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Wednesday, May 11, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 11, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to raise the subject of housing starts in this House.

Increased interest rates had no negative impact whatsoever on housing starts in April. In fact, the residential construction sector was given a boost by a more positive employment situation, increased consumer confidence and a steady resale market. The month of April ended with positive results for builders across the country.

Total housing starts nation-wide, on a net basis, increased by 5.9 per cent, rising from 149,000 units in March to 158,000 last month. Housing starts for individual homes have reached their highest level in 16 months, totalling 75,000 homes in April, an increase of 19.3 per cent over the 63,000 reported in March.

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

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UNIVERSITY OF QUEBEC AT TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, this year the University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières celebrates its 25th anniversary.

On this occasion, I wish to pay tribute in this House to the founders and pioneers of this institution, and especially to its first president and founder, Gilles Boulet.

This institution has already graduated over 35,000 students and is now a centre for research and intervention with an international focus, and more specifically in the field of pulp and paper, hydrogen and small business development. It is also the only institution in the world to offer a doctorate program in chiropractic medicine, in French.

Education and research and development provide the tools we need to provide for the future and sustain our economic and industrial development. The University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières is an outstanding exponent of this principle.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have told the government repeatedly that they are worried about the economic state of this country. The 1994 budget demonstrated quite clearly that the government did not get the message.

Perhaps the government will listen to an outsider, someone who is not directly affected by the economics of this country. One of Asia's top bankers says Canada's economy is in danger of self-destruction and without greater economic growth Canada's envious quality of life will be endangered.

I agree with the view of the person who sits on the outside looking in. Our economy could crumble under the weight of high taxes, massive public debt and unnecessary government regulations.

The positive aspect of this government's budget reminds me of a person who adds a needed piece of furniture to a house that is burning down. I urge the government to introduce further spending reductions, to put out the fire and restore our international reputation.

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ROCK THERIAULT

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, Rock Theriault, the cult leader who tortured his followers with impunity for over 10 years did so as a result of negligence, ineptitude and potential wrongdoing of various public officials and medical experts.

Theriault used starvation, sleep deprivation and mutilations to control his followers. In 1989 he was convicted of cutting off the arm of a cult member. Only then was it discovered that he had killed one of his many wives a year earlier. Her death and the atrocities committed to her body were nothing short of sadistic.

In 1992 Theriault pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of second degree murder and is now incarcerated at Kingston penitentiary.

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Theriault will be eligible for day parole in two years and full parole in five, even though the OPP has a list of over 80 attacks Theriault committed but has never been charged for. These range from castration, shootings, stabbings and disfigurement. Some of these acts involve children living at his commune.

Theriault should be classified as a dangerous offender. I ask the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General to consider a full review of his case including the plea bargaining and to prosecute him on all outstanding charges.

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CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to remind the House that tomorrow, May 12, is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Day.

As members may be aware, chronic fatigue is a clinical syndrome belonging to a group of severe chronic debilitating conditions of unknown cause. There are other related disorders, such as immune dysfunction syndrome. The syndrome is not transmissible or life threatening but diminishes the quality of life to its extreme. Although this affliction is not a notifiable disease, Canadian cases are estimated to be in the thousands.

Let me commend the many volunteers in self-help and mutual aid groups across the country for the information, advice and reassurance they provide to those afflicted by this syndrome.

Please join me in wishing them a very successful Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Day tomorrow.

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NIAGARA FALLS CONSTITUENCY

Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I had the pleasure of organizing and hosting in my riding of Niagara Falls two information fora. One was on the alternatives to the GST; the other one was on how to access capital for small business.

A great number of my constituents from all walks of life attended the meeting and voiced their opinion on these important issues.

I believe this to be yet another example of how our government is maintaining its promise of ongoing consultation by effectively seeking the input of all Canadians before implementing major policy decisions, thus empowering them to reach a better future.

In this spirit of openness I pledge to continue with the process of consultation so that I might be a true voice representing the people of Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, organizers for the Liberal Party of Canada released the list of the resolutions to be debated at the party's convention which starts this Friday. It comes as no surprise to the Bloc Québécois that Quebec's concerns have no place on the convention agenda.

(1405)

With these resolutions, the Liberals will try to intrude even more into exclusively provincial jurisdictions such as education. The issue of Quebec sovereignty is being ignored. Since the Liberal Party denies that it rejected any resolutions on the subject, our conclusion must be that either this old-line party is so mentally challenged that it is incapable of understanding the situation in Quebec or it is resigned to the inevitable.

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[English]

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, three people were cruelly murdered in 1992 in a restaurant in the constituency of Cape Breton—The Sydneys. When the government was presented with a petition demanding the return of capital punishment signed by 60,000 people from that area, its response was: "We'll give it serious consideration when bills are being drafted".

There are only 66,000 people in the entire constituency. Does every person in the riding have to sign a petition before the Liberals will stand up in this House and say what the voters have mandated them to say?

Well, I will declare the words the people of Cape Breton—The Sydneys want to hear from the Liberal government: Yes, we will hold a national binding referendum on capital punishment.

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JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to address a matter of great concern to all Canadians.

Recently in Singapore a young man was disciplined for delinquency. The nature of his crime justified the punishment according to the laws of the land.

My concern is that the laws of our country have neglected to address the basic fact that injustices must be dealt with rigidly.

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I have a deep sense of pride and respect for our values and ethics. There must be a greater sense of accountability and responsibility for actions committed by offenders, period. Punishment must reflect the severity of the crime committed. Respect and discipline must sustain our just society.

I encourage our government to focus on its responsibility to effectively protect the innocent and punish the guilty. Only when the penalty administered advocates a deterrent will we have restored faith in our judicial system.

Corporal punishment must be introduced for those who choose not to be governed by more than conventional methods. A return to law and order must again be realized.

* * *

CRIME

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is time to bring some sanity to the debate on crime in Canada.

It is fashionable right now to let loose our passions and demand more laws and more punishment as the means of attacking crime in our communities. That response is entirely understandable. Violence and killings have no place in a civilized society.

We on this side of the House are deeply concerned about these issues. However we must all understand that more laws and more punishment alone, and I emphasize alone, will not solve our crime problems. The U.S. would be paradise if that were the case.

No, crime is not that simple. We must also look at what causes crime and anti-social behaviour in the first place: poverty, lack of opportunity, racism and family breakdown.

When we begin to address crime in its full context we will also begin to truly understand the problem and how we might solve it.

Our justice minister knows the complexities of the problems. He deserves our support as he tackles some of the serious issues.

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[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): Mr. Speaker, on May 6, the governments of Canada and Quebec signed in Ottawa an administrative agreement to harmonize our respective regulations governing the pulp and paper industry as regards the environment.

This agreement eliminates administrative duplication and overlap and creates a single window for the industry, with combined annual savings totalling \$1.6 million for the two governments.

This initiative gives concrete expression to our commitment to minimize duplication and overlap between governments and reflects constructive federalism.

[English]

Besides, in the environmental sector the federal government is presently working on several agreements with the provinces with a view to achieving more effective and co-ordinated management for the benefit of Canada's environment.

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[Translation]

BOSNIA

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, the situation continues to deteriorate around the Muslim enclave of Gorazde. Serb forces have yet to pull back the rest of their troops and heavy weapons according to the agreed procedure.

Just days before a meeting between Russia and the West scheduled for Friday in Geneva to examine new peace initiatives, agreements continue to be violated on both sides, logistic support convoys to be held back, medical evacuations to be cancelled and relief to be blocked.

(1410)

For the time being, it would seem that no further NATO air strikes are planned. At the slightest sign of hesitation, the Serbs will assume that the West's will to launch punitive air raids is failing.

Let us hope that the warring factions will show the will to reach a compromise as soon as possible so that the situation can stop deteriorating and peace initiatives be successful.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, unchecked growth in government debt is exposing Canada to the risk of currency and interest rate turbulence; simply put, explosions in deficits several years down the road.

Ontario, like the federal government, put off for another year stopping the rise in government debt as a ratio of GDP. Fortunately, some western and Atlantic provinces plan to reverse the rise this year. But Ontario's deficit and Quebec's overspending should raise the federal-provincial debt to 97 per cent of GDP within a year. Add municipal and regional governments and the

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ratio hits 100 per cent. Canada then joins the ranks of high debt countries like Greece, Italy and Belgium.

People always knew the deficit numbers were awful. We have begun to reach the point when confidence in our currency is evaporating and then we may get slammed fast and hard.

We need aggressive fiscal policy at all levels to prevent what appears to be the inevitable.

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THE LATE MARWAN HARB

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the tragic loss of Marwan Harb has hit us as an arrow in our hearts. A young Canadian was robbed of the chance to live. He was robbed of the chance to enjoy life.

[Translation]

On behalf of Marwan's family, I wish to thank my colleagues for their support. We appreciate the sympathy expressed by the community. The support we have received from Marwan's school friends, his teachers and the school officials has been comforting.

[English]

As Marwan joins other victims, I can hear the call on us to stop the tragedies. I can hear the call on us to protect the innocent of our society from becoming victims. I hope we will. I know we can.

Marwan, we will truly miss you.

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SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre): The recent draft amendments proposed to the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff Act by the Minister of Justice as they pertain to the importation and sale of serial killer cards are further evidence of this government's effort to listen, consult and act on behalf of the Canadian people.

The importation and sale of serial killer cards allows for profit at the expense and misery of the victims and their families. This must be stopped.

Our government is committed to making our communities and neighbourhoods safer and this is yet another step in that direction. The importation of serial killer cards is a disservice to our communities, communities that should be free of violence and intimidation.

The residents of Scarborough Centre commend the Minister of Justice for his prompt attention and urge all members to support this government's initiative to ban the sale of serial killer cards and board games.

WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 75th anniversary of the Winnipeg general strike, an event which saw the working people of Winnipeg unite against the corporate agenda of that time. This event shaped the political life of Winnipeg and to some degree of Canada for all time.

The strike produced members of Parliament like J. S. Woodsworth who went on to be the first leader of the CCF. He had been charged with seditious libel for quoting the prophet Isaiah.

Today the prophetic judgment of Isaiah is no less relevant to the corporate agenda and the indifference of the rich and the powerful to the plight of the powerless.

* * *

CHANTAL TITTLE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I am happy today to congratulate one of my constituents for her outstanding volunteer efforts. Calgary leads the country in its volunteer spirit. You simply have to look at the tremendous success of the 1988 Winter Olympics to see this.

Mrs. Chantal Tittle demonstrates why Calgarians are such generous volunteers. Mrs. Tittle has recently returned from Peru where she volunteered for CESO. She identified products in the agriculture and handicraft areas with potential for Canadian markets. She also established a long and short term strategy for introducing these products to Canada.

Mrs. Tittle is the kind of Canadian ambassador who makes other countries look to us with envy. We have many people in Canada who are willing to share their skills and expertise to help other countries develop. Through international ventures such as these, Canada can help developing countries become economically self-sufficient.

(1415)

I am proud that a person from Calgary Southeast has volunteered for such an important international venture.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, as an educator you will appreciate this.

All too often excellence in teaching goes unrewarded in our society. Fortunately, however, the right hon. Prime Minister has chosen to recognize excellent Canadian educators by presenting them with the Prime Minister's award for teaching excellence in science, technology and mathematics. This year a total of 191 awards were presented by the Prime Minister in Ottawa.

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One of the recipients of this prestigious award was Mr. Dave McKay, head of the mathematics department at Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School in Hamilton. One of McKay's former students said: "Dave's teaching methods stimulated our interest to further explore the field of mathematics".

Indeed Dave McKay is the type of individual I would entrust with the task of teaching my children. He is a credit to his school as well as the community, and by continuing to inspire students to excel and develop themselves academically, Dave McKay and all the teachers like him are a credit to our nation.

Congratulations to Dave.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In a report tabled in the House in November 1989, the Liberals, who were then the Official Opposition, called upon the government of the day, and I quote:

—to abandon the proposed GST and to undertake without delay consultations with Canadians and provincial governments on a fair and integrated reform of the entire tax system.

Does the Minister of Finance believe as strongly today as he did during his days in opposition that the federal tax system is in need of a complete overhaul and that a simple analysis of possible alternatives to the GST would not be enough to eliminate the inequities of the tax system?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows full well, in our budget we proceeded to review thoroughly several aspects of the corporate tax system, a move which was essential to restoring equity to the tax system. At the same time, he also knows that we have kept our word by setting up a finance committee to review the GST. I am, therefore, very confident and proud of our party's and our government's handling of the tax system.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, judging from what has been accomplished thus far, I think there is cause for concern about the seriousness of the government's intentions, because the only true reform carried out to date is totally inadequate. It should not even be equated with the word reform.

In the event the promised reform is carried out, will the Minister of Finance recognize that, in so far as the sales tax and income tax are concerned, the federal tax system should not encroach upon existing fields of provincial jurisdiction?

[English]

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the position the government has taken and one that we took with the budget is one that respects the jurisdictions of both levels of government. In fact at two successive meetings with the ministers of finance we discussed this very subject. There were no complaints. We recognize very clearly the absolute necessity of working together.

In terms of what we did in the budget within our own field, we began quite a profound restructuring of corporate taxation. We eliminated a number of abuses where companies were not paying tax on foreign passive income. We examined the number of expenditure openings, loopholes, exemptions and closed them.

As a result of our budget, we have re-established a substantial portion of fairness within our fiscal system.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer my question. I asked him if the government was going to respect provincial fields of jurisdiction with respect to tax matters. What we got was a long litany about the budget. That is an entirely different matter. I have another question for the minister and I hope this time that he will answer it. As his government prepares to reduce transfer payments, depriving the provinces of substantial revenues in the process, will the minister recognize that if GST reform were to mean a reduction in the provinces' tax base, this would be completely unfair as it would only add to their financial woes?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, first of all, as far as transfers to the provinces are concerned, not only have we not reduced these payments, but in terms of equalization, we have increased them.

(1420)

Second, we have agreed to a moratorium along with other provincial finance ministers while our social programs are being reviewed. Both the federal government and the provinces will save money as a result of this review.

As for our co-operating with provincial governments, I think it is obvious when you consider the meetings and even the discussion we had yesterday with the Minister of Industry concerning the elimination of tariff barriers. We do not need to be told what to do, as far as the provinces are concerned.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The *Toronto Star* quotes the chairman of the finance committee, which must submit its report on an alternative to the GST on June 1. The committee chairman, the member for Downsview, suggests that a single sales tax must be contemplated and that such a tax should be

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hidden to reduce the anger and frustration of consumers when they realize they are paying 15 per cent tax on the sales price.

Can the Minister of Finance assure us that he has ruled out the finance committee chairman's suggestion to put in place a single national sales tax collected by Ottawa?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, first of all, this issue is before the finance committee. But I will still answer the question. The hon. member knows full well that the committee, including members from the Bloc Québécois, is now working on the report.

They are in the process of writing it and I eagerly await it. However, I should tell you that the hon. member's position contradicts that of his leader because when he says we will harmonize taxation between the two levels of government, we will really do it because that is what many provinces want.

We want to introduce a sales tax that respects provincial jurisdiction because that is what the business community, consumers and provincial governments want.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister also share the opinion of the finance committee chairman, who claims that a hidden tax would reduce "counter shock"—the anger and frustration of consumers when they realize they are paying 15 per cent in taxes?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I said many times that I am not in a position to make comments on a report that has not been submitted yet.

But I eagerly await the report and if the hon. member knows everything about it, perhaps we could meet later.

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[English]

VIOLENT CRIME

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

Over the past several weeks Reform MPs have repeatedly questioned the government on criminal justice issues. The purpose has been to prod the government into actually doing something about violent crime.

In response the minister has said that violent crime is not going to be resolved by tinkering with statutes or changing acts

and that the real answer is to attack the underlying causes of crime.

Could the minister specifically identify the underlying causes of crime to which he refers and tell the House whether any of the reforms he has promised will have any immediate effect on these causes and on the safety of Canadians?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the record will disclose that in response to the questions that have been put I have said that there are already two answers to the issue of crime.

The first is legislative reform to ensure that the Criminal Code and the Young Offenders Act and all the other statutes are enforced as effectively as possible. That is one response.

But of equal and perhaps in the long term greater importance, I have spoken about the root causes of crime. In that connection I have spoken about developing at long last a national strategy for crime prevention and in order to achieve that establishing a national crime prevention council. We propose to do just that.

In response to the question by the hon. leader of the Reform Party may I say this. The specific steps will be the creation of the council and the reform of the statutes. I have mentioned that in weeks ahead I will be bringing to the House proposed amendments to both the Criminal Code and the Young Offenders Act.

(1425)

As for the root causes, I believe the national council on crime prevention will once and for all collaborate, harness and put to constructive use the energy you see in communities across the country, including Edmonton, which is among the leaders, toward community based programs for crime prevention linking social services and—

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): But, Mr. Speaker, I did not really hear any references to the underlying causes of crime to which the minister refers and I did not hear specifically any reference to the failure of individuals to accept responsibility for their actions as one of the roots of crime.

Many Canadians no longer have confidence in the Liberal philosophy of the past, the philosophy behind the original Young Offenders Act that individuals are not primarily responsible for their own actions and that crime is primarily the fault of society.

Will the minister state unequivocally today that whatever the details of the criminal justice reforms he brings forward they will fully recognize the principle of personal accountability for criminal acts?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can give that commitment without hesitation. I am confident the hon. member will find that in the proposals we will bring forward to lengthen the maximum

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sentences for serious violent crimes in the Young Offenders Act, for specific changes in the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Code, that he will find ample scope for accountability by individuals who commit crime.

Let me say something else in response to his question. He asks about root causes. The record of committees and commissions and inquiries is replete with references to the fact that longer jail terms and harsher penalties and more police do not solve the problem of crime because they do not get at its causes. The causes are patent. They are poverty and they are dysfunctional families and they are abusive children and it is hopelessness.

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

Yesterday in question period the minister made reference to a meeting he held with Margo B., the Quebec mother raped while doing secretarial work in a church by an inmate of the Cowansville penitentiary on day parole.

The minister will recall that Margo B. asked the Quebec court to compel the accused to take a blood test to determine whether he was HIV positive but the court denied her request saying that such an intervention would compromise the rights of the accused to privacy and security of the person under the charter.

Would the minister assure us that the criminal justice reforms he proposes will establish the principle that where the rights of a perpetrator of crime and the rights of a victim of crime conflict it is the rights of the victim that will prevail in Canadian law.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I spoke to this issue yesterday in the House. I said on that occasion on the facts of that particular case and dealing specifically with the right of a victim of sexual aggression to know whether the perpetrator is infected with a communicable disease is a matter we are considering.

Questions of constitutional law and privacy arise but I want to assure the hon. member, as I assured the House yesterday, that by the fall of this year we will bring forward a decision on that question and let the House know what our approach is. We are giving consideration to making such tests mandatory for the sake of the peace of mind of people like Margo B.

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[*Translation*]

TAX HAVENS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, in his report, the Auditor General denounced some provisions of the Income Tax Act that allow big Canadian corporations to invest in tax havens and bring dividends back to Canada without paying a cent of tax. The problem arises because Canada signed tax conventions with several countries that are now considered as tax havens.

