plantation or fuel farm would never dry out. Imagine the savings, as well as the benefits from an environmental point of view.

Let us take a look at corn crops in the United States. In the early seventies, some fungus seriously damaged corn crops, causing losses of two billion dollars. Recently, a primitive kind of corn from Mexico was discovered. This wild corn is perennial, while the other kinds are annual. Crossing this corn with commercial varieties of corn would translate into savings on ploughing and seeding. The genetic qualities of this plant, which was almost extinct, would allow savings of hundreds of millions every year in the United States alone.

The preservation of wild species ensures our survival and allows us to make enormous savings.

The amendments in this bill do not concern only endangered species. Indeed, the scope of the legislation is extended to include inland waters and territorial waters—we are referring here to the 200 nautical mile limit—so that the government can create protected marine areas to ensure the survival of endangered species. However, and this is very important for us, if provincial jurisdiction is involved, the federal government will have to come to an agreement with the province concerned. Moreover, this amendment will have the effect of significantly increasing the protection of our marine ecosystems, which are important for our wild species. Protecting ecosystems in an intelligent manner contributes to the major goals of sustainable development.

(1545)

Clause 13 of Bill C-24, which amends section 11 of the act, clearly defines the duties and powers of wildlife officers as well as their role with respect to the provinces. This provision clarifies the specific duties and functions of wildlife officers and others involved in this field.

Clause 15, on the other hand, significantly increases the amount of the fines that can be awarded. These may range from \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$25,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months. Hopefully, the new fines provided for in the legislation will discourage potential lawbreakers and poachers.

Pursuant to the legislation, the minister may acquire lands for research, conservation and interpretation purposes involving migratory birds and, if it is in the national interest, other species, including endangered ones, in which case he acts in co-operation with the provinces. There are currently 45 national wildlife preserves in Canada covering a total area of 287,000 hectares.

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In conclusion, I would like to draw a parallel between the Canada Wildlife Act, Bill C-24 and sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined on page 8 of the Brundtland Report as the ability of humanity to do the following, and I quote: "to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The report also stresses the following point, and I quote: "There is a growing need for effective international co-operation to manage ecological and economic interdependence. Yet at the same time, confidence in international organizations is diminishing and support for them dwindling".

Therefore, it goes without saying that we on this side of the House support this bill designed to update the existing legislation and to clarify certain roles and responsibilities. You can rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that the Bloc Québécois will continue to support initiatives that promote the environment and sustainable development, provided they are respectful of existing jurisdictions.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, as the parliamentary secretary has stated, the purpose of Bill C-24 is to amend the existing Canada Wildlife Act.

At the outset may I say as environment critic that the Reform Party supports these long overdue amendments to the act that was first proclaimed in 1973. Since proclamation there have been a few minor amendments, but by and large the act is much the same as it was when introduced 20 years ago. Canada's wildlife legislation clearly needs modernization.

Bill C-24 is relatively simple and straightforward. However that does not mean we should just give it a rubber stamp of approval. This is the first real opportunity we have had in 20 years to sit down to review the act clause by clause and to amend the bill so that it meets the needs of the 21st century.

We must ensure the bill is all encompassing, for it is not enough simply to attempt to protect wildlife. I am pleased to see that the bill addresses a wider range of organisms. The broadening of the act to include all living organisms allows the government to protect all endangered species.

Back in 1973 when the wildlife protection bill was first passed it was said that the world was losing one species per year. Today there are 258 species on Canada's endangered species list. Only last month 20 new fish, mammals and plants were added to the endangered species list.

Some of these species include the western harvest mouse in the Okanagan and southern Alberta, the Pacific water shrew on the lower B.C. mainland, the King rail in southern Ontario, and the short-eared owl in most of Canada.

These species are largely endangered by pressures from the urban and agricultural sprawl. Habitat loss, industrial pollution and urban development contribute largely to the plight of Canada's wildlife. However the broadening of the act to include endangered species should be tempered in its use and particularly in how it is applied.

(1550)

The United States with its endangered species act is not in my view the direction this country should be going. The amendments in Bill C-24 are appropriate as they cover measures necessary to protect endangered species without going to the extreme measures pursued in the United States. Too often the species in question, for example the spotted owl in the Pacific northwest, is simply the tool used to achieve another objective. In the case of the spotted owl the goal is forest preservation and the owl is simply used as a stepping stone to attain another goal.

In Canada we must ensure that our legislation is directed toward the endangered species in question and that the revised act cannot be used or abused to achieve other goals.

This will also require the co-operation and understanding of the provinces as there is an overlapping of jurisdiction. In protecting wildlife and wild organisms the act should be applied with care so as to avoid overstepping other jurisdictions. The wider discretionary powers granted to the minister by the bill must be exercised judiciously.

I would now like to step into the past for a moment and draw on my previous experiences to show where areas within the bill are appropriate and long overdue.

In my capacity as a forester for a large woodlands operation on Vancouver Island part of my duties included overseeing the land base of 250,000 acres. This involved dealing with many federal and provincial agencies, including fish and wildlife, and on numerous occasions dealing with wildlife offences.

In our area of operation there had been a particularly successful transplant of Roosevelt elk from northern Vancouver Island to the Nahmint Valley where a series of severe winters had virtually wiped out the local elk population.

During the mid-1980s, 13 young bull and cow elk were transported and released to join a single old bull who was the only survivor of the original herd. As an aside I want to say that old bull was delighted to see those cows coming off the back of the transport truck. Four of the cows were equipped with radio

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collars in order to study the migration patterns and habits of the elk. It was truly a success story, and in four years the herd had multiplied to 24 animals from the original 14.

There was also a sense of pride and ownership in the community as many different groups including wildlife clubs, provincial agencies, forest companies and the community at large had banded together to make this happen.

Unfortunately this story has a dark side as four of the best breeding cows, three with radio collars, were shot illegally. To add further insult only the hind quarters of one animal were removed. The others were left to rot.

The individuals responsible were subsequently caught and processed through the courts, but they only received extremely light sentences. The local residents of Port Alberni were particularly upset with the light sentences. My point is that although I realize the situation I described is within provincial jurisdiction, similar instances occur in federal areas such as our national parks.

I am particularly pleased to see the bill address the areas of enforcement and punishment, for too often the penalty does not fit the crime. However the bill puts some teeth into areas that up until now have lacked strength.

The bill increases penalties to include a maximum \$25,000 fine and a maximum six months in prison. It also creates indictable offences for the more serious infractions.

However there is one area that does not appear to be covered in the bill. It is the illegal possession and sale of endangered or protected species animal body parts. We are all familiar with the plight of the African rhino. Its tusk brings poachers huge profits for its final use as an aphrodisiac in Asia. What we are not as familiar with is that this type of atrocity is also going on in this country.

In my former job I have come across black bear carcasses where only particular organs were removed, the remainder of the animal abandoned. Why? It was because the sale of these animal organs in Asia brings big dollars where they are required in ancient remedies and tonics.

(1555)

Body parts commonly being exported to Asia from Canada include: black bear gall bladders, claws, paws and teeth; seal and sea lion genitalia; beaver genitalia; deer and elk antlers in velvet; and eagle and falcon beaks and claws.

British Columbia currently has legislation directed toward possession and sale of animal parts. It is my hope that the minister will be receptive to examining those portions of the B.C. legislation that may be applicable to the bill, with the intention of further strengthening the Canada Wildlife Act to prohibit the possession and sale of animal body parts.

Another area of the bill which has been updated is that pertaining to nautical wildlife. Whereas the old act applied to the old 12-mile limit, it has now been expanded to include the 200-mile limit. This increased area of jurisdiction will play a key role in the protection of water mammals and fish stocks. Regulation making authorities related to marine protected areas have also been established in the bill, and this will allow for enforcement. Other administrative and implementation provisions such as inspection, search, seizure, custody and forfeiture are all provided for in the bill which will hopefully allow these provisions to be effectively carried out. However all these powers need to be exercised with discretion.

Other areas that deserve comment are those directed toward the recovery of costs. In light of Canada's current financial situation it is most appropriate to recover costs related to the management of public lands and protected marine areas. It will mean reduced government expenditures and a more self-sufficient system. It will allow for greater financial sustainability in policy over the long term.

In conclusion, we support the bill and look forward to examining it in detail in committee with the purpose of refining it to best deal with the wildlife concerns of the country into the next century.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport): As we all know, Mr. Speaker, Canada is in many respects the envy of the world, particularly when it comes to the diversity of its ecosystems and wildlife and the geography that makes such richness possible.

However recent studies have revealed that we have 11 extirpated species under the general heading of mammal, bird, reptile, fish and plant. We have nine extinct ones under the general heading of mammal, bird and fish species. Under the general heading of at risk species we have 258 mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and plants. This list is by no means exhaustive.

The questions we have to ask ourselves in this important debate are: Why are so many species at risk? How come we already have so many extinct and so many extirpated species? Is it due to habitat destruction caused by humans? Is it due to thoughtless trafficking in animals because of greed?

It seems habitat destruction and trafficking are the two major reasons. Whatever the combination of causes, it underlies the need to increase our efforts in protecting wildlife and ensuring that the destruction of wildlife and wildlife habitat destruction do not occur.

The act is a good measure. It is a good step in the right direction. As others have already indicated it is very timely and badly needed. It allows, for instance, the minister to purchase, acquire or lease lands for the purpose of research, conservation and interpretation in respect of migratory birds and—this is the interesting angle—in the national interest and with the support of provinces other species including endangered species. So

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there is a broadening of a very important concept in relation to the acquisition of land.

(1600)

Presently in Canada there are 45 national wildlife areas encompassing roughly 300,000 hectares, as the member for Terrebonne already indicated in his intervention. The provinces have indicated to the federal government that the existing penalties are no longer appropriate and that administrative and enforcement procedures need to be streamlined. Because of this, a number of changes have been proposed.

As the member for Comox—Alberni has already indicated, the definition is no longer limited to any non-domestic animal but includes wild organisms, animal, plant or other organisms and their habitat. The broadening of the definition encourages an ecosystem approach to conservation and brings the act far beyond the traditional approach for protection which in the past has been limited to just the higher order of animals.

Much has been said by those who spoke before me on the establishment of protected marine areas. I also welcome these, because this step has potential positive implications for areas within the 200 nautical mile limit and provides authority for the protection of marine animals and mammals.

Until now the marine ecosystem and its diversity has remained largely unprotected from the perspective of habitat protection and the application of the act has been limited just to the 12 mile limit. Therefore it has become critical that the wildlife habitat, including breeding and feeding grounds for whales and areas of significant concentration of seabirds be extended beyond the 12 mile limit. This is a very good development.