(1430)

How does the Minister of Finance justify having countries like Barbados, Cyprus and Malta, tax havens recognized by the Auditor General, still on the list of countries with which Canada has tax conventions that unduly allow some Canadian companies to avoid taxes?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that the key word really is “unduly”, that the countries with which we signed these treaties impose some taxes and that if we did not have treaties with them, Canadian companies would be liable to double taxation, which would make them uncompetitive.

The hon. member also knows that in the Budget of February 22, we eliminated many of these openings so that we could tax passive investment, in order to reduce taxes on our companies’ operating profits.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, all experts agree that the most recent budget provisions in no way solve the problem of tax evasion by Canadian companies.

Does the minister not agree that it is absolutely indecent to ask ordinary citizens to pay more and more tax, even if it breaks them, while conventions which he maintains with countries considered by the Auditor General to be tax havens cost the Canadian government hundreds of millions of dollars in tax evasion?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, again, as the hon. member knows, in our Budget, we largely followed the Auditor General’s recommendations. As for tax havens, we eliminated most of them, but some remain. We live in an interdependent global economy; Canadian companies do business outside Canada and we do not want to put them in a position where they cannot compete with companies in other countries.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

The Solicitor General has told this House that applicants for the National Parole Board are considered on the basis of merit. He went on to say that the final decision for these order in council appointments is in the hands of cabinet.

Can the Solicitor General explain how he and cabinet can possibly determine merit if the applicant has never even been interviewed?

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Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the applicant's qualifications are a matter of record and often a matter of public knowledge. This record and this public knowledge are something that exist quite apart from any interview, no matter how lengthy that interview is. If we are looking for competence and merit, we want to look at a person's record of achievements, a person's training and a person's qualifications. That is what counts. An interview may be useful but that cannot outweigh these other factors.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, as I suggested in this House on Monday, Standing Order 110 provides a mechanism whereby nominees can be scrutinized by a parliamentary committee before a final decision is made by cabinet. The current system of making the appointment and then bringing the person before committee does not allow members of Parliament meaningful input.

I repeat my request. Will the Solicitor General forward all nominations to the National Parole Board to the standing committee on justice for review before any final appointment is made?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I said that I would take the hon. member's suggestion aboard, but I want to point out to him that the rules in this regard make this a matter of discretion, an optional matter for the minister. The word in the rules is "may".

The hon. member may want to reflect on his question because some of the people who submit application for appointments may not want it to be made public in terms of the impact on their existing employment and there are similar factors.

I suggest that the hon. member should bear in mind that it is our commitment, as we have been doing, to appoint people on the basis of merit and competence. We are prepared to submit our judgments which we are authorized to make by this Parliament to the test of this House and the public.

* * *

(1435)

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the Supreme Court decision, Quebec intends to maintain its Régie des télécommunications and is asking the federal government to delegate appropriate regulatory powers to the province. Speaking on that issue, the Quebec Minister of Communications said that the current situation clearly illustrates the inadequacy

of the Canadian constitutional framework as regards communications.

My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Does the federal government intend to legislate and delegate the powers of the CRTC to Quebec's Régie des télécommunications, as requested by the Quebec Minister of Communications?

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 I already indicated, we have no problem consulting with Quebec to see if some responsibilities in the communications sector could be delegated to that province. Our approach will not be based on jurisdiction, even though the Supreme Court clearly indicated, as did Quebec's Superior Court and Court of Appeal before it, that communications come under exclusive federal jurisdiction.

Under the circumstances, our approach is based on the principle of efficiency; in other words, it is a matter of determining who can provide the most efficient service. We will thoroughly review the decision, get the advice of our experts and negotiate with Mrs. Frulla-Hébert. Also, we will be particularly careful not to create overlapping in a field which comes under exclusive federal jurisdiction.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, does that mean that the minister intend to rely on the fact that communications are under federal jurisdiction to negotiate only minor details of no consequence with Quebec, when he is fully aware that what is at stake here is Quebec's cultural development as a whole?

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 I just indicated, on the contrary, our decision will not be based on the fact that we have exclusive jurisdiction. Rather, we will consult with Quebec and make a decision based on efficiency. In other words, we will go for the sharing of responsibilities which best serves the interests of Quebecers and Canadians.

* * *

[English]

PAROLE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and is inspired by Helen Leadley, a constituent of Calgary Southeast.

Robert Paul Thompson stabbed to death the daughter of a constituent of Calgary Southeast. He also stabbed and beat her friend. He plea bargained to second degree murder and is serving a life sentence. While in prison he took a nurse hostage and stabbed two guards. He continues to be a violent offender, harassing the victims' families. He is eligible for parole in 1995.

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Can the minister guarantee that in his review of the parole system he will implement the necessary changes to ensure that killers like these who continue to threaten the families of their victims stay in jail and off our streets?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, one of the efforts in which we are engaged at present is to deal with high risk offenders who give reason for concern about the safety of the community upon the completion of their jail term or their terms of imprisonment.

In that connection I raised with the territorial and provincial ministers of justice and attorneys general in March when I met with them the approach which we said we would take during the election campaign which is to ask the provinces to work with us to amend where necessary the provincial mental health legislation to permit assessments of such persons in the prisons and then involuntary detention under mental health legislation at the end of their criminal sentences so that they can either be treated or detained as required for purposes of public safety.

I am happy to report that I have had constructive co-operation and expressions of support from my colleagues in the provinces and territories. I hope the day is not far away when the legislative base will be present for us to treat the kinds of persons to which reference has been made—and I should say I am not speaking in reference to that particular case but generally about offenders—who create a risk so that we can deal with high risk offenders in a way that will protect the community.

(1440)

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the minister's answer, Thompson was out of jail on a day pass when he committed murder.

I ask specifically, will the minister guarantee that in his proposed changes to the criminal justice system he will protect innocent victims of crimes like these, those who are left behind, those who are being stalked by convicted killers, by tightening up the eligibility criteria for the granting of day passes and denying them parole or is it going to be continuing the parole as usual?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General and I take it as our shared responsibility to ensure that the system works to avoid risk to the public.

I shall take the hon. member's question as an expression of concern that those efforts be continued. I will work with the Solicitor General in ensuring that the parole system guards against such risks to members of the public.

*[Translation]***TAINTED BLOOD**

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Health.

The Minister stated in this House, on February 3, March 23 and April 26, 1994, that the request for additional financial resources for the Krever Commission and for the Canadian Hemophilia Society was being considered by the Treasury Board. She also stated on April 26, 1994, and I quote: "The people who wish to take part in this inquiry have the right, as well as the funding they need, to appear before the Commission."

How can the Minister state that everyone who wishes to can have access to the work of the Commission when the Canadian Hemophilia Society had to lay off a third of its employees and no longer has the financial resources to send an expert to defend its members before this Commission?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it was indeed stated on the dates in question that money was available to facilitate the appearance of these groups before the Krever Commission.

It is understood that the amounts are not extravagant, but there will be funds available. They only need to make an application to the Krever Commission and the resources they require will be available.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister assure us that the level of financial assistance provided will be adequate to meet the needs of the Canadian Hemophilia Society and enable it to defend the rights of hemophiliacs adequately?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

*[English]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Spring has now sprung across the country and many communities are anxiously awaiting word on their infrastructure projects. In my riding of Peterborough I have spoken to municipal officials who have submitted 40 or 50 projects to the federal-provincial body for review.

Can the minister assure the municipalities of Peterborough that decisions on infrastructure projects will be made soon.

Oral Questions

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me an opportunity to report more good news to the House.

This morning I was in Brampton where we unveiled some 19 projects of over \$54 million as part of the program. Last week in Bradford more programs were announced and indeed also in Dryden, Sioux Lookout and places all over Ontario.

I can tell the member that by the end of June we expect to process some 700 applications in Ontario. I am sure some of them are going to be from Peterborough.

This also gives me an opportunity to note since I last rose in this House on this matter that we have gone from 200 projects with 3,000 jobs up to 364 projects creating almost 10,000 jobs. This government is living up to its commitment to get Canadians back to work.

* * *

(1445)

NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Contrary to what the minister has previously said, there has indeed been a change in overseas tax credit policy enforcement. Nonetheless, on Friday the minister of revenue stated that the Liberal government was committed to living by the strict letter of the law.

What steps has the government taken to ensure that Revenue Canada's dogmatic application of the OTC does not violate the NAFTA and the FTA thus putting Canada at the risk of U.S. retaliation?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I have answered the question in general terms previously. The objective of this program is to give Canadian companies an opportunity to bid for overseas contracts and thus make it attractive for their Canadian employees to go overseas and take part in that work.

It is not a program to assist American or other companies to do the same thing overseas. The legislation is clear in this regard. Indeed, as I mentioned before, I am limited in my opportunity to apply the law.

With respect to the NAFTA and the FTA provisions, I am informed that we are within the spirit of the NAFTA and the FTA. However I will again check the matter at the request of the hon. member.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance.

According to officials in the department of international trade and the U.S. treasury department, the Liberal government's change in the enforcement of the OTC violates article 1402 of the FTA as well as articles 1102 and 2103:4 of the NAFTA.

In light of the international agreements, will the minister now consider amending the Income Tax Act so that the overseas tax credit does not violate Canada's international obligations?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I do not have articles 1402 and 2103:4 of the other paragraph the hon. member has mentioned.

If members of the Reform Party or other members of the opposition wish to be so specific in their questions, they should give ministers the courtesy of at least providing us with either the text of the documents they are referring to or advance warning so that we can prepare for questions in the House.

Unfortunately I cannot answer that question. I revert to my previous statement that I will look into the matter to see whether we are in full compliance, as we believe we are, with both the NAFTA and the free trade agreement.

* * *

[Translation]

HEPATITIS C

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. On May 9, the Director of the Bureau of Biologics of the Department of Health said, and I quote: "There is no point in trying to track down those persons who received transfusions of blood tainted with the hepatitis C virus, because there is no vaccine or preventive treatment."

My question is as follows: Can the Minister tell us unequivocally today whether she repudiates the remarks made by her official?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have no reason to believe that there have been any changes, and I am certainly going to ask the people in my department whether anything new has been discovered that would help us treat people with hepatitis C.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister not recognize that in her capacity as the person responsible for public health, her primary duty is to inform those people who were likely to have been infected with the hepatitis C virus during blood transfusions administered since 1992?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, might I add that it might be in the best interest of all Canadians who fear they might have contacted hepatitis C due to a blood transfusion to be in contact with their physicians. That would be very advantageous to anyone who fears that.

Oral Questions

(1450)

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Last month the government made a very big deal about announcing a new series of very expensive short term make work projects for unemployed youth. Once we get beyond the press releases we find that only 2,500 of Canada's 405,000 unemployed youth will have a shot at those programs this summer. That is less than 1 per cent.

Will the minister admit that these programs are not a long term solution to youth unemployment and that implying they are is creating false hope for Canada's unemployed youth?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the hon. member says, the initiatives we announced will affect far more than 2,500 students. In fact under the summer employment program there will be 60,000 summer students employed across the country.

Under the internship program, which is a very crucial program to deal with the critical problem of enabling young people to make their transition from school to work, there will be about 8,500 in the first round this year, going up to a number close to 60,000 in the full year of operation two years from now.

Under the youth service corps my colleague will be announcing very soon a number of LEAD sites which will lead to close to 10,000 to 15,000 young people being employed.

In addition, we are undertaking a number of co-operative ventures with the provinces to help to provide national standards in the schooling system.

I do not know where the hon. member gets his information. It clearly has nothing to do with the major initiative the government has announced.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister will admit what he is talking about are programs that were previously announced. In some cases he is talking about programs that will actually take effect in years to come. Indeed this summer there will be 2,500 new positions opened up.

The facts show that despite having dozens of these programs over the last 20-odd years, youth unemployment has almost doubled since the 1970s to its present 17.4 per cent. It is no coincidence that unemployment has risen with the debt and deficit levels.

Will the minister acknowledge that the debt is the single biggest killer of jobs in the country and every day it fails to cut spending his government is contributing to high levels of unemployment?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I say with all due apology and deference to the hon. member that I do not think he knows what he is talking about. On the one hand he says cut programs, cut spending, do not do anything about it, and in the question before he said do more, get more people to work.

Before the hon. member asks a question he should make up his mind what he believes in.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader.

We all want appointees to government boards and agencies to be fair minded, free of partisan political pressure, and accountable to the public. While we recognize that board members are not employees of the government in the traditional sense, what can the government do to ensure that those who sit on these boards act in the best interest of all Canadians?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked an important question. Our approach is twofold.

First, we are appointing people on the basis of competence and merit and, second, when it comes to the National Parole Board I have said on behalf of the government that I intend to introduce legislation in the House to create a system of accountability and discipline for parole board members.

Certainly our experience with this system is something that can be looked at in terms of other commissions and boards. I look forward to having the hon. member's input, as I do that of all members of the House, in dealing with this important issue.

* * *

*[Translation]***SENIORS**

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for senior citizens. Yesterday, in response to my question about the plan to use voice mail to answer requests for information from senior citizens, the minister merely stressed the efficiency of the proposed service.

Oral Questions

However, senior citizens do not like this kind of service, and they have made that clear through the representative for the Fédération de l'âge d'or.

Considering the special needs of senior citizens and disabled persons, would the minister responsible for senior citizens agree that the general use of voice mail in dealing with this particular clientele is entirely inappropriate?

(1455)

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the most important requirement for a program of assistance to seniors or to any Canadian through government administration is to make sure that they have good, effective service, that it does not take a long time, that there are no delays, and that it is a personalized service.

Under the program we are introducing, because we will be able to finally bring management into the modern age through the development of new information technologies we will be able to have a much speedier system. It gives us more opportunity to provide direct personalized service on an individual basis through phones or other bases.

Surely to goodness in this day and age even the Bloc Québécois is interested in better service.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, why does the federal government insist on attacking senior citizens, considering that most of them find it very difficult to deal with a system that is so impersonal?

[*English*]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, that kind of comment is absolutely irresponsible. There is nothing we are doing that will hurt seniors. By saying those kinds of things in the House the hon. member is responsible for spreading false alarms.

The fact of the matter is we are bringing in a better program, a more efficient, more personalized and more direct service to give better service to seniors. We have to ask the hon. member to stop spreading that kind of misstatement and misinformation.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and has been inspired by Mrs. Helga Lopp of Prince George, B.C.

Mrs. Lopp has been waiting over two years for a vital operation to cure a life-threatening condition. Yet, because of cutbacks in the operating room assignment times, the one doctor capable of performing the operation has a backlog of over 300 patients.

The minister has repeatedly said in the House that the health care system in the country is healthy. I do not believe it. Reformers do not believe it. Certainly Mrs. Lopp does not believe it.

Is the Minister of Health prepared to stand in the House today and acknowledge that the Canadian health system is not well and that bold measures must be taken to restore the health care system so that it works in Canada?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to stand in the House today to say that the principles and the values of the Canada Health Act will prevail.

I do not believe that any Canadian whose life is threatened imminently has had to wait for two years for surgery.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Health. I sent her the letter for her eyes only. She has the letter.

Ministers of the crown have stood in the House and have stated over and over again that the health care system is based on a principle of universality. Stout defenders of this principle who ignore the fact that Canadians like Mrs. Lopp are not getting the health care they need offer no hope.

Does the minister realize that the people who wait in these ever growing lines for health care will eventually hold her and the government responsible? When will the minister come out of hiding—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I want to affirm to all Canadians today that the government takes its responsibilities very seriously.

We want to tell all Canadians that yes, their health care system will be protected. They will be treated based on their need, not on their wants and not on the size of their pocketbooks.

* * *

VIA RAIL

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

It is being suggested by various groups interested in passenger rail traffic in the country that VIA Rail pays 300 per cent more for track use than CN's normal commercial freight users.

Routine Proceedings

(1500)

Can the minister please advise us if VIA pays the same track rate as that attributed to freight cars or is it higher?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member that I really do not know because we are not privy to all of the cost arrangements.

We have to find out first of all what we can release in terms of the commercial confidentiality. As the hon. member knows, VIA does business with both CN and CP. To make a comparison between the kinds of services provided to VIA by CN or CP with what happens with their own freight cars might require some work, but I certainly do undertake to get an answer back to the hon. member.

* * *

TOBACCO PACKAGING

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have so many questions stored up, I do not know which one to ask.

My question is for the Prime Minister. It has to do with evidence given in committee yesterday. A hired gun of the tobacco industry said that NAFTA might stand in the way of the intention of the Minister of Health and the government to introduce plain packaging to discourage the use of cigarettes.

What does the government intend to do about this? If it is found to be the case and NAFTA does stand in the way of this obvious good measure in terms of public health, will the government reconsider its support of the North American free trade agreement?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am so happy to see the member on his feet, but about the question, that is another problem.

I do not think NAFTA has a lot to say about the way we should control that type of problem in Canada. Sometimes we hear things in committee we do not agree with. Evidently the hon. member did not share that view and I do not either.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[Translation]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 22(2), as promised in this House on May 2 in response to a question by the hon. member for Charlesbourg, I have the pleasure to table, in both official languages, documents setting out the Department of National Defence's policy on environmental protection.

[English]

They are entitled: NDHQ Policy Directive P5/92 "Canadian Forces and National Defence Policy on the Environment", Canadian Forces Administrative Order 36/50 "Environmental Protection and Management", and Canadian Forces Administrative Order 36/55 "Hazardous Materials Management".

* * *

(1505)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions.

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ACT

Hon. David Michael Collenette (for the Minister of Human Resources Development) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-30, an act to amend the Department of Labour Act.

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

* * *

*[Translation]***CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf) moved for leave to introduce a bill entitled: "An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Employment Act (whistleblowing)".

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of this bill I am introducing today is to provide appropriate sanctions against retaliatory discharges by public sector employers of employees who report or "blow the whistle" on serious misconduct of their employers.

It is a question of protecting employees acting in good faith. Therefore, the bill would recognize that there are times when it is in the public interest to encourage employee whistleblowing, particularly when the public health and safety are at issue.

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

* * *

*[English]***CITIZENSHIP ACT**

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-249, an act to amend the Citizenship Act (right to citizenship).

Routine Proceedings

She said: Madam Speaker, today I wish to table a bill to amend the Citizenship Act.

The intent of the bill is to clarify the automatic issuance of Canadian citizenship specifically to those born in Canada to parents who have made a claim for refugee or landed status and are awaiting a decision. The bill specifies that a child should retain the citizenship status of the parents until a decision is rendered on the case.

It is my belief that our citizenship laws should recognize that citizenship is not simply an automatic right, it is a privilege.

The intent of this bill is a direct response from input by the citizens of my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam.

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

* * *

(1510)

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY ACT

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-250, an act to establish the Canadian International Development Agency.

He said: Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill, seconded by the hon. member for Red Deer, that will mandate the Canadian International Development Agency to help the poorest nations on earth.