I was very interested in the comments made by the member for Comox—Alberni on enforcement. One often wonders about the effectiveness of fines and whether the right level is achieved. Certainly there is no doubt that what is being proposed in the bill is an improvement. Until this bill is passed, enforcement agencies in the field are reluctant, we are told, to charge offenders because of inappropriate penalties and the time required to follow up in court proceedings.

Hopefully the amendments will allow the wildlife officers to have broader authority in inspecting wildlife specimens, including the provisions regarding inspection, search, seizure, custody and so on. The minister will also have powers to appoint persons or a group of persons to be employed by the government as enforcement officers.

While the amendments to increase penalties are welcome and desirable, they will mean very little if the necessary resources are not allocated to enforcement. At the present time the federal jurisdiction has only 30 enforcement positions, all of which are not filled. As the member probably knows, coming from Alberta, a lot of criticism has been directed through the federal

government at the fact that enforcement powers have been declining, as has the strength of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

(1605)

The parliamentary secretary waxed eloquently at the beginning of his speech, stating: "Canadians care deeply about wildlife". He is right. The question is this: Can fewer than 30 enforcement officers do the job? All they can do is answer telephone inquiries but not much more. Therefore this aspect of implementation and enforcement requires attention.

Fines have been increased. I will not go into the details of what is being proposed but I have to ask this. What is the value of a polar bear, what is the value of a spotted owl, what is the value of a bald eagle once the species has entered the endangered category? The monetary value expressed through the fine is not adequate to express the damage caused to the totality of our culture when an endangered species is removed by one number.

I am a bit puzzled about the effectiveness of the fines proposed, whether they go far enough in becoming really preventive. There is definitely an improvement in the proposed amendments to section 13 which make a person liable for a separate offence on each day on which an offence is committed. That is good. It will allow a court to multiply fines by the number of specimens in the possession of the offender. The member for Comox—Alberni made reference to possession of wildlife that ought to be taken into account when we go through this bill clause by clause.

Section 13 allows the court to impose additional fines if the court deems that the person has made earnings from the offence. Although this will be difficult to prove it is a good step in the right direction.

Clause 15 of the bill among other things adds a new section for special orders of the court which allow the court to order those convicted to remedy the harm, pay for remediation of all activity that could lead to repeat offences, perform community services and the like. That is highly commendable.

Now we come to what is probably the heart of the bill. Section 8 deals with endangered species. Here the minister has been given permissive powers, in co-operation with one or more provincial governments, to take measures as the minister deems necessary for the protection of any species of wildlife in danger of extinction.

This terminology has good potential, but is it strong enough? Does this section provide adequate protection or do we need new legislation for the specific protection of endangered species? This is the question that ought to be addressed. I am sure it will be addressed in committee. If we do not come to grips with the question of endangered species and their protection, future generations of Canadians will not be able to enjoy them.

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The International Union for the Conservation of Nature in January of this year in Argentina adopted an interesting resolution which in effect repaired a protocol under the convention on biological diversity which deals with diversity in the forest. It is a good step in the right direction.

The question is this: How does Canada rank in the international sphere? Are we doing enough to protect species that cross borders?

(1610)

What about the Porcupine caribou in northern Alberta and in Yukon territory? That herd resides and moves between Yukon and Alaska. While the Canadian land is designated as a wildlife area, one section of the calving region is in the United States. This land is described as 1002 lands and is very important because it is the calving ground of the herd and is in danger of being destroyed because of oil exploration.

Therefore, should oil exploration be permitted on the north slope, which is this 1002 land in Alaska, or should it be, as I would of course argue in favour, banned for the protection in the centuries ahead of these particular herds which move across the border? This is a cross-border issue. We must, I submit, ensure that species and populations such as the Porcupine caribou herd are not threatened through exploration and exploitation of natural resources. Since this is an international matter I would urge the Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise it at the appropriate time in Washington.

It seems to me as we look at this bill and the overall situation in the nineties that we need international agreements on the preservation and protection of water and land wildlife. We are losing species compared to the richness of 50 or 100 years ago. In other words, there is a constant attrition and diminution in the richness of species that can be documented.

If future generations are to have any wildlife to enjoy, then we need to do much more for the species in danger of extinction and for the cross-border species in particular.

I will conclude with a thought that I am sure troubles all of us. It is more than that, it is a reflection. I wonder whether fines, enforcement, laws and regulations can do the job. It seems to me that they can only go so far.

What is needed as a complementary measure to Bill C-24 is an intensive education program. We have to have education aimed at all ages, an education aimed at all groups and promoted at all levels. Every Canadian should know what is endangered in our ecosystem, either on land or in the water, whether it is a plant, an insect, a mammal, you name it.

Every Canadian through this educational effort should be mobilized to protect wildlife. Every Canadian should be asked

to help in the protection of endangered species because in a democracy the most effective instrument is education.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, the bill the government is introducing this afternoon is aimed at amending the Canada Wildlife Act. Enacted in 1973, this legislation will be made more efficient by the new provisions. The environment is indeed an evolving sector in need of constant readjustment.

(1615)

I am very happy to take part in the debate this afternoon, being the fourth member of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development to speak on Bill C-24, immediately following its chairman, the member for Davenport.

Over the past twenty years, this act had been left unchanged. It was intended, first, to allow the federal government to conduct wildlife research, and second, to protect wild animals, especially those on the endangered list. The amendments before us today appear to be quite justified since they are mainly aimed at giving more teeth to this piece of legislation regarding the protection of our wildlife. The proposed changes are in four areas.

First of all, the amendments extend the act to cover the internal waters and the territorial sea of Canada up to 200 miles. Before, the limit was only 12 miles. This will allow the government to create protected marine areas across a larger territory. Among other things, such areas will serve to protect endangered species. It is of the utmost importance to be able to take care of these species since they are threatened by the pollution in our waterways, even if they do not come under our jurisdiction. Naturally, endangered species have no way to protect themselves against such negative impact, and we cannot pick up their distress calls if we are not in the field to notice the devastation.

Another amendment deals with living organisms and throughout the French version of the act, the word "faune" is replaced by the expression "espèces sauvages". That way, animals, plants and other living organisms and their respective habitats, are all protected. If we care about the habitat of these wildlife species, we also make sure that all the ecosystem elements their survival requires will be protected as well. In past years, we focused on animals and only animals. From now on, this legislation will give the government all the authority it requires to protect the producers, the first links in the food chain which of course feeds the consumers. We will also deal with the decomposers to ensure perfect recycling.

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Plants are the first link in the food chain which nourishes herbivores and carnivores alike and which ends with man. This reminds me of the story about Isle Royale most of us have heard. Authorities had introduced herds of moose on that island. There were no predators so the moose multiplied at an alarming rate. What happened? There were too many, the whole herd was weak and sick, individuals were aggressive with each other, vegetation was scarce, the whole island was heading towards disaster. There was overgrazing, so the animals had to dig up plant roots in order to survive.

(1620)

Fortunately and just in time, authorities who did not want to allow hunting, reintroduced on the island the moose's natural predator, the wolf.

A pack of wolves was reestablished on the island. At the beginning, food was plentiful and there was a population explosion, while the moose population dwindled. However, after thirty years, a perfect balance was reached on Isle Royale, to everybody's relief.

This is the kind of balance that humans and the government should strive to achieve. Previously, we did not protect habitats. We could also talk about clear-cutting. When hundreds and hundreds of contiguous hectares are ruthlessly stripped of all trees, clearly habitats are being destroyed.

Animals must move out and search for a similar habitat. However, when they find one it is likely already occupied by other individuals of the same species. You know how it is, when you have a territory you try to defend it, to keep intruders at bay.

Other times we see the total disappearance of a habitat, very often crucial for endangered species. This amendment is in keeping with the Convention on Biodiversity that Canada ratified in 1993. Several members already mentioned it.

At the present time, the term used excludes domestic animals. As it becomes increasingly clear that all elements of our environment are closely interrelated, it would obviously be inefficient to protect a mammal or a bird when it cannot survive in its natural habitat.

The third amendment defines the duties and powers of wildlife officers, who will have more leeway with regard to offenders. Although the hon. member for Davenport spoke at length on this earlier, I would still like to deliver this message.

The last amendment deals with fines, which will be much higher. Provision is made for a \$25,000 maximum fine or a six-month prison term or both for more serious offences.

This measure, which is intended to discourage poaching, should be proceeded with. By the way, Mr. Speaker, when I was in my riding of Frontenac on the weekend, I read in the county newspaper, the *Courier Frontenac*, that people who had burglarized dozens of cottages and summer homes were sentenced

to less than two years in prison—which is reasonable in my opinion—but since provincial jails are overcrowded, the journalist figured out that the time spent behind bars varies from 1.8 to 24 per cent of the sentence.

While listening to the hon. member for Davenport earlier, I figured out that six months in prison multiplied by 30 days a month amounts to 180 days. So 1 per cent of that would be 1.8 days, let us say two days. The bill may provide for a prison term of six months but even if the judge sentences the offender to six months, it should be a little less with good behaviour. But if the prisoner only serves 1.8 per cent, 2 per cent or 4 per cent of his sentence, it is a little disappointing for the judge, and our wildlife officers will eventually lose all motivation.

(1625)

The Disraeli chief of police told me of the time he testified in court in Sherbrooke, some sixty kilometres away. On his way back, he stopped for a hot dog, french fries and a Coke and when he got to Disraeli, the man he had testified against and who had been convicted was already there. Maybe he spent too much time eating his hot dog! That just goes to show how sentences are not always appropriate.

The measures proposed today will protect wildlife species more efficiently but will also ensure special attention is given to endangered species. The public already knows some of these species. The beluga whale, for example, at the mouth of the Saguenay, the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the prairie dog, the grizzly bear, the bison which was endangered just two decades ago.

Allow me to go off on a tangent once again. I am lucky enough to live in the country. Last Sunday morning, for the first time, I saw a bald eagle on my land. I called my wife and children so they could see it and there we were, in front of the patio door with our binoculars, filled with wonder at the sight of that bald eagle. I hope it has a mate so they can reproduce on our land. All this to tell you that even if I have lived in that area for many years, last Sunday was the first time I had the opportunity to see there a bald eagle, which is the emblem of the United States.

Other species are not as lucky. The preventive measures we seek to introduce will allow us to foresee the problems and to act, rather than react after the damage is done. Instead of waiting until some species are on the verge of extinction to do something to preserve them, we will be able to take measures to maintain their numbers at a level that poses no threat to their continuing survival.

I will tell you another story. You probably know that the Government of Quebec had to legislate in order to save the beaver, the one on the reverse side of the nickel, the symbol of hard-working people. In Quebec, during the depression, beaver was actively trapped for its pelt or its meat. Times were hard, families were large and feeding them was not easy.

The government prohibited all trading in beaver pelts as well as trapping. Populations started to build up again. Maybe I have a keener eye than most but on highway 417, coming to Ottawa, about 15 kilometres from the national capital I see trees, trembling aspens, cut down by beavers. I noticed them again no later than Monday. This to say that beavers are now plentiful, they are on the outskirts of Ottawa and Hull, along the 417.

I urge hon. members using this road to be on the lookout, they will see the fallen trees. Perhaps authorities will deport the beavers, the way they deported the Acadians, if they do too much damage along highway 417.

I remind you also of the passenger pigeon which, in North America, has come to typify the devastating influence of humans on wildlife. It is now extinct. Of course it was not exactly a smart bird, it would come close to human dwellings. As I said before, people were poor and hungry. These birds were easy to catch and very good to eat.

(1630)

Do not believe that the only purpose is to save some very rare species so that we can boast that we have rare birds in our backyard, as I was just telling you earlier about the bald eagle. Protecting their habitats lets our wildlife live in a healthy environment that is the best possible one for them.

I will draw a parallel with Bill C-23 presented in this House last Monday. One amendment made to that act on migratory birds concerns embryos, sperm and eggs.

One may question the importance of protecting these items and wonder even more what these items can be used for. If you look a little closer, you quickly see that with biotechnologies becoming more and more prevalent, it is good planning to regulate potential problems that may arise.

This bill also amends a law that might not seem very important, except that saving our wildlife depends on it. If we do not want to always be in a race against time to protect our endangered species, we must take proactive measures.

One possibly contentious aspect concerns federal and provincial jurisdictions, since they are not always clearly defined when it comes to the environment. Take the example of a non-navigable waterway, which is under provincial jurisdiction; if it were navigable, then it would be under federal jurisdiction.

It is interesting to note that, under the provisions of this legislation, if the jurisdiction of a province comes into question, the federal government—and I certainly hope it will abide by the letter and the spirit of the law—will have to reach an agreement with the province concerned.

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To conclude, I think it may be worthwhile to remind this House that nature is exquisitely sensitive as well as self-contained. On this blue planet of ours, we have something called the food chain. This chain could be compared to the huge chains big contractors use on their power shovels. Every time a plant or animal species is extinguished, it is one more link being weakened. Eventually, this link will break. Naturally, it would be catastrophic if one of these links broke. That is what sustainable development is about, as my colleague from Terrebonne so aptly described it earlier, based on the Bruntland report. If one of these links were to break, then our children's future and that of generations to come would be seriously jeopardized.

It is well known that a chain is only as strong as its weakest links. So, seeing that some links are getting weaker, it is high time that we all worked together to make our planet a better place to live, basically. At this stage, I can say the government can, of course, count on the Bloc Québécois' support. As my colleague from Terrebonne said, we will always endorse policies to protect our environment and make this planet a better place for future generations.

(1635)

We are growing old, so this will be for generations and generations to come.

I will close on this, but I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that by the end of the day, you will have become very knowledgeable in matters of the environment. I can see you listening with great interest to all the speeches made this afternoon on Bill C-24, including the remarks of four members of the Standing Committee on the Environment who have spoken so far, with perhaps a fifth one to come.

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, over two decades ago Parliament passed into law the Canada Wildlife Act. This was a key piece of legislation in the effort to protect our country's wildlife. It enables the federal government to carry out wildlife research and, in co-operation with the provinces, to undertake a wide range of conservation interpretation activities for wildlife and its habitat including the protection of endangered species.

Since 1973, however, we have seen far-reaching changes in our approach to environmental issues. These changes necessitate updating of the act. We have come to see the crucial importance of the interrelationships between these issues and the need to integrate the environment and the economy. We also recognize that the issues we face are complex. To address them successfully we need co-operation across jurisdictions and even across borders.

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This new understanding lies at the heart of sustainable development or sustainability. Sustainability recognizes the need to keep human activities within the limits of the ecosystem's capacity to sustain. It means integrating economic and environmental goals. It also means building a wide network of partnerships to achieve these goals.

At the United Nations earth summit in 1992 the world community gave its support to sustainable development. In the area of wildlife it adopted the convention on biological diversity. Canada was one of the first industrialized countries to sign this unprecedented agreement.

Signatories to the convention must regulate or manage biological resources to ensure their conservation and sustainable use and must establish a system of protected areas to conserve biodiversity. The convention calls for conservation efforts to consider all species within an ecosystem and requires countries to develop legislative provisions to protect endangered species.

We have welcomed the new international commitment to maintaining biodiversity because wildlife has a special importance to our country and to the vast majority of our people. Canada is indeed fortunate in still having natural spaces largely untouched by development where wildlife abounds in a free state. We all take pride in our vast wilderness areas and the creatures that inhabit them. They help to define the identity of our country.

As well, Canada's living natural resources make a major contribution to our economic well-being. According to a Statistics Canada survey on the importance of wildlife to Canadians in 1991, expenditures associated with all types of fish and wildlife related recreational activities contributed at least \$11.5 billion to our gross domestic product. They generated \$4.4 billion in tax revenues and provided 250,000 jobs.

The same survey shows that over 90 per cent of Canadians took part in wildlife related activities during 1991, devoting to them a total of 1.3 billion days and \$5.6 billion. Those figures indicate that wildlife plays a major part in Canadians' recreational life. Further, 86 per cent of Canadians support wildlife conservation.

For all these reasons we must ensure the health of Canada's wildlife. The amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act will help achieve that goal.

(1640)

The bill under consideration will broaden the scope of the Canada Wildlife Act to apply not simply to non-domestic animals but instead to all wild organisms. That shift will bring the act into line with the biodiversity convention.

The bill will also make it possible to create marine natural wildlife areas, not only within the 12 nautical mile limit as at present, but all the way out to the 200 nautical mile limit. This

will allow much greater protection of the Canadian marine ecosystems important to wildlife.

The amendments establish regulatory authorities for marine protected areas. They strengthen enforcement related provisions. They will help deter illegal activities such as poaching by setting a maximum penalty of \$25,000 and/or six months in jail for serious offences.

These changes will help ensure that future Canadians enjoy the same benefits we do from flourishing wildlife populations. However protecting Canada's wildlife is not a task for the federal government alone. To a large extent managing wildlife is a responsibility of the provinces and the territories. Only by working with them can the federal government promote our national wildlife objectives.

Canadians can be proud that the different levels of government have a record of strong co-operation on wildlife issues. In 1990 the federal and provincial governments adopted the wildlife policy for Canada. This calls for effective legislation conserving wild animals and plants and ensuring that all uses are sustainable.

It also calls for penalties that pose effective deterrents to the illegal use of wild species. More recently federal, provincial and territorial governments together have been developing a Canadian biodiversity strategy that will set out the manner in which Canada will implement the 1992 global biodiversity convention.

That same co-operation is central to the Canada Wildlife Act. For example, the act provides for co-operative management areas on provincial lands. While the federal Minister of the Environment will have the authority to appoint provincial officers as wildlife officers, these appointments will be made only with the agreement of the provinces concerned.

The amendments define the authority and powers of those officers and provide for inspection and search and seizure procedures in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Federal and provincial governments will also continue their co-operation on the management of endangered species. That co-operation dates back to 1988 when the responsible government agents launched the RNEW organization and strategy.

RNEW stands for recovery of nationally endangered wildlife. Its goal is to have all agencies and organizations work as a team to rescue species at risk from extinction and to prevent vulnerable species from becoming at risk. The need for such teamwork is all too clear because the list of species designated as endangered is growing ever longer while the list of recovered species remains all too short.

RNEW brings together the directors of federal, provincial and territorial wildlife agencies plus the heads of three major national wildlife organizations: the Canadian Nature Federation, the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the World Wildlife Fund Canada. These officials set up a team to prepare a

management plan for the recovery of a particular endangered species, a plan eventually to be carried out by the responsible governments in co-operation with universities and conservation organizations.

Successes achieved through the RNEW program are gratifying, but they must not make us complacent. There are more cases by far in which Canada's wildlife populations are suffering from the effects of such problems as loss and degradation of habitat, overharvesting, poaching, disease and the impact of toxic substances. Yet the few successes are invaluable because they clearly show us the way forward. That way is through co-operation of the different levels of government and concerned groups outside government.

The amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act reinforce that co-operation. They will enhance protection for Canada's wildlife and help us advance the goals of sustainability.

(1645)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, in speaking in support of Bill C-24 I am going to take a somewhat different angle or attack to it than has been taken to this point.

We have been speaking an awful lot about issues concerning enforcement, search and seizure and all of these things which of course have to be a part of an act if it is going to be workable.

I would like to talk about some of the people in my constituency and I believe all across Canada who presently are involved, not in the enforcement but in the enhancement of the whole issue of wildlife.

There is a network of people who belong to organizations like rod and gun clubs all across my province, indeed across Canada. In British Columbia some of the networking is interprovincial or international in scale. For example, there are the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Canadian Wildlife Federation, and on and on.

Simply stated, networks are people talking to each other, sharing ideas, information and resources. These networks which are fundamentally informal exist to foster self help, to exchange information, to change society, to improve productivity and work life, and to share resources.

The hunters, trappers, guides and fishermen of Canada however are facing a crisis, a turning point in history. They have always been low key. Their way is not confrontational. Their way is to work in co-operation not confrontation. They not only value the privilege to carry out their sport, but also to work hard with real dollars to maintain healthy wildlife populations in British Columbia and across Canada.

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For example, within British Columbia there are approximately one million homes. Of this number about 50 per cent or half of them contain a hunter or fisherman, based on licences sold. Of course, there are also thousands of homes that contain non-hunters and non-fishermen.

Then there is a number containing anti-hunters and anti-fishermen. The anti group is by far the smallest of the three categories, but you do get more publicity if you are anti. You do not necessarily have to know what you are talking about to get press. There is a feeling that only antis care about wild animals or fish. The so-called let them be group, they have a management by lobby philosophy. A lot of what they do has nothing to do with science. They are very simplistic and feel that if hunting and fishing cease, everything will be fine. They could not be further from the truth.

It is my experience that hunters, fishermen, trappers and guides are very poor at getting their conservation message out. So in my small part I am trying to do exactly that.