Currently CIDA is not directly accountable to this House. Its funding is scattered over more than 100 nations. Forty per cent of its aid money is spent right here in Canada, yet every day we are confronted with the desperate images of the third world which needs emergency assistance and long term help to become self-sustaining. CIDA could do more to assist in these areas by redirecting its aid toward the third world. However, to change its priorities requires a legislative mandate.

My bill is based on the principles of openness, democratic decision making and accountability to this House. I think all members of Parliament could lend their support to this compassionate effort that will finally mandate CIDA and direct Canadian foreign aid toward those who need it most, the poorest of the poor.

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

PETITIONS

SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by numerous members of the constituency of York West in the province of Ontario.

They draw to the attention of the House that they support the efforts of Mrs. Debbie Mahaffy in her quest to have the importation of killer cards seized at the Canada-United States border to stop their distribution in Canada.

They state further that they abhor crimes of violence and believe that killer trading cards offer nothing positive for children or adults to admire or emulate but contribute to violence.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today under Standing Order 36 to present a petition very similar to that of the hon. member who preceded me.

The members of my constituency would like to support the efforts of Mrs. Debbie Mahaffy in her quest to have the importation of killer cards seized at the Canada-United States border and to stop the importation of these damaging cards into our country.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions, the first of which is signed by constituents of my riding of Scarborough West.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase, sexual orientation.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Madam Speaker, my second petition is from the good people of Kamloops, British Columbia.

They pray that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

[Translation]

SENIORS

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est): Madam Speaker, today I have the honour to present a petition signed by nearly 200 residents of my riding, Québec-Est, and region.

The petitioners want to draw the attention of Parliament to the situation of seniors in Quebec. Fifty-three per cent of men and 82 per cent of women who reach the age of 65 need government help to make ends meet. Forty per cent of seniors 65 and over are entitled to the guaranteed income supplement, a benefit which keeps them at the poverty line, and only 5 per cent of those 65 and over have an annual income above \$50,000.

The petitioners therefore ask Parliament not to take any action that would reduce any benefit, pension, social program, assistance or acquired right which seniors enjoy or that would impose any tax or other measure which would reduce their income. I support this petition without reservation and I urge the government to act on it.

(1515)

[English]

ETHANOL

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to stand in the House today pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by residents of both Kent county and Essex county who support ethanol fuel, as do many members in the House.

The ethanol industry will do a great deal to help agriculture. It is one of the most environmentally friendly fuels in the world today. Whereas there is a tremendous boost for labour in agriculture and person-years in construction in my local municipality and municipalities around, they humbly ask this Parliament to consider the tax exemption on the ethanol portion of fuel.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Madam Speaker, today I have the solemn responsibility pursuant to Standing Order 36 to table a certified petition on behalf of more than 9,000 residents in my constituency of Stormont—Dundas.

Regrettably the petition is motivated by the tragic murder earlier this year of 16-year old Carrie Lauzon of Cornwall. This petition was started by her mother, Shelley Lauzon.

The undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to review and revise our laws concerning young offenders by empowering the courts to prosecute and punish the young law breakers who are terrorizing our society by releasing

Routine Proceedings

their names and lowering the age limit to allow prosecution to meet the severity of the crime.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall all notices of motions for the production of papers stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I have two matters. I think the House will give its consent to the withdrawal of government business Nos. 11 and 12, the two motions for debate on special subjects which have now been debated and are therefore finished. To clear the Order Paper, I am asking that they be withdrawn with consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Do we have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motions Nos. 11 and 12 withdrawn.)

BILL C-29

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I think you will find there is agreement among the parties that at the conclusion of the speech of the Minister of Fisheries on Bill C-29, which I understand will be called in a moment as the first item of government business, there will be a 10-minute period of questions and comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***COASTAL FISHERIES PROTECTION ACT**

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans) moved that Bill C-29, an act to amend the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place to address the substance and rationale for Bill C-29. In doing so, may I express on behalf of the government and all the government supporters and as well on behalf of Atlantic Canadians, all those who have traditionally depended upon the resources of the sea for a livelihood and for a reason to be in many of our isolated and rural communities of Atlantic Canada, our thanks and appreciation to all members and to all parties in the House for the rare show of unanimous support to expedite the passage of Bill C-29, an act to amend the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act.

It is seldom in the life of a Parliament that such a rare show of unanimous support is forthcoming in the pursuit of a cause that is so worthwhile for all Canadians.

(1520)

For generations fishermen have worked hard to make a living. It is a very tough existence but a good life from the resources of the ocean on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. All of that is threatened today.

We confront a very grim question. The question is will a way of life that has been sustained for 500 years now survive?

Environmental conditions have had a role to play in pushing down fish stocks. There are fewer, in fact historically low levels of young fish on the Grand Banks today. These fish are growing more slowly. They take longer to mature. More are dying because of natural causes. Indeed, we have record low levels of temperature on the east coast, 65-year record low temperatures. Therefore, we have a more natural death of fish stocks.

All of these ecological factors are happening today, but these factors are only one small part of the resource crisis that we face.

Beginning in the mid-1980s there was massive destructive overfishing of cod, flounder and other resources on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks just outside Canada's 200-mile economic zone. The fisheries in this area just outside the 200-mile limit is regulated by an organization called NAFO, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. The catches set by NAFO are determined as a consequence of the scientific evidence that is gathered from all of the nations that participate in fisheries outside our 200-mile limit. Canadian scientists on Canadian

fisheries patrol vessels, Russian scientists, Japanese scientists, European union scientists all collaborate to establish what the proper harvesting levels should be to sustain the resource. NAFO, as an organization, works collaboratively to set quotas and to start harvesting plans in a manner that is sustainable.

During the 1980s Canada fished within the quotas set by NAFO. So did the fleets from most other countries fish within the quotas established by NAFO. We did what we thought was right then in the mid-1980s. We know now that we took in fact too much fish.

I have to say here and now that even as we fished within the assigned quotas as did many others, the European union in the mid-1980s showed no such restraint. The European union as a member of NAFO would participate in establishing global quotas, would be assigned its share of the quota and then would unilaterally establish for itself its own quota and fish according to its own fishing plan.

Canada and many other nations set out to do the right thing. In retrospect it turned out we were not doing the right thing. The European union in the mid-1980s set out to do the wrong thing and regrettably it succeeded.

The heavy overfishing of cod and flounder in the mid-1980s severely depleted those resources. It was in the early 1990s that nature, because of a changed environmental condition on top of the heavy overfishing of the mid-1980s, dealt a second crushing blow. These stocks which were depleted, weakened and overfished are now in a rate of rapid decline.

How many Canadians realize that the once great 2J, 3KL cod stock, an important part of the protein, the food basket of the planet earth, a cod stock that once sustained the great North American fleet, all of the European fleet, the Spanish and Portuguese fleet, the Russian fleet, the Japanese fleet, a stock that fed a good part of the planet, the once great northern cod stock has been decimated and that the spawning biomass of that stock since 1989 has declined by 99 per cent. A scant four or five years later only 1 per cent of the spawning biomass that existed five years ago remains today. This stock is in crisis. This resource that belongs to the planet earth is on its last legs today.

(1525)

Man has been slow to realize, but we had better realize soon, that we cannot command nature. We can only obey nature. If we do not understand that in the context of fish stocks, we face a terrible consequence for our ignorance. We face the commercial if not the biological extinction of once massive fish stocks.

This could happen to northern cod. It could happen to southern Grand Banks cod, 3NO cod, and it could happen to four endangered species of flounder as well on the Grand Banks.

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Canada has stopped fishing all of these endangered stocks, every one of them. Canada has participated with NAFO in putting moratoriums in place, the most recent in February in Brussels, to protect 3NO cod. Prior to that, four moratoriums were put in place to protect flounder. A moratorium was put in place to protect the great northern cod stock that I have just described as having been devastated. There is a moratorium in place to protect American plaice in area 3M on the Flemish Cap.

Within Canada we have not only participated in moratoriums to protect straddling stocks, but today as the minister of fisheries I preside over 14 moratoriums within Canadian waters. We have shut down virtually the entire cod fishery, the entire groundfishery of all of Atlantic Canada. We have done all that we can in the name of conservation. We have even denied after 500 years of settlement and existence the right of those who live in the Atlantic region to take simple biblical level technology, a simple hook and line and fish food for a living.

We can do no more than we have done literally in the name of conservation. We submit that those who come from distant water nations to fish off our shores can do no less than what we have imposed upon ourselves.

We proposed a bill to give Canada the capacity, authority and ability not to extend our jurisdiction out beyond 200 miles, not to make a territorial grab, not to expand our economic zone and not to pull unto ourselves more territory or water. That is not Canada's nature. It is not Canada's way. It is not part of our history. It is not part of our culture. We have never been an expansionist power or some kind of imperialistic power.

We propose a measure today to give us the ability to enforce the conservation measures necessary to protect endangered species not just for ourselves but for the world.

Overfishing has occurred on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, overfishing on occasion by Canadian fleets. Let us have the courage, the integrity and the honesty to admit that and stop that overfishing. We have demonstrated in the last months that where a Canadian vessel breaks the rules Canada shall reach out the long arm of its enforcement power and impose proper conservation measures. A month ago we went out 300 miles to arrest the *Stephen B*, a Canadian tuna boat fishing against ICCAT rules, to protect bluefin tuna, a highly migratory species. We went out 228 miles to arrest the *Kristina Logos*, a Canadian registered vessel catching 3NO cod. We are not asking the world to accept a standard that we do not impose upon ourselves first.

(1530)

The vessels overfishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks can be divided into two rough categories, those that belong to the multilateral organization that I described earlier, NAFO, that fish within NAFO quotas and according to NAFO rules within a NAFO management plan, and those that do not.