Most of the government wildlife agencies also have difficulty getting their message out. What we find is that the media seems to be mostly on the anti side of everything, particularly if it is spectacular and there is some kind of confrontation involved. Most of the material put forward by the media on the subject of wildlife management is so distorted that it is almost embarrassing when people take a look at what the real facts are.

There is a desperate need for government to understand and provide public support for wildlife management through organized sportsmen. It is a positive thing if done the right way. Because of course we are always concerned in the nineties about being gender neutral or gender specific or whatever it is to express ourselves correctly, let me say that I was in a home in my constituency just a couple of weeks ago and was admiring some of the beautiful trophy animals they had mounted there. I was about to compliment the husband on that when it turned out that indeed the wife was the person who had gone out and done such an excellent job. I recognize that it is a growing sport and a growing interest no matter what a person's gender. Across Canada the impact of a century of hunting, trapping and sports fishing is quite well documented. As a matter of fact most wildlife species are more abundant now than they were 75 years ago.

(1650)

These species are all more abundant: the elk, the moose, the buffalo, antelope, mule deer, beaver, sea otter. As a matter of fact on Monday in this House when I was speaking on the migratory birds act I mentioned that in one part of my constituency they have very much an overabundance of grizzly bears. I suggest that probably the reason those bears are thriving as they are, even in an active logging operation area, is because many of

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the loggers are hunters and fishers and support this kind of wildlife and outdoor activity.

Most rod and gun clubs stand for scientific resource management. They oppose management by lobby. Resource decisions rather than political ones should be made on the basis of scientific evidence. We must manage more intensely as population expands. Those who use the resource are the ones who really work for it on the grounds of purchasing and enhancing habitat for all species. Many funds are set up exactly for that purpose.

I stand in support of the principles of Bill C-24. I believe that it will be an important part of the infrastructure required to give us the regulations or the ability to bring forward regulations that will help these dedicated people, indeed all Canadians, to be able to protect wildlife.

There is an issue that keeps on coming up in this House and it is directly related to what we are talking about here. These rod and gun club people, these people who enjoy being out of doors, enhancing wildlife, indeed putting much of their own blood, sweat and tears into preserving and protecting wildlife also are hunters and they are under attack. They are very much under attack at this particular time.

These are people who join these wildlife organizations, pay their dues, not only as membership fees, but pay their dues in terms of their time and energy and effort.

These people currently are under attack by many different, probably well meaning people across Canada. I cite as an example one organization that purports to have "over 5,000 Canadians" count as individual supporters of this particular organization.

Let us compare this organization to the wildlife or rod and gun club organizations. I read from their bylaws where they say there shall be no membership fees or dues unless otherwise directed by the board of directors.

What kind of commitment is there on the part of these people when they will not even put up their membership fee to be part of this lobby group to go after people who are currently enjoying the out of doors and the whole area of recreation in the wild.

At the risk of perhaps putting too many things together, I also suggest that on the same page I read and I quote: "Members shall apply for admission as such by completing a membership application," this is important, "in such form as the board may from time to time approve or by otherwise representing to the corporation in a manner satisfactory to the directors that they are interested in furthering the objects of the corporation".

I am not a legal person. I have never been involved with the law but when I read this I say to myself that if I wanted to increase my membership list and I was not charging member-

ship fees anyway, I would put out a petition in support of the objects of my corporation.

(1655)

When I receive this back under these terms and conditions, obviously these people are interested in furthering the objects of the corporation which is the ban of all guns.

I suggest that when we compare the level of commitment of the people, the lobby, that is currently going after the law-abiding citizens who are members of rod and gun clubs who enjoy the out of doors to the commitment of the people who are spending time in the bush, who are going out and are enhancing our environment and protecting our environment, obviously they come down on one side and not the other.

Further to that, yesterday I took part in a meeting between our party and this coalition and other supporters of the coalition. I was absolutely astounded to find that one of the people there said that we needed gun control to prevent suicide. Really, if our society is currently toying with the idea of legalizing doctor assisted suicide, what in the world are we doing on the other side of the coin harassing legitimate gun owners all in the name of stopping or trying to prevent suicide?

I stand in support of Bill C-24. I restate that I stand in support of the principles of Bill C-24 because I stand in support of Canadians who are going out into the bush and making our environment better. I support them in every way. They are the people who make Canada Canada.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have listened all afternoon with great interest to my colleagues, the hon. members for Moncton, Terrebonne, Comox—Alberni, Davenport and Frontenac, York—Simcoe and Kootenay East.

I share the concern they have made known with regard to Bill C-24 and Canada's natural heritage. I hope I might add a little something in the way of information to the debate. I will be brief.

Wildlife has helped shape Canada's identity. Wildlife related activity as the last speaker has just pointed out is a cherished recreational activity for a large number of Canadians. For native Canadians, wildlife harvesting is a vital component of an age old but sustainable lifestyle. For Canada's economy, as we have heard, wildlife activities make a contribution measured in the billions of dollars.

All these are cogent reasons why we should protect Canada's wildlife. We shall be better able to do so with passage of the bill now before the House amending Canada's wildlife act. The amendments bring the act into line with our latest understanding of wildlife, with the latest international agreements, particularly the North American water fowl management plan, the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance and the

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global convention on biological diversity and with the planned Canadian biodiversity strategy.

This modified act will recognize that an ecosystem approach is the best way of protecting wildlife. In other words, we can save wildlife by saving the habitat on which they depend. One of the key ways which our country is doing this is by establishing national wildlife areas or NWAs under the Canada Wildlife Act.

The purpose of these areas is to conserve essential habitat for migratory birds and other species, especially endangered wildlife. At present there are 45 national wildlife areas covering approximately 287,000 hectares of habitat. Another six sites have been designated to become NWAs.

(1700)

National wildlife areas exist or are planned in all provinces and territories except Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. These areas protect a wide variety of critical habitats.

In British Columbia the wetlands of the Alaksen NWA and the Fraser River estuary are an internationally significant stop-over point and wintering area for large numbers of migrating birds.

On the other side of the country Pointe de l'Est is one of the few remaining nesting sites in Quebec for the piping plover, a bird listed as endangered in Canada.

At the Suffield NWA in Alberta the short grass prairie and sand dunes are home to the burrowing owl and the ferruginous hawk, both threatened species. Part of the endangered Arctic population of bowhead whales frequents Isabella Bay in the Northwest Territories, the site of a proposed marine NWA. In this case the opportunity to extend the boundaries beyond the 12 nautical mile limit of this NWA depends directly on the passage of this bill now before the House.

For each of these areas the Canadian Wildlife Service conducts public consultations as an integral step to preparing a management plan. The plan specifies which activities are to be allowed under permit within the NWA, for example, perhaps oil drilling, livestock grazing, or haying. The management plan may also specify how to improve habitat in such ways as planting native plants to provide food and cover for wildlife or digging ponds to make the landscape more inviting to waterfowl.

Conservation is the main purpose of the national wildlife areas but it is not the only one. Under the Canada Wildlife Act public education and research, as the hon. member for Davenport pointed out, are also goals.

In most NWAs visitors are allowed to hike, canoe, take photos and watch birds. Traditional uses may be allowed to continue. Some management plans provide for trapping, hunting and fishing. All these activities are carefully regulated to prevent declines in wildlife population levels and deterioration of habitats.

In some NWAs research takes precedence. For example, at Scotch Bonnet Island NWA on Lake Ontario access is restricted because the island is used for long term studies of the effects that environmental contaminants in the food chain have on wild birds in the great lakes.

At Polar Bear Pass in the Northwest Territories as well as at other NWAs the focus is on archaeological and biological research.

Many of the sites protected as national wildlife areas have also been accorded international recognition. Cap Tormente in Quebec is one of several NWAs that are also wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention. The Shepody NWA in New Brunswick is a western hemisphere shorebird reserve.

This international recognition shows that the world community appreciates the value of our national wildlife areas. This House must do the same by passing the amendments now under consideration.

NWAs also involve key partners outside the federal government in the work to conserve our wildlife by conserving wildlife habitat. They are managed by the federal government in co-operation with provincial and territorial authorities as well as non-governmental organizations.

Some important areas have been protected thanks to donations and leases from the Nature Conservancy and other non-government partners through land transfers from other government agencies or with the help of funds from other habitat protection programs such as those of Wildlife Habitat Canada and the North American wildlife management plan. Recently the establishment of NWAs has been a part of land claim settlements reached with aboriginal groups.

All these groups have become involved because they know that while wildlife needs our protection, Canada equally needs our wildlife. This is a part of our heritage, a part of our present and it must be part of our future.

(1705)

As we work to make the transition to sustainable development we know that we must safeguard the health of our environment as a way of ensuring our prosperity. Wildlife provides one of the best indicators of environmental health. The signs are that we must do still more on its behalf because such actions ultimately benefit us all.

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That is why I strongly support the amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act. It will extend our ability to protect wildlife throughout Canada and in the oceans which wash our shores. This is in the interest of all Canadians. I urge hon. members to support this measure and give it swift passage.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry) moved that Bill C-12, an Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read a second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to begin debate on second reading of Bill C-12, an Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

As a piece of federal framework legislation, the Canada Business Corporations Act helps promote the competitiveness of Canadian businesses. It is a key element of our national economic union and our internal market. The act must be kept up-to-date so that the government can use modern technology to provide better services and to improve administrative efficiency. It must also respond to the emerging challenges of a rapidly evolving global market.

[*English*]

This new law must be fair. The Canada Business Corporations Act will continue to provide a practical balance of interests among shareholders, creditors, management and the public.

This House will recall that the CBCA came into force on December 15, 1975 in order to revise and reform the law applicable to companies incorporated to carry on business throughout Canada. At that time the CBCA was heralded as an exemplary act, a model to be followed in Canada and abroad. For nearly 20 years it has acted as a model and promoted order and fairness in the corporate environment.

The CBCA is important to the competitive position of small and medium sized businesses as well as for the many large corporations registered under it. Over half of the top 500 companies in Canada are registered under the Canada Business Corporations Act. Approximately 190,000 corporations in Canada are covered by the provisions of the act.

However, after nearly two decades we need to update the provisions of the CBCA. Business practices and legal developments in a number of areas such as shareholder communications and the roles and responsibilities of directors have evolved considerably since the act was originally passed.

(1710)

Corporations today must take into account the intensified competition of an international marketplace and the globalization of capital markets. Our framework laws must take into account increased share ownership by institutional investors and the holdings of shares through intermediaries.

The Canada Business Corporations Act must keep pace with the changes that are driving the competitiveness of Canadian industry. It must be amended to ensure that it will continue to be a useful tool for Canadian businesses and a model for others to follow.

The legislation before us today represents the first of two phases that will reform the framework legislation which governs federally incorporated businesses. We are introducing these amendments now so we can move quickly on a number of technical but important reforms. They represent a first step in renewing the CBCA. They will be followed by more substantive revisions after consultations with all interested parties.

Hon. members will note that the legislation before us provides for a parliamentary review of the CBCA within three years. We intend to introduce substantive amendments when the act comes up for review. Hopefully we will be in a position within 18 months to proceed with the review, but at the very latest we will have an opportunity to review the need for further amendments within three years.

In the meantime, Industry Canada will consult extensively with those who have a stake in the CBCA. We have prepared a consultation package and hope to complete our consultations and have draft recommendations ready for review by the government within 18 months.

[*Translation*]

The phase II consultation package deals with such issues as the liability of corporate directors, shareholders communications and other substantive issues. The package has been submitted to interested Canadians, including corporate executives, corporate law experts, institutional investors, shareholders' representatives, the accounting profession, business associations and other stakeholders.

After we have heard back from those who have a stake in reforming the CBCA, we will recommend to Parliament further amendments to the act to reflect business and community needs.

[*English*]

I want to emphasize that the legislation before us is a necessary first step. It enables the government to proceed with some important technical changes to the CBCA while we prepare for more substantive revisions. The primary objectives of the legislation before us lie in four areas and I would like to go over each of these briefly.

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First of all, the legislation provides for improved service to federally incorporated companies. It brings the CBCA in line with technological advances and permits the introduction of more equal service across the country.

[*Translation*]

In the years that have passed since the CBCA came into effect, technology has revolutionized the way in which business is conducted. The drafters of the 1975 legislation could not have foreseen the day when, for example, fax machines would be used to transmit key corporate documents. They could not have known that, within a few decades, electronic data interchange would have the potential of reducing the paper burden for business.

[*English*]

I must confess that in my days of practising law here in Ottawa it was quite convenient to act as Ottawa agents for firms across the country as we delivered and collected documents from the corporations branch of the then consumer and corporate affairs department.

I suppose I really ought to apologize to some of my former colleagues still in practice in Ottawa that we are now making it possible for firms across Canada to deliver their documents directly and electronically.

My friend from Toronto says "hear, hear". The one benefit of the old rules was that we found ways to collect fees from Toronto law firms.

The director who administers the CBCA through the corporations directorate of Industry Canada receives a variety of notices and documents from corporations, directors, shareholders and others.

Many representatives of CBCA corporations have requested that facsimile transmission and electronic filing and issuance of documents be permitted under the act. The CBCA director has begun to accept some documents transmitted by facsimile, but there are certain impediments in the existing act to the use of modern technology.

(1715)

The amendments before us provide broad regulatory making power to prescribe the form and other details of electronic filing and issuance of documents. They authorize the CBCA director to deal with the technical details. These changes will result in eventual same day incorporation from all regions of Canada, not just the national capital region, thus again saving money to industry across the country.

CBCA corporations and others will have easier access to the information that the corporations directorate provides.

[*Translation*]

I would like to emphasize that while we want to amend the act in order to better enable the corporations directorate to keep abreast of modern information technology, clients will still be able to use paper-based communications if they prefer.

[*English*]

The second broad area that the amendments before us address is the need to simplify certain corporate government procedures and record keeping and filing requirements. For example, the amendments will permit current directors to appoint a limited number of directors in the time between shareholders meetings if the corporation's articles so provide. While shareholder democracy is safeguarded by the limits placed on this power, the change will give CBCA corporations the flexibility to react quickly and with less expense to unforeseen events.

Under the amendments shareholders can also elect a reduced number of directors at the same shareholders meeting that they approve the reduction. As the law now stands shareholders can vote to reduce the minimum number of directors but must wait until the next meeting to elect that reduced number of directors.

Another amendment would permit the CBCA director to exempt the filing of specified classes of documents when they are publicly available elsewhere. This will reduce the burden of multiple filings of certain documents and thus the costs incurred by CBCA corporations.

[*Translation*]

In keeping with the trend towards reducing paper and administrative costs for users of the CBCA, the amendments will establish a six-year period for which accounting records and files must be retained. Currently, the CBCA gives no direction to corporations as to how long such records must be maintained.

[*English*]

The amendments will eliminate public financial disclosure now imposed on large, privately held CBCA corporations while maintaining disclosure to shareholders. The CBCA currently requires public disclosure of the financial statements of privately held CBCA corporations whose assets exceed \$5 million or whose gross revenues exceed \$10 million.

Mandatory public disclosure of financial statements of large private corporations is not required by the provinces, nor is it required by the laws of our major trading partner, the United States. The CBCA therefore places federally incorporated companies at a competitive disadvantage and increases their compliance costs. This may discourage foreign businesses from establishing in Canada, certainly under federal jurisdiction.

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Shareholders of privately held companies will continue to be protected because an audit can only be waived if all shareholders agree. Financial statements will still be prepared and sent to shareholders in any event.

Financial statements of all corporations, not just those that are federally incorporated, must be disclosed to Statistics Canada through other legislation such as the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act. This information is publicly available on an aggregate basis.

The third broad theme of these technical amendments is clarification. Some amendments have been introduced to clarify the language of certain sections of the CBCA through changes to the French or English versions or through the use of better terminology. For example, revised definitions of control and subsidiary are proposed in order to capture the whole chain of corporations under the ultimate control of a holding corporation, thus simplifying amalgamations and financial assistance within corporate groups.

Finally, the fourth area addressed by the bill before us is efficient administration. The act now requires that before an administrative dissolution of a corporation can take place the CBCA director must give notice of the decision to dissolve a corporation in, among other things, a local newspaper.

(1720)

By removing this requirement for publication in a local newspaper the CBCA director will be able to move expeditiously against defaulting corporations. This will help encourage companies to comply with the public information filing provisions of the law. Also, the government will avoid a publication cost of almost \$1 million over the next few years.

The amendment will not affect the statutory requirement to notify directly the corporation in default and each director personally, nor the requirement to publish notices in the *Canada Gazette* and the *Canada Corporations Bulletin*.

[Translation]

To promote effective administration, the amendments before us also include provisions to strengthen the CBCA rules governing corporate names. For example, under one proposed amendment, corporations will be prohibited from using words such as "Limited", "Limitée" and "Corporation" in names other than their corporate names.

[English]

Industry Canada is committed to the continued modernization of the CBCA. We will proceed with the technical amendments of the kind I have outlined today. In the meantime we will continue to work with the Canadian business and professional communities to design more substantive changes to the law. Our overall objective is to help the conduct of business in Canada and to contribute to the competitiveness of federal corporations.

The amendments before the house render the CBCA more efficient. They simplify filing and record keeping requirements and certain corporate grievance procedures and they allow for technological innovation.

They also allow for improved service to corporations governed by the CBCA by reducing overall paper burden and the cost of compliance under the act. Overall they make the CBCA a more useful instrument to businesses and investors who use it.

This government is committed to helping small and medium sized Canadian business. We want the CBCA to serve Canadian businesses in their bid to become competitive at home and internationally.

[Translation]

They also allow for improved service to corporations governed by the CBCA by reducing paper burden and the cost of compliance with the Act. Overall, they make the CBCA a more useful instrument for businesses and investors who use it.

I hope that my hon. colleagues from both sides of the House will join me in supporting this legislation and in helping ensure its speedy passage. Thank you.

[English]

I know late in the afternoon it is hard to find enthusiasm for a bill on the Canada Business Corporations Act and I do find myself concerned that I will contribute further to my generally perceived image of being rather dull and boring. However, it is the best we can do with the Canada Business Corporations Act.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Before giving the floor to the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, I must make a statement concerning the time reserved for Private Members' Business tomorrow, May 5. The hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk has informed me in writing that he could not present his motion during private members' hour tomorrow.

[English]

Since it has not been possible to arrange an exchange of positions in the order of precedence under Standing Order 94(2)(a), I must direct the table officers to drop the item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence.

Pursuant to Standing Order 94(2)(b), Private Members' Hour will thus be suspended tomorrow unfortunately and the House will continue with the business before it prior to Private Members' Hour.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate and I agree with the minister when he says that this bill may be part of the government strategy to sometimes be dull and boring. Indeed, this is not a romantic piece of legislation, and it does not generate a lot of controversy.

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As you know, Bill C-12 is an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

(1725)

Therefore, this legislation purports to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act. It allows for the implementation of technological innovations such as electronic filing and facsimile transmission of documents, it simplifies certain statutory procedures and record-keeping and filing requirements, and it makes the administration of the Act more effective.

Its object is to modernize the federal Canada Business Corporations Act. This act, which was passed in 1975, is a commercial law regulating about 190,000 Canadian businesses which were incorporated under it.

Half of the 500 largest businesses in the country were incorporated under that legislation. The government wants to amend the act in two stages, Bill C-12 being the first of those two stages.

A review of this legislation shows, as we in the opposition see it, four major changes which will allow businesses to improve their operations from a technical point of view.

The first of these changes is the fact that businesses will now be able to use electronic means to transmit documents. This should facilitate communication between businesses and the department.

Another provision allows current directors to appoint, under certain circumstances and if the rules of the corporation so provide, a limited number of directors. It must be pointed out that until now shareholders were the only ones who could appoint the directors.

The third change is to the effect that, from now on, companies will have to keep official documents such as accounting records and files for a minimum of six years. Obviously, we agree that this measure should help reduce the paper burden, but we wonder if a period of six years is sufficiently long.

Finally, privately-held corporations will no longer have to disclose financial information. This measure is criticized by the Order of Chartered Accountants, which worries about the impact it will have on the accounting profession. We must also realize that this measure will remove an injustice that may have existed before, in that provincially licensed companies had an unfair advantage because they did not have to disclose such information; federally licensed companies will now have the same status.

It is not easy to take position on such a slim bill. However, we must realize that, like other bills, it will take up a great deal of time and energy. That is why opposition members feel uncomfortable with this bill because there is still so much to do. There

is so much to do with regards to the economy, to small and medium sized businesses and their development, that the government is not doing. Let us take, for instance, the paper burden small and medium sized businesses especially must carry, just to serve the government.

According to some studies, these businesses spend one out of five days dealing with government red tape. The government is aware of that, as it acknowledges in the red book. On April 28, the Minister of Industry announced a 29-member committee would be set up to study the issue of red tape among other things. As everyone knows, including the officials of his department, there have been numerous reports and the solution proposed by the government—it is like a reflex of this government—is to form a committee to study the issue; 29 people from coast to coast will consider the issue of government red tape. It is a waste of time.