A moment ago I said that European vessels in the mid-1980s did not abide by NAFO's rules even when a member of NAFO. Even today some European vessels do not comply fully with the rules but by and large the quotas and the management plan set by NAFO are complied with by European union vessels.

While we occasionally have differences, we have the means as a member of NAFO to settle those differences by agreement and within an existing management structure.

May I say there is nothing so unholy, nothing so repulsive, nothing more predatory than the spectacle of tying up Canadian fishermen, tying up Canadian boats, closing down Canadian fish plants, wiping out the very reason for existence of Canadian coastal communities in the name of conservation, and even as that sacrifice is made to restore this resource for future generations, watching a handful of what we call flag of convenience pirate vessels targeting those same endangered species that we Canadians have set aside to be saved to rebuild this fragile resource. I say to the pirates their day has come and we are going to stop that kind of predatory action. We are going to stop that kind of exploitation.

Why? Because we have some desire to be in conflict on the high seas? Not at all. It is contrary to our nature. Because we have some macho desire to flex our muscles on the high seas? Not at all. It is contrary to our nature, to our history.

We hope that we as a House of Commons who have come together to produce this legislation, unanimously proposed, unanimously supported, unanimously implemented, will not have to move against a single vessel. We hope that those who make exploitation, risk capital, their gain, will understand that their best course of action is to pull up gear and leave.

We do not want to confront a single vessel on the high seas. We do not want to arrest a single vessel on the high seas. We do not want to interfere with a single crew, wherever it comes from, whatever flag of convenience it flies on the high seas. But we will confront and we will arrest and we will seize and we will prosecute each and every one if they do not pull up their nets and leave the zone.

Last month Canada arrested a Canadian registered vessel, the *Kristina Logos*, 228 miles out. The vessel was flying the Panamanian flag, with a crew from Portugal. We towed it into port in St. John's.

Do you know what we found? We found over 100 tons of product aboard that freezer vessel. Do you know what else we found? We found nets with something close to legal mesh size. Of course a legal mesh size would allow a small juvenile or baby fish to escape because it could swim through the mesh. Yet aboard that boat were 100 tons of juvenile cod, juvenile flounder, and juvenile redfish. I was down in the hold of that boat. I want to tell my colleagues that I saw not a single fish of the 100 tons in that hold that was bigger than the palm of my hand. I want you to stop and think about that. Not a single fish aboard that vessel was longer than the palm of my hand.

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(1535)

Those who come from Atlantic Canada know when you are catching those kinds of fish you are slaughtering the species. It is a crime against humanity. It is a crime against an important resource that belongs not to a single nation but to the planet. That is what was found in the hold of that vessel.

You ask yourself, how can they catch such a small fish? It looks more like it belongs in the aquarium at home, not in the hold of a commercial fishing vessel. How is it done? Then fisheries officers uncover what is called a liner. Inside the legal sized fishing gear is put a liner so that everything that swims into that net is being held inside it. Nothing can escape, not juvenile fish, not any species. Everything goes into the hold of the boat.

Who are these people? The people who own these vessels see them as an opportunity to make profit. These are people who do not have the mentality of fishermen. Fishermen believe you must harvest the sea as a farmer does his land. A farmer knows you must sustain the fields. You must leave them to lie fallow on occasion. You must replant a different product from time to time. You must sustain the power of the fields to produce crops.

The ocean is no different. It cannot be exploited, it must be harvested. You must catch fish in such a way as to leave the young, let them grow older, let them reproduce. You move your effort from fragile stocks on to healthier stocks.

Not these vessels, not these pirates, not these flags of convenience or stateless vessels. No, they do not have the mind of a farmer or a fisherman, they have the mind of a miner. Take the resource. That is understandable in mining, it is not renewable, it is not sustainable. You take the resource, mine it, clean it out and then move on.

That is not acceptable to Canada. That is why Canada as represented by all of its political parties today will act in record time to pass this bill.

Our legislation says: "The bill will enable Canada to take the urgent action necessary to prevent further destruction of straddling stocks and to permit their rebuilding while continuing to seek effective international solutions".

Lest anyone be in doubt, let me affirm once again three fundamental commitments by the Government of Canada. First, Canada is committed to the rule of international law. Second, Canada's goal remains effective international controls over high seas fishing. Third, the Government of Canada will use the powers under this legislation only where other means to protect threatened straddling stocks have failed.

Our commitment to the third principle is no less strong than our commitment to the first two; that is, the rule of law and our desire to seek effective international controls to deal with the problems of high seas fishing.

That is why even as we propose a measure that allows us to go beyond 200 miles and to use the force required to ensure that NAFO conservation rules and other conservation measures are respected, we continue to work at the UN Conference on High Seas Fishing which will undertake its third session in August in New York to seek a permanent solution to the problem of overfishing.

The measures we take today under Bill C-29 are an interim measure, a temporary measure. They are necessary now because if we do not act those fish stocks will disappear, perhaps forever.

(1540)

The world needs, and Canada needs, not a temporary solution taken by one nation but a permanent solution taken by all nations under the auspices of the UN. That is why Canada has worked hard at the UN both last summer and again this spring and we will do so again in August to get a new convention on high seas fishing.

I say to those people in Atlantic Canada who ask if it is too late, no, it is not too late. We can build this resource. It takes the commitment not of a single province, not of a single region, not of a particular group of people, but the commitment of a nation. I say to those people in Atlantic Canada who believe that their country has abandoned them in this crisis and that Canadians elsewhere in Ontario or Quebec or British Columbia, Saskatchewan or Manitoba do not know or do not care about this crisis, it is not true.

This is a particularly proud day for me, not as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans but as a member of Parliament from Newfoundland. I have been here for 14 years. I stand here today in an emergency debate and look across and see colleagues from every party and from every part of Canada who give the confidence that this measure is supported. The country does care and does have the will to solve this problem.

I would like to acknowledge the work over many years to raise the consciousness of the nation to this crisis of all the Atlantic premiers. Members would understand if I were particularly to acknowledge the work of Premier Wells of Newfoundland. He went across this country to raise the consciousness of the nation about this problem.

Members would understand as well if I said that it takes a Prime Minister with vision, it takes a Prime Minister with courage and it takes a Prime Minister with great integrity to have said during the heat of an election campaign that Canada will act and to have delivered during the calm of the first serious

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and sober days of government the ability to act. I thank our Prime Minister.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Madam Speaker, the minister has requested that Parliament act expeditiously in passing this bill. I am curious as to when we can expect this act to come into force.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, if the House gives passage to this measure today—and we have had some discussions with all of the parties and I acknowledge that and thank them for it—then the matter will be referred to the Senate as early as tomorrow.

It is up to the Senate. It is its own creature, of course, its own authority. If it considers this bill as quickly as tomorrow it could pass and be given royal assent tomorrow, which I think would be almost a record passage of any bill before this Parliament. We would publish the regulations within a week and I can tell you we will be enforcing them very soon afterward.

Mr. Cummins: Madam Speaker, at this time the minister did not acknowledge that Canada is renegotiating the Pacific salmon treaty with the United States.

I am curious. The minister is taking unilateral action on the east coast with this bill. Is it in any way likely to jeopardize relations with the United States and in particular the negotiations which are ongoing on the salmon treaty between Canada and the United States on the west coast?

(1545)

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I think he has asked a very important and relevant question. I am glad he has raised it and has given me the opportunity to respond.

I had lunch today with a very enjoyable luncheon companion, the American ambassador. I did so for two reasons. First I wanted to have the opportunity to raise a number of outstanding issues, one of which was the issue of the Argentia base in Newfoundland and the American closedown of that base. We wanted to ensure there were reasonable conditions for the American departure there.

The second reason was that I wanted to talk specifically about the bill, what it does and what it does not do, to assure our friends and colleagues south of the border that we have a bill that is targeted at a particular problem which needs to be addressed. I thought there was certainly—I will not comment on the American formal response—some understanding for the plight we face. We had a separate discussion on the whole question of the Pacific salmon treaty.

I made very clear to the American ambassador, as did the Prime Minister when he spoke to the president a few weeks ago,

that the successful conclusion of a salmon plan with our friends, the United States, is urgent and important for Canada.

I can assure the member there is no connection nor was any connection drawn by the American ambassador between the bill and its provisions and the separate question on the Pacific salmon treaty that we are attempting to resolve.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, I would like to start with a question and at the same time congratulate the minister for agreeing to answer questions, because I know that on a motion or a bill like this at second reading, ministers do not have to take questions, so I want to praise his courage. At the same time—I will have to repeat it later—we will support this motion.

The minister talked about the harsh decisions recently made by Canada concerning the closure of 14 fish stocks in Canadian waters. I myself favour sustainable harvesting and, when it is no longer sustainable, I agree with the minister that we must take all necessary measures and impose a moratorium.

However, the minister has been in office for nearly six months now and not all stocks are threatened to the same extent. I want to ask the minister this: If some stocks should recover a little more quickly, will we allow at least some exploratory fisheries, so that the new selective gear being produced can be used and several species can be harvested. The Bloc Québécois even made a few suggestions in this regard.

I would just like the minister to comment on this and remind him that even if the motion to end over-fishing was tabled by the Liberals, the Bloc Québécois did not hesitate to support this project because it was a good idea. I want to make sure that, if some good questions or ideas come from Quebec, the minister will not hesitate to support them either.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his long involvement and interest in matters having to do with the fishery. The member has had a career in advance of coming into the House dealing with the fishery and fishermen in the province of Quebec.

The member has suggested that wherever possible and wherever stocks warrant we need to have exploratory fisheries, developmental fisheries or test fisheries. I totally agree with the member and would say to him that even in areas where we have a moratorium it is important for us to have some sentinel or test fisheries under way. In addition to the scientific evidence there is no better solid base of information for what is happening than to have an experienced fishing crew in a boat on the water conducting these test fisheries.