Some adjustments would probably be easy to make, however. Knowing how competent federal public servants are, they could consult with their provincial counterparts, including those from Quebec, who are very competent.

(1730)

Adjustments could be made to the program, and the procedure that companies must follow for exports, for example, could be simplified. Why not try to come up with ways to make it easier for small and medium sized businesses and others to export, which is vital for the economic development of Canada and Quebec? Why not refine what is offered to small and medium-sized businesses to encourage research and development? The Liberal Party of Canada made a big issue of it in the red book.

Why not ask officials, without striking a committee, to find ways of streamlining the forms, of reducing the delays in order to help small and medium sized businesses effectively, tangibly, pragmatically to do research and development? We know how complicated it is; I worked on it before. It is extremely complicated for a company to qualify for research and development tax credits, for example.

Easy ways must be found to help companies in that regard, just see to it. Companies must be helped to find ways to modernize their equipment, to give them the training that exists on the market to increase their productivity, to be more competitive internationally. Everything must be done to ensure that companies take the total-quality approach more and more. This is essential if we want our companies to be recognized, both here as subcontractors and internationally. Today, with ISO 9000, there is an international standard to help make sense of all the complexity in the world and to identify the companies considered qualified by a third party and those that are not. All our companies must be encouraged to come up to the ISO standard.

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Even more serious, not only do we see no government interest or concern for these small things, which could really turn the situation around for small and medium-sized businesses if the government cared. Not only do we not sense any willingness on the part of the government, but we are moving backwards in areas such as military conversion programs, about which the government was very eloquent in its red book and made a lot of commitments. However, not a word about conversion was said by the minister, in the Throne Speech or in the budget speech, even though there are areas, in Quebec for example, where the military industry is very important. We will address the issue of the military industry tomorrow. The military industry must be revamped everywhere in the West, because of the evolution of the geo-political situation. As everyone knows, the Cold War is over, at least in the form we have known it until now.

We must make some adjustments to help industries move from military to civilian production, but there is no co-operation in this area. The government does not seem to be really concerned, since all it did was skim over the issue in some of its speeches. However, we have companies in Quebec, like Oerlikon and Paramax, which are in trouble. They have lashed out against the government. They cried for help again fifteen days ago. Help us, because if you do not and we do not get any more military contracts, thousands and thousands of jobs will be lost. Only in Quebec, the military industry has already lost 11,000 jobs in the last five years. These were high tech, high paid, and high-knowledge jobs. That is not the kind of jobs we can afford to lose in Canada and in Quebec, where the economy is already staggering, as we all know.

The situation with MIL Davie is also very important for the Quebec City area. If I am not mistaken, it is the largest company in the Quebec City area and it depends on government contracts. It needs the help of the federal government through a project that would meet a need, and I am talking here about the Magdalen Islands ferry. There is also another project, the smart ship project, which is important for the future of Quebec and Canada. Among other things, this multifunctional ship will be used to help settle regional conflicts as well as for UN peacekeeping missions. These projects should be a priority, but the government does not seem to have the political will to move on them.

(1735)

This is an issue, and not only the Bloc Québécois says it, since the Quebec Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technology, although he may be a Liberal and a federalist, has recently denounced the Liberal government by saying: "You see, you even wrote it in the red book". I heard it with my own ears on the radio. He was alluding to some form of political will by saying that it was nice to have written it, but what was behind the text?

Where is the political will? We have not heard anything about that since.

It is not crying wolf to talk about this issue and to repeat that, if we do not do anything, we should be aware that we might have another brain drain, as we did in the late 1950s. Meanwhile, the Americans are developing their economy, they are here, they are everywhere, they are the giants and, as with the Avro Arrow in the late 1950s, they will come and get the best people from Canada and Quebec to develop their economy.

Another issue where we are going backwards is the fight against unemployment and the so-called job creation. Drawing from the red book, the government implemented the infrastructure program, indeed, \$6 million in Canadian investments, including \$2 million from the federal government. This program is supposed to be the main action and, so far, is the only one coming from this government to fight unemployment. The number of unemployed stands at 1.6 million, and this program will create 45,000 jobs. We must suspect that a very good number of these infrastructure jobs are seasonal, temporary jobs such as repairing sewers, roads and bridges. This will create many temporary jobs; of the 45,000 jobs created they say that 15,000 will go to Quebec.

They have nothing more to say and quite the contrary they brag about it. Weeks and months are passing by and this is all they have been able to find. They see this as a panacea and they think that this will solve the problem of 1.6 million unemployed. It is a shame to have so little imagination, to lack that much of the courage required to find another solution. I find this outrageous.

If there were a political will, there is an initiative that could go ahead readily, whatever the Prime Minister thinks of it, and that initiative is the high speed train. The project, which would link Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, and Windsor, could go ahead immediately but the government went wrong in that case. During the election campaign, the Bloc Québécois supported the cancellation of the helicopters contract and everyone agreed to that. There was nevertheless something implied in what the leader of the Bloc Québécois, the member for Lac Saint-Jean, said. It was that we should take the necessary steps in order that the expertise and all the budgets allocated to the helicopters be used for immediate and imminent development of the high-speed train. The government retained a part of the suggestion, since it cancelled the helicopters contract but as a result, thousands of workers lost their jobs.

I do not think this is the way to go to ensure economic development. We should note, and this is not coming from us but from the president of VIA Rail who said last week, and he should know what he is talking about, that the HST would create 127,000 jobs over a period of 10 years. Furthermore, according to the scenario favoured by the president of VIA Rail, this would

require absolutely no additional funds from the federal government.

That project would have many technological spin-offs and create jobs of all types, high technology or more simple ones, in all regions of Ontario and Quebec. Its impacts would be highly beneficial, mainly, as you have guessed I am sure, in the St. Maurice Valley, if first, it is implemented, second, the line is built on the north shore and third, the HST stops in my riding, in the regional capital of Trois-Rivières.

The third issue, and this one is dramatic because we can even talk about negligence in this case, concerns pharmaceutical products; the influence of lobbies is felt everywhere, most of all the lobby of Ontario members and ministers from the Toronto area.

(1740)

There are two types of drug manufacturers, those who create new drugs and do research and development, and generic drug manufacturers, who copy existing drugs. Most of the first ones are located in Quebec where they do research and development.

Last Monday, I met a representative of the Canadian Drug Manufacturers Association. You need to know that it takes from 10 to 12 years to develop a new drug, before it is certified, licensed, tested and what not. I am told that it costs an average of \$360 million to develop a new drug.

That industry is concentrated in Quebec. Bill C-91 was passed under the former government with the support of the Bloc Québécois and over the opposition of the Liberal Party of Canada, although that party was divided over the issue. I could come back to that later. That bill extended to 20 years patent protection for drugs developed by those innovative companies. New drugs cannot be copied.

The proposal before us would provide for an immediate review of Bill C-91 even though the bill itself specifies such a review will not take place before 1997. And this, again, much to the dismay of the Quebec Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technology, being the federalist and Liberal that he is, who was reported in *Le Devoir* on April 28, 1994, as saying: "The federal government's decision to review the legislation protecting drug patents for 20 years is creating uncertainty and its indecisiveness is scaring away potential investors in the strategic sector of pharmaceuticals. A \$50 million investment was to be announced last week but was postponed owing to the federal government's indecisiveness".

The Quebec manufacturers' association strongly opposed any attempt by the federal government to review this act.

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Finally, I will quote from *La Presse*, which is hardly sovereigntist and neither is its editor, Mr. Alain Dubuc, who wrote in an editorial comment yesterday: "The research investments matter is neither a joke nor a multinational piece of cake. The Trudeau era policy"—this should ring a bell for the members opposite—"of eliminating patents was a disaster. Canada's pharmaceutical industry literally dies away, with research funding dropping to 3 per cent of sales, as compared to approximately 14 per cent in the United States, France and Germany. Bill C-22, which repaired the blunder, was a success; from 1987 to 1991, companies invested nearly \$1 billion, half of which in Quebec—

[*English*]

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We all appreciate this history lesson but I thought we were on Bill C-12 regarding the business corporations act. I am sorry, I do not see the relevance whatsoever of the member's comments with regard to Bills C-91 and C-22. I thought we were talking about Bill C-12.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you could direct the member to speak to the bill before this House.

The Deputy Speaker: I think that is the first time the relevance rule has been raised in this Parliament, as least when I have been in the chair, and it is a rule that the parliamentary secretary will know is observed more in the breach than in the respect.

[*Translation*]

Perhaps the hon. member who had the floor could speak to the point, that is the bill presently before us.

(1745)

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to demonstrate that the government should have other priorities than Bill C-12 and should not tackle such things as reviewing the pharmaceutical legislation the way they have been doing. That is the point I want to make, and they are not through hearing about it. As far as I am concerned, I am not through talking about it.

Bill C-22, which was tabled before Bill C-91 and cleared the air, was a success. Between 1987 and 1991, companies invested almost one billion dollars, half of that amount in Quebec, to such an extent that in 1991, research reached 9.7 per cent of sales in 1991 compared to the 3 per cent rate under Mr. Trudeau. While this is a marked improvement, it does not make up for lost ground.

How can a country complaining because it is lagging behind in research by contrast to other countries and also because it is not part of some high tech industries manage without one of the major high tech industries? The red book recognizes that our research is lagging behind. I will come back to that later.

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We will not give up on the issue of pharmaceutical patents, which is critically important for Quebec. In fact, the pharmaceutical industry typifies Quebec industry. It is one of our finest industries, and we will not let the lobbying of members from Ontario, especially from Toronto, lower Quebec economy to such an extent.

I think that something happened last week, when my colleague, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, quoted Confucius when responding to the minister of Industry who himself had quoted Shakespeare, a bit nastily, I must say.

The member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie quoted Confucius and said: "Culture is like jam; the less you have, the more you spread it". That struck me. I thought about it last week, if I remember well, while working on my lawn. I wondered why my colleague for Laurier—Sainte-Marie had quoted Confucius in those terms. After having given this matter much thought, I finally realized that it contained a message, a subliminal message. There was something symbolic about it. By "jam", he meant "in a jam". In a jam because of the failure of the government. Failure, especially if you make a report card after six months. I believe the government is celebrating that anniversary of its official and legal victory.

If you take a look at the situation, I think "in a jam" is the right expression. Let us recall, for instance, the issue of cigarette smuggling. Without the determination of the Official Opposition, we might still be discussing this whole issue. In the meantime, smuggling was flourishing in Quebec, resulting in loss of revenues for the government—which, in itself, was terrible enough. Also, because of civil disobedience, a whole climate was created where everything was challenged—our institutions, the role of the government, respect of the law, even social peace.