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I totally concur with his suggestion. It is my intention to have such test fisheries occurring everywhere. The moratorium would continue. The commercial aspect of the fishery would continue. Having a few boats here and there to try to develop underutilized species or test the circumstance with respect to stocks in the moratorium is a sensible suggestion. I tell the member that the intention is to put the scientists and the fishermen shoulder to shoulder in the same boats working together. We have to close the gap of suspicion and mistrust between fishermen and scientists by having them work together.

(1550)

I want to make another point. I acknowledge with great joy and enthusiasm the quick support of the Bloc Québécois, just as we have had quick and strong support from the Reform Party.

My friend from Delta is also someone who had experience in the fishery before he came into the House. He was a fisherman for many years and knows the industry well.

I acknowledge the support of the Bloc Québécois. I acknowledge the instinctive quick reaction to support a sound policy. I tell my hon. colleagues that I look forward, notwithstanding their wishes in other areas, to spending many years working with them in the House in the interest of Canada.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Madam Speaker, I too congratulate the minister for introducing the legislation today. It is just one more step in a lot of decisions the minister has been making over the past seven months. There have been more decisions made over the past seven months than have been made over the past seven years.

I congratulate him on his very active efforts on behalf of the people of Atlantic Canada and on behalf of the people of his province. Many of his fellow citizens in Newfoundland are not going to fish for quite a number of years and some will never fish again. For Newfoundlanders I suspect that is a sentence of death. They are giving up and losing an awful lot for the sins we have committed in the past, both ourselves and people from other parts of the world.

I see by the map that the legislation covers the nose and tail of the Grand Bank. Adjacent to it is the Flemish Cap, a very important breeding ground for cod and other groundfish.

Could the minister explain why the legislation stops short of the Flemish Cap and whether he has confidence that NAFO with the agreements he secured a month and a half ago is in a position to police that area?

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is a very good question and gives me an opportunity to make a couple of things clear that are perhaps less than clear.

The legislation gives Parliament of Canada the authority to designate any class of vessel for enforcement of conservation measures. The legislation does not categorize whom we would enforce against. The legislation makes clear that any vessel fishing in a manner inconsistent with good, widely acknowledged conservation rules could be subject to action by Canada. We cite as an example the NAFO conservation rules. Any vessel from any nation fishing at variance with good conservation rules could under the authority granted in the legislation be subject to action by Canada. There are no exceptions.

The government and I have said that we will stop foreign overfishing, not foreign fishing forever but improper fishing practices. We have said we will do it by agreement where it is possible to reach agreement and by unilateral action where unilateral action is necessary.

We believe we have the means. We hope we have the will and the measures within the NAFO regime for NAFO to police itself, for NAFO to take the steps required, and for NAFO member states to police their own vessels. We are a member state of NAFO. We believe that Canada can police Canadian vessels. We believe that all other NAFO member states can and should do the same. Our expectation is that they will do the same. If one is a party to an agreement one should want to see that the agreement is lived up to fully.

(1555)

What we do not have is the capacity to make an agreement with flag of convenience vessels or with stateless vessels because they belong to no organization.

In answering the member's question let me say that the areas outlined on the map are NAFO regulatory areas. They cover straddling stocks and stocks regulated by NAFO. The area that is not outlined on the map, including the Flemish Cap, is not part of the straddling stocks that affect Canada. That is why we have not claimed any territory beyond those affected or covered by our own straddling stocks.

As I said, this is not an extension of jurisdiction; this is a conservation regime that we are introducing today.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Fisheries mentioned, the Official Opposition does support the bill. However, we would like to add a few words and say ourselves that we do support the minister's legislation.

This bill will allow the Governor in Council—for me in French it means the cabinet—to make regulations concerning straddling stocks, the classes of foreign fishing vessels to which the prohibition will apply, and the conservation and management measures with which these vessels must comply.

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These measures have also been formulated by Canada in the context of NAFO, and I think they were supported by the majority. Indeed, they did receive the support of a majority of members. I guess you cannot go against common sense, and I think that Canada is well-advised to put its Coast Guard and its national defence system, if necessary, at NAFO's disposal for surveillance and monitoring purposes over that organization's fishing area.

As I said, the Bloc Québécois supports this government initiative. As I also mentioned yesterday at a press conference, after the Minister of Fisheries made his speech, I believe this is a good compromise between diplomacy and enforcement or other monitoring measures. This legislation will empower the minister to use force but, at the same time—as we will see later on in Committee of the Whole—we will ask the minister and the cabinet to make sure that this retaliatory tool will be used with discretion. To that end, the Attorney General will have to give his consent and authorize the arrest of fishing vessels.

As I said, the Bloc Québécois believes that international agreements negotiated in the context of NAFO must be respected. Canada will now be able to take action and arrest those fishing vessels flying a flag of convenience, which are commonly called stateless vessels. According to the law of the sea—Madam Speaker, I always have a hard time with that law—a vessel which does not fly a flag is a pirate vessel. Canada will be able to arrest these vessels, even outside its territorial waters, but inside the waters which are part of NAFO's regulatory area.

(1600)

In the bill under consideration, we have the improved version of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act which was amended in the House by Bill C-8. The Bloc Québécois, at the time this bill, which is now a law, was passed, unless the other Chamber or the other place, as one should say, has not yet disposed of it, said it was concerned about the expressions regarding measures that might be taken “to disable—a vessel” and the use of “the force that is necessary.” Very soon, in Committee of the Whole, I will ask whether the Cabinet is now prepared to tell us the definition of these words, even if the Minister assures us in advance that this Act will be applied with great discrimination.

I would also like to add that Bill C-29 is also a means for the Bloc Québécois to show its desire to be a positive element in Canada. We in the Bloc Québécois know the points on which we disagree with Canadians, but our position here will let Canadians know the points on which we can agree. And this the Minister also pointed out a little while ago.

In this regard, I was given an opportunity to speak a little about sovereignty. Even the journalists asked me the question: What political gain is there for the Bloc Québécois in these

measures? There is no political gain. It is out of maturity, as people, that we say yes to measures that must be taken at the international level to protect the world heritage. And in the context of sovereignty, since I had begun to speak of it, the Bloc Québécois has made some suggestions. And when Quebec becomes sovereign, we too will be a member state able to take part in NAFO. Consequently, we would like to reassure the Minister of Fisheries that a sovereign Quebec will also comply with NAFO's management rules. It is in this sense that the Bloc Québécois is expressing its support today in the House of Commons.

As I or the Minister said, it is rare for all the parties to agree so quickly on a bill. The Minister said yesterday that it was a way for all Canadians to speak in a single voice, but as I said a moment ago, even if Quebec were sovereign, Quebec and Canada would also have spoken in a single voice in the issue at hand.

Why did the Bloc Québécois accede so quickly to the Minister's request? We did so because we are also aware of the fact that Canada has exhausted all of the diplomatic avenues at its disposal. As the Minister said, I worked in the fisheries sector for a number of years, and I know that action was taken. Many successive deputy ministers took action. There were even ambassadors who are now sitting in this House who were involved in these activities. We therefore saw what was coming.

We are pleased once again to see that the government has managed to achieve an honourable compromise in this matter. I will try to go faster because, in any event, we have made our agreement known. I will just try to go over the points in order to be very sure of the rationale behind them.

Here is another important point that I would like to raise. We realize that, while increasing the size of the area to be monitored beyond the 200-mile limit, we will still cover an area slightly smaller than the area managed by NAFO. This may require increasing marine or air surveillance. When we increase this kind of thing, it may mean increased costs as well. As these decisions are made, I would expect the minister to suggest to Cabinet that they use the tools they have, including National Defence and the Coast Guard, and at the same time try to minimize costs by using these resources efficiently. We must not forget that foreign overfishing is only one of the reasons why fish stocks have gone down. The minister also mentioned climatic conditions as a contributing factor.

(1605)

We must make sure that we have enough money left to initiate what I would call an industrial diversification strategy. The minister said that we must rebuild fish stocks, and I agree, but in fact, we are going to give nature a chance to do the job.

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A while ago, I made a few suggestions to the minister, and I think there are still some areas where the Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party can work together. We will have to consider this new approach to fisheries. Using the best selective fishing devices to catch the stocks we want to catch also means setting up land-based infrastructures to receive the catch.

If we look at the history of fisheries, first it was salt fish because there was no other way to preserve fish. With the advent of refrigeration, we started to produce frozen blocks, but now the market seems to be saturated. Considering the absence of fish from Canada, I would have expected an increase in the price of fish in the United States, our main customer, but I did not notice any increase in prices, which means there have been substitutions.

There are other countries that sell other kinds of fish, even cod, and they have moved into our markets. This means that when we start fishing again, we will have to be very creative and look to market niches such as fresh fish. These are things we can do now, because we have the requisite transportation infrastructures. We have airports in Newfoundland, the Gaspé, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, so that we can reach our markets very quickly.

I will leave a list of suggestions for the minister and his deputy ministers, and I think we should use these five years to make a start with these strategies because the \$1.9 billion that is now on the table to support the fisheries strategy is mainly income support for the fishermen, in my opinion. On this score, we have some differences of opinion with the Liberals because when we in Quebec speak of manpower training, we would prefer that this area come under provincial jurisdiction.

If the minister wants us to agree somewhat more on this issue as well, perhaps he could transfer the fisheries envelope directly to the Quebec Department of Fisheries, as this would allow us to adapt programs to the way things are done in Quebec. Exchanges of technology and know-how could be made between Canada and Quebec. It could be amusing to have a little competition in this area. I apologize for injecting a touch of humour into the proceedings, but sometimes it makes a bitter pill somewhat easier to swallow.