The government argued that there was no evidence of smuggling. It took weeks, but the opposition did not let go, and finally the government took the necessary measures.

Take another example, the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean. Here again, I want to show you—in case the member does not understand—that there are more important things to do than discussing minor bills such as this one. And, in our opinion, when the government does act, it does not necessarily act in the right way.

Mr. Fontana: Time.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, I am allowed 40 minutes.

When the government acts, we know the results.

An hon. member: A fine mess, a jam.

Mr. Rocheleau: Yes, the military college was another fine mess. The Liberal government is forced to admit they have

neither the desire nor the money to maintain the only francophone military training institution in America.

(1750)

In tomorrow's Canada, in order to receive military training, francophones will have to go to a most anglophone city—which is all right—that has no facilities to make them feel welcome. The government say they have no choice. They have neither the desire nor the money to go on. That gives an idea of the Canada in which Quebecers will have to live, if they decide to remain a part of it.

What can we say about social program reform besides saying that again the government is in a jam? When one is obviously and deliberately taking it out not on unemployment but on the unemployed, not on poverty but on the poor, when the only thing we know about the government is that they will consult for two years—only to cut \$7.5 billion in social programs at the end of the consultations, the situation is serious! When it is the unemployed and not unemployment, and the poor as opposed to poverty that are attacked, I say we are in a jam!

As for manpower training, the federal government stubbornly wants to keep jurisdiction over it. However, everybody in Quebec, employers as well as union leaders, school board members, Department of Education or Quebec government officials, whether federalist or not, everybody agrees that vocational training should be entirely under Quebec jurisdiction. But no, the government, for reasons known only to itself, is stubbornly hanging on to manpower training, after a two-year study involving goodness knows who, whereas everyone in Quebec is saying that it should withdraw from this area.

The last issue has to do not only with the government opposite, but with the federal system as well. I will not hide the fact that for sovereigntists like myself, it is very good news indeed to know what the rules of the game are in this country. The Supreme Court has just given us some idea of what they are with its ruling on telephony and communications where it said that however distinct Quebec might be, it had no rights over this field.

[English]

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that this member may not have much respect for this institution but I am sure he would have respect for the Speaker.

I thought I heard the Speaker give some guidance to this member and ask him to stick to the subject matter which is Bill C-12. That is what we are discussing today. Opposition day is tomorrow. There are plenty of opportunities in this House for this member to speak about anything else he would like.

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Surely Canadians, taxpayers, who are watching this institution would expect that the hon. member would respect the wishes of the Chair and stick to the subject matter we are discussing today, Bill C-12, and not ramble on about everything that this House has done or will do in the foreseeable future.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask for your guidance for this member who just does not seem to get it.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. colleagues, as I said a while ago, it is extremely difficult to say whether a comment pertains to the subject matter before the House or whether it does not. Therefore, I would ask all members for their co-operation in complying with the Standing Orders and speaking to this bill. I think that all members can appreciate how very difficult this situation can be for the Chair.

Mr. Rocheleau: Let me congratulate my colleague on his intellectual rigour. It shows that he must not come to the House often. In fact, I have not often seen him here myself. Mr. Speaker, you will surely agree with me that it is difficult to discuss this bill for 40 minutes, given that it is a slim piece of legislation and, as the minister said, a rather dull and boring one at that. Furthermore, unless he talks nonsense, a member has a right to use his speaking time to discuss subjects which he deems to be timely.

As I was saying, the Supreme Court handed down a ruling concerning telephony and communications which gives the federal government full jurisdiction. It is the federal system which is at issue here and I will not hide the fact that Quebecers are deeply interested in this subject.

(1755)

The federal system is at issue here. To say that telecommunications—telephony, for example—come under exclusive federal jurisdiction is to deny Quebec's distinctiveness, one of the key points of the Charlottetown Agreement, which by the way was unanimously rejected.

In other words, for the hon. member's information, as Quebecers and Canadians must ponder the situation, I hope that Quebecers will realize that if they ever decide, in a referendum, to remain within Canada as a province, they will have to accept centralization.

That is the conclusion to be drawn from such measures. Decisions concerning the military college, social program reform, manpower training, telephony and communications all reflect a growing tendency on the part of the federal government to centralize major powers in Ottawa, and to consider provincial governments henceforth as regional governments. This is the context in which Quebecers will be deciding, in a referendum, whether or not to keep Quebec in Confederation.

In the time I have left, I want to come back more sensibly—my colleague will be pleased—to the issue of Bill C-12. I said earlier that the government must have better things to do and you only have to look at all the statements and the promises of the red book to see what I mean. I want to quote what it says about research and development, technology, small and medium-sized businesses, and economic development. On page 52, it reads: "It would also create a climate that encourages pre-competitive research in various sectors of the Canadian economy. A Liberal government will further strengthen R and D, especially in small and medium-sized business, by encouraging technology partnerships between Canadian universities, research institutions, and the private sector that emphasize the commercial applications of research and development". For your information, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what is going on in the pharmaceutical industry.

Again, the red book says: "A Liberal government will continue to support basic research, including the provision of stable funding for the granting councils, the National Research Council, and the Networks of Centres of Excellence".

It is so nice that I could go on and on. It is so very interesting but that goes back to last fall. Since then—and that is the complaint I have against this government—the government has not kept its promise—for which it was elected by Canadians from Ontario and the Maritimes, among others—but it introduced minor measures like Bill C-12. As I said at the outset, Mr. Speaker, it is a waste of time, a waste of energy and a waste of money to deal with such an issue.

Reading the red book and seeing the negligence of this government, I am led to say that it is more and more obvious, and absolutely necessary, that people take charge of their own destiny all across Canada, and particularly in Quebec, in every region of Quebec.

I want to tell you that as far as people of my riding, the riding of Trois-Rivières, are concerned, they have already started to do so. This is wonderfully exemplified by the re-opening of the former CIP Forest Products plant, which had closed down, causing the loss of 1,200 jobs, if memory serves me well. This plant has just re-opened, thanks to the involvement of the Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs du Québec; and if it has been re-opened, we must understand that it is because its workers had never given up. They made all the necessary representations, they made everybody aware that it was unacceptable that such a large plant, in a city like mine, Trois-Rivières, could close down for good. They managed to get the Fonds de solidarité involved. I take this opportunity to congratulate them for that.

There are other areas where people of my riding have understood and are doing something. First of all, at the CEGEP of Trois-Rivières, which is famous for two things, its Centre for Metallurgical Technology and its Centre for Pulp and Paper Technology, two specialized centres which are increasingly

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servicing the needs of metallurgical as well as pulp and paper industries all across Quebec.

(1800)

And secondly, at the Université du Québec in Trois-Rivières, there are also people with a sense of imagination and vision who have set up a research group on small and medium-sized businesses to make sure that more universities know the problems of such businesses in order to better train young people and give assistance, even on the spot, in terms of consultation, to small and medium sized businesses everywhere in Quebec.

In a field which has a very bright future, there is also a hydrogen research centre which, you have to admit, is a high-tech field. This hydrogen research centre is attracting more and more attention and, given the importance of this product for the future, could have a remarkable development in the coming years.

Lastly, I would like to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières is the only institution in all of Canada to offer a doctorate program in paper engineering. This is another illustration of our region's capacity to show its resourcefulness and its determination to take charge and make its presence felt more and more in Quebec as well as abroad.

In closing, and my friend will be happy, I would like to talk about Bill C-12 and say that we all know that it is the first part of a two-part law, the second part of which will come in three years and address much more important issues related to the operation of small and medium-sized businesses, like the responsibility of directors, insider trading, for example, and take-over bids.

It seems that these issues, and the government is still consulting, will be addressed in two or three years. The position of the Official Opposition is that we cannot oppose such a bill; although it is uninspiring, it is important in its technical aspects, and we understand that it makes technical changes which should improve the operation of our businesses. Consequently, the Official Opposition is for this bill, in spite of everything.

[*English*]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will address my remarks to the contents of Bill C-12. I resist corroborating the opinion that was expressed by the member opposite that if the bill is really not a major bill then it should not receive major debating time. If there are major points to be made then let us make them. However we have to be very careful not to abuse our privileges.

Bill C-12 as I understand it represents amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act which will govern approximately 190,000 Canadian federal business corporations, including over 50 per cent of Canada's top 500 corporations.

This is the first phase of amendments designed to improve the competitiveness of Canadian business, simplify filing and record keeping requirements and certain corporate governance procedures and allow for technological innovation. The bill also begins the process of modernizing federal corporate law.

Amendments to Bill C-12 are purported to be of a largely technical nature. While this is in essence true we feel certain amendments could have ramifications far beyond the technical level.

We applaud those amendments to Bill C-12 that will result in simplifying filing and record keeping requirements and certain corporate governance procedures, allow for the technological innovation and better service to all regions of Canada, enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the CBCA and clarify the language of the act through changes to the French and English versions and through the use of better terminology. It will promote good governance in corporate enterprises—at least that is what the intent is—facilitate efficient and flexible business management while protecting investors, including minority shareholders, and foster a fair and efficient marketplace.

(1805)

It is purported to provide flexibility for corporations to act quickly and with less expense to unforeseen events by permitting current directors to appoint a limited number of directors in the time between shareholder meetings, if the corporation's bylaws permit that to happen.

We recognize that these measures are part of the government's commitment in the speech from the throne to focus on small and medium sized businesses. We encourage measures that are designed to improve the competitiveness of Canadian business. By encouraging internal trade within Canada and by helping business pursue an active international trade policy, we can place our federal corporations in a better competitive position.

We would be pleased if the reforms that are currently within the amendments to the CBCA accomplish all of these objectives. Certain provisions however require closer scrutiny and should be noted.

First, the provision to eliminate public financial disclosure for larger privately held corporations may allow certain public companies to transfer assets to private companies under their control and thereby avoid financial disclosures of these private subsidiaries.

Sections 16 and 17 regarding financial disclosure, while apparently not significant to the minister, being simply of a

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technical nature, should be recognized as a substantive departure from the current provisions. They are not technicalities as suggested by the minister. They should be studied by the committee with a promise to consider moving them to the second part of the amendments to this act.

Notice is hereby given as well that two other matters are of concern to members of our party and will be drawn to the attention of the committee studying the bill. They are, first, the new section, 258.2, which allows the director to exempt notices or documents from having to be sent to the director in the prescribed circumstances. This is potentially a very wide provision if the governor in council chooses to prescribe wide circumstances.

We have been advised by department officials that this is intended to apply only to cases where documents are publicly available elsewhere. To make sure this is the sole reason, an amendment to that effect is required. The amendment could be something like this: "If a notice or document is required under this act to be sent to the director must be made public by some other provision of or made pursuant to another act of Parliament other than this act, the director may, by order made subject to the condition that the other provision has been complied with and any other conditions the director may consider appropriate, exempt the notice or document from the requirement under this act that it be sent to the director".

The second amendment that ought to be looked at refers to section 8(2). This section provides a previously unregulated period for which records must be kept. The minister mentioned that presently the act is silent on this and that we need to recognize under the Income Tax Act and the provisions thereof that claims to be made by the minister may be made for six years back and the limitation on actions in contracts in most and maybe all provinces is six years after the cause for the action arises.

In light of these provisions it seems strange to have a six year minimum, as longer record retention is generally mandated by other legislation and by common sense. It would appear to be better either to leave out this provision or to avoid redundancy and to have a longer period, say eight or ten years. Eight years would certainly cover the income tax provision and meet most contract litigation needs.

There is a second reason why the provision which will see record keeping reduced to six years may be inadequate. Litigation procedures may be started after six years so the requirement should be, in our opinion, probably something like ten years.

The second phase of the reforms that are being talked about here should also be referred to at this time. We are alerted that consultations for phase two reforms have apparently started already. They includes issues like the liability of corporate directors; shareholder communications both between the corpo-

ration and the shareholders and also among shareholders; citizenship and residency requirements currently imposed on boards of directors; financial assistance granted by the corporation to directors, officers, shareholders and others; and governing insider trading and takeover bids. Each of these areas are very substantive in nature and will require very careful and detailed examination and study.

(1810)

Their importance to the federal business corporations and to Canada's competitiveness is clear. The expansion of directors' liability may be leading some qualified people for example to refuse board appointments. For a corporation to be successful, qualified people must be willing to serve on boards and once there to take bold steps in order to compete in the global marketplace.

We also encourage commitment to continued reform. It is absolutely amazing this particular act has not been revised over the last 20 years. If we compare business practices of 20 years ago to today and the competition that exists out there I find it almost unbelievable that the act still fits. It does not fit too well and that is why it is before us today. So we are encouraging continued reform.

The proposed amendments require the minister to submit within three years of this bill receiving royal assent a report to Parliament on the provisions and operation of the act, including recommendations for further changes to the law.

We heard the hon. minister say about an hour ago that within 18 months he expects to bring this forward. I certainly would encourage him to meet that deadline.

In general we support the objectives of the bill. We recognize the government's efforts to meet one of its promises as set out in the speech from the throne. However we would caution the minister from viewing all of the amendments to this bill as technicalities. While in some instances this is essentially true there are other areas, as demonstrated in the text of my speech so far, that require closer and more cautious scrutiny.

I am confident that once this bill is referred to committee, government members will agree that some safeguards must be implemented to protect shareholders, the corporate structure and finally the Canadian marketplace. Once this is accomplished I believe Bill C-12 will meet its objectives of promoting a fair and efficient marketplace and an economic climate that is conducive to sustained growth and job creation.

We look forward to the referral of this bill to the committee. We will take the opportunity then to ensure that Bill C-12 meets its objectives in a manner satisfactory to all sides of the House.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

*Government Orders***RAILWAY SAFETY ACT**

Hon. Douglas Peters (for Minister of Transport) moved that Bill C-21, an act to amend the Railway Safety Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to present for second reading a bill to amend the Railway Safety Act. I understand there is agreement that we do all three readings hopefully before the hour of adjournment.

The bill, which will help reduce accidents and fatalities associated with Canada's railway system, will create an offence for trespassing on federally regulated railway property.

(1815)

A similar prohibition in the Railway Act was revoked by proclamation of the Railway Safety Act in 1989. By reintroducing the prohibition we will put teeth into the Railway Safety Act by giving railway companies a strong deterrent.

Effective and enforceable legislation in conjunction with public education should help reduce trespassing related incidents on railway lands. The three *es* to enhanced railway safety are education, engineering and enforcement. I am pleased that this enforcement initiative will enable law officers, especially railway police who are empowered to enforce federal legislation, to charge trespassers found on railway lines.

This legislation is clearly in the interest of public safety. Trespassing on railway property is one of the most frequent causes of fatalities and injuries related to railway operations. The incidence of accidents to trespassers is increasing. In fact, last year for the first time the number of trespassing fatalities surpassed the number of lives lost at level crossings in Canada.

An estimated 100 people are struck by trains each year while trespassing on railway right of ways. Almost half of these people are killed and the remainder are seriously injured. Many of these people are habitual trespassers, and an unfortunate number of accidents involve young children and students. These are tragic statistics.

The government has introduced this bill as a means of reducing the terrible consequences that can result from trespassing on railway lands. Trespassing commonly occurs near schools, parks, recreational facilities and commercial or residential locations which have high pedestrian traffic, urban areas such as Montreal and Toronto.

The reasons for trespassing include shortcuts to commercial establishments, schools and residential areas, and the use of railway tracks by children as play areas. Unfortunately a railway right of way is a dangerous time saver and far too often becomes a deadly playground for young children.

There is also a major problem of homeless people using railway property as living or resting areas. Many trespassers make use of railway property with total disregard for their personal safety and this is of major concern to Transport Canada.

Fencing and highly visible signage put in place by railways have not been sufficiently effective in discouraging trespassers. Let me emphasize that the penalty provisions contained in the act are broad enough, up to \$5,000 on summary conviction, to create a major deterrent to repeat offences.

Reinstatement of the prohibition against trespassing will assist police in reducing the incidence of this dangerous practice on railway property and hence the number of accidents and fatalities. The onus for enforcement would rest with the railways through their police forces and there would be no demand on government's resources as a result of this amendment.

The original anti-trespassing provision in the Railway Act was not included in the Railway Safety Act when the latter legislation was proclaimed in January 1989 because it was felt the matter could be addressed effectively through subsequent regulations.

A review by the justice department has determined that due to the nature of the prohibition, the provision should be established as part of the legislation itself and not as a regulation. Transport Canada has worked with railways to improve safety in areas of heavy trespass; measures such as increased railway policing, barbed wire top fences and other steps to discourage trespassers have been introduced as a result.

The amendment will not affect individuals such as native people and prospectors in remote areas who may need to cross tracks on a regular basis to reach trap lines and mineral claims. The purpose of the amendment is to enable railway police forces to take action in areas of continual and dangerous trespasses.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the federal government is committed to working with the railways to reduce accidents and fatalities associated with Canada's railway system. This addition to the Railway Safety Act strengthens this important piece of legislation and in conjunction with public education should help remedy the problems of trespassing on railway lands.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans I would like to ask the House if it is true the other parties have given unanimous consent for this bill to go through all three stages and be passed today?

Government Orders

Mr. Guimond: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I can confirm that there is such a consent.

The Deputy Speaker: Very well. Does the Reform Party concur?

[*English*]

Is the Reform Party prepared to give unanimous consent to the three stages passing today?

Mr. Gouk: We are, Mr. Speaker.

(1820)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, as transport critic for the Official Opposition I would like to make a few comments on that bill. The first purpose of this very short, but nevertheless important bill is to ensure equivalence between the French and English versions of the Railway Safety Act. The second is to prohibit unlawful access to line works.

I can tell you that I am doubly concerned about this bill. In my riding of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans there is a rail line that people at CN call Murray Bay. It goes from Limoilou, in Quebec City, to Clermont, in Charlevoix, which means that it crosses the entire riding.

While I was preparing my notes and rereading the bill, I remembered two events that I would like to share with you. They are tragic events for the families involved. Some two or two and a half years ago, in July, a 72-year old person was hit by a CN train in front of the Basilica in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, in my riding. I can tell you that in a community the size of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, such an accident creates quite a commotion.

The second event, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport just mentioned, involved a child. Last year, a six-year old boy, on his way home from school in Ville Vanier, in the Québec-Est riding, was hit by a Via Rail train which was going through a residential area at high speed. There was a coroner's inquest. We are still waiting for his conclusions. I can tell you that listening to the testimony of the father, who was deeply affected, was heart-rending—I do not mean that the mother was not affected—but the testimony of the father left me with extremely painful memories. I can tell you that, as the father of two children, I was shaken.

Having said this, I will refrain from saying that this is a good bill even if I would like to. I do not know if I am becoming a seasoned parliamentarian, but I do not dare say this was a good decision because when one does, there are usually ministers, whose good faith can be questioned, who are only too happy to mention in response to our questions: "But you said the government had made a good decision in this bill". So I will refrain from saying it. It is unfortunate that the rules of the British

parliamentary system, and our friends opposite's vision of it, prevent me from saying this is a good bill, although I am tempted to say so.

I can tell you why I consider this bill important. By the way, short lines are referred to as C.F.I.L. in French. Perhaps I should take this opportunity to enlighten my francophone colleagues from other provinces. Instead of using the expression "short lines" in French, we should say C.F.I.L., which stands for *chemin de fer à intérêt local*. We know that railway companies, whether it is CN or CP, are more interested in selling lines.

I think that if we have local operators trying to make a profit with their line, it would be unfortunate to see railroad safety adversely affected. I feel that this bill, which guarantees a level of firmness regarding the implementation of certain safety standards, is a good piece of legislation. And as regards short lines, we, parliamentarians, will have to be watchful and ensure that operators comply with a minimum of safety rules.

(1825)

To conclude, I want to say that the Bloc Québécois did not object at all to the grouping together of all three reading stages. We support this bill, which is primarily aimed at increasing railroad safety.

I forgot to mention recreational use of land on which a railway line is situated. For example, in my riding, as in several others, snowmobiles make increasing use of that land. To some extent, this bill is to protect from themselves such people, who take unwarranted risks. As you know, the snowmobile was invented by a Quebecker, Mr. Bombardier. Its usefulness has been demonstrated and this invention has had an impact across Canada and throughout the world.

In conclusion, we support this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, we recognize this as an important but non-contentious piece of housekeeping legislation designed to improve rail safety. As such the Reform Party supports the bill.

We support it going through three readings and we offer our co-operation in that regard. We do not wish to take up the House's time in any further debate or comment on it so that we can finish with the bill and get on to the more important and pressing matters coming before the House.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported and concurred in.)

The Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By unanimous consent, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. David Anderson (for the Minister of Transport) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Government Orders

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Transport, I want to thank both parties for the quick passage of this very important bill.

It does show that when an important piece of legislation needs to be put through the House in fairly quick order all parties can move, and I want to thank them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guimond: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I do not

think things will go as fast with Bill C-22 on the privatization of the Pearson airport.

[*English*]

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.30 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

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