One final comment about the \$1.9 billion envelope. I mentioned being opened to ideas, but we do have some concerns at the present time. Perhaps I did not explain clearly a while ago the reason why we are not receptive right now to the idea of putting in place dockside reception infrastructures. Until now, vessels were specialized factory freezer-trawlers. What we need to do is set up markets at the unloading points in order to make use as quickly as possible of species classified as underutilized. They are underutilized because the volume caught is marginal. Now that cod and flounder stocks have declined, monk fish and skate tails will be very important. I wanted to

re-emphasize this point to make certain that the government listens to this idea, because we need to develop strategies geared to the industrial sector concept. This is one such example.

(1610)

In conclusion—

[*English*]

I will say in my own voice because I want all Canadians to hear me that the Bloc Québécois will support the bill. We want to be sure that all foreign vessels that want to overfish will be stopped. It does not matter if Canada has to fight under international law because we have a good reason to make that kind of case if some countries want to fight against us.

I am not the minister but the speech I made is an encouragement and if he does not do his job in the future, I will check.

[*Translation*]

For the benefit of my francophone friends, let me repeat that the Bloc Québécois supports this motion because it considers the foreign fishing now taking place to be outrageous. The minister mentioned it and the deputy ministers painted a picture of the situation for me this week. We are no longer talking about the haphazard catching of small fish. We are now dealing with deliberate attempts to catch small fish. When we speak of small fish the size of the minister's hand—we could have a minister with large hands, but that is not the case—this means that fish too small to reproduce are being caught. We can no longer tolerate this situation.

Speaking for the Bloc Québécois, I support this bill and applaud the fact that it will be passed very quickly.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I understand the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden has switched his presentation time with the member for Delta.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, yes. First of all I would like to express my appreciation to the member for Delta for allowing me to speak first. I have a plane to catch shortly and I want to say a very few brief words on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus.

First of all as the fisheries and oceans critic for the New Democratic Party I would like to inform the government that our caucus does support Bill C-29. I would also like to say that we do not just support the bill, we would also like to commend the government on the legislation tabled yesterday in the House of Commons. I would like to offer my personal congratulations to the minister for his very impassioned plea and his very articulate speech this afternoon in support of this bill and in defence of Canada and its responsibility to protect this very important national and renewable resource.

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It is high time that the fragile straddling stocks, those species which swim inside and outside the 200-mile limit in the nose and tail area of the Grand Banks, are protected from foreign vessel overfishing.

The previous government under Brian Mulroney allowed this situation to go on for far too long without acting in the best interests of the fishery and the best interests of Canada. I am very pleased to see the Liberal government taking action to protect these endangered stocks which have been very significantly depleted over the years, in particular from so-called flag of convenience plundering. It is our hope the bill will ultimately help the fishery as well as the depleted stocks.

I have spoken with fishermen and other contacts in the eastern provinces. The general consensus is that people are very pleased to see this long overdue legislation. There is some concern however about whether the legislation goes far enough since there are foreign vessels fishing off the 200-mile limit under flags such as Spain and Portugal and not just flags of convenience.

My question to the minister during the course of the review would be will the government be able to deal with these vessels as well? My sense is that these sorts of restrictions will be imposed on members of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. The minister has affirmed that this legislation will address this very important question to those people in Atlantic Canada.

(1615)

Also I hope the government will back up this legislation with the resources necessary to enforce it, in particular by having enough personnel and equipment to monitor the situation on a regular full time basis.

Having just met with members of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union from the west coast of Canada, I am aware of the history of government mismanagement of the fisheries resource on the west coast by the previous government as well.

Besides concerns regarding stock management there is a burning concern, and I would even say a raging debate, regarding the Department of Fisheries and Oceans licensing policy as witnessed recently in the roe herring fishery. Corporate boat owners, or armchair fishermen as they are called, are being allowed to rent their licences to active fishermen who pay exorbitant prices to lease the licence for a specific fishery.

The Government of Canada has not officially recognized these rental practices but at the local level DFO officials sanction them. This is a very serious situation in licensing which is destructive to the fishery industry, not to mention the loss in revenue to the government from licensing.

The point is that I hope the government will not just stop here with Bill C-29. It is our hope in the New Democratic Party that

the government will learn from this situation on the east coast and will not leave the situation on the west coast to deteriorate to the point at which it is beyond help.

We as New Democrats hope that the lesson in this terrible condition on the east coast will ensure that the west coast fishery is protected for future generations of Canadians. In summary, the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons supports this bill. We will facilitate its quick passage in this House.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the co-operation we have received from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on a variety of issues concerning the fisheries. He has been most helpful and we do appreciate it. That being said, our job is not to be a cheerleader for the minister; rather our job here is to point out what we feel are shortcomings in government legislation, if there be any. That is what we are about to do.

We clearly agree in principle with this bill and will support it. Taking action on foreign fishing is long overdue. We suggest that if this action had been taken 10 years ago we might not have had the tragedy we have on our hands now.

The bill was tabled in the House yesterday morning; I was only briefed on it late yesterday afternoon. We want to support this bill because we believe it imperative that action be taken. However it is difficult to do so entirely when we have not had time to fully investigate the consequences of the bill.

The minister has said the bill must be passed quickly because it is an emergency situation. This has been an emergency situation for years. The government did not just compose the bill last night. We could have presented constructive criticism which might have made the bill a better one if we had been brought into the process at an earlier date.

The function of Parliament is to debate issues so that the best possible solution is developed. We question whether the best possible solution has been reached with this bill. We sincerely hope this bill will achieve the desired results but we are not confident it will. This is a serious move the government is making and there will be no turning back.

In a news release yesterday DFO stated: "in February 1994 NAFO reviewed the 3NO cod stock at Canada's request. It imposed an international moratorium on this stock". The news release went on to say: "Fishing activities by vessels that carry flags of convenience and by several stateless vessels are conducted without regard for international conservation controls. Such vessels are targeting fish stocks now subject to NAFO and Canadian moratoria".

To ensure the international moratoria was adhered to, Canada, along with the European Community, Japan and Russia participated in a high level joint demarche to non-NAFO states fishing in the NAFO area requesting them to stop fishing.

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(1620)

This action had been agreed to by the participants of the September 1993 NAFO annual meeting. Meetings took place in Panama and Honduras in February with both governments and the principal suppliers of the so-called flags of convenience undertaking to address the problem on a priority basis.

The violators had agreed to act. Rather than acting unilaterally, would Canada have been better off to go back to NAFO and obtain its support for police action to enforce the conservation measures which NAFO had agreed to? We ask this because we cannot help but wonder what the consequences of enacting this legislation will be, in that we will be acting unilaterally.

Will this bill be supported by the international community? Will this bill set a precedent and therefore give licence to countries that may not be as reasonable as Canada to extend their own jurisdiction into international waters? Is giving this licence in the best interests of Canada? Will this bill be viewed by the U.S. as being in its best interests? We are curious as to what the U.S. view is of this bill. If the U.S. has a negative view, as I suggested, will it have any effect on the current negotiations under way on the west coast salmon treaty? I am concerned that the government has not fully thought through this bill and the possible consequences.

The joint news release issued yesterday by the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that the ongoing process to strengthen the high seas fisheries conservation is currently focused on two recent major developments.

One is the compliance agreement approved in November 1993 by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. This agreement requires that its parties control their vessels to prevent any activity that undermines conservation measures established by regional fisheries conservation organizations such as NAFO.

The other major development cited in the news release is the United Nations conference on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks which has been under way since 1993. It is aimed at developing new global rules to prevent high seas overfishing of the stocks concerned. It is scheduled to enter its final negotiating session in August of this year.

What the news release fails to mention is the lead role Canada played in negotiating the FAO agreement. It fails to mention the lead role Canada played in the decision to convene the United Nations conference on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. It also does not mention the lead role Canada is continuing to play to bring these critical and important negotiations to a meaningful conclusion this summer.

Will this unilateral action on Canada's part jeopardize these developments? Will this unilateral action encourage other nations to throw caution to the wind and exert territorial jurisdiction beyond the 200-mile limit?

What assurance can the minister give Canadians that the proposed legislation will be supported by the international community? The implementation of Bill C-29 is dependent on co-operation and support of the international community. Without that, it is no more than a whistle in the wind.

At the same time that the minister threatens action against foreign vessels outside the 200-mile limit, we question the level of enforcement within Canadian waters. Perhaps no action better exemplifies the government's real intentions and priorities than the actions it has taken in the last few months to conserve stocks within our own 200-mile limit.

I am thinking of yesterday's hearing of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in which we heard from fisheries observers who had been thrown out of work by the government. These observers are our first line of defence against overfishing within Canadian waters. Without experienced observers we have no way of knowing whether vessels within our waters are dumping undersized fish intentionally, catching the last few remaining juvenile cod in our waters or accidentally catching a second species that may already be overfished.

Talk about catching pirates makes good headlines. But why did the government undermine the only program with ears, eyes and teeth to conserve our fish stocks, the observer program?

(1625)

In February the government selected a firm to take over the observer program effective April 1. By the end of March it was clear to the government that the company was not able to provide the experienced certified observers, but it went ahead anyway.

The tender process had been organized such that the winning contractor would be required to use certified observers who had extensive experience in the offshore on foreign vessels. The tender required the contractor to submit a list of 30 experienced observers on April 1 and a final 20 on April 30. The winning company, Biorex, was not required to comply with these tender requirements to produce experienced observers and the results are already being felt.

The silver hake fishery is now open. The minister has authorized Cuban and other foreign vessels to undertake this fishery in our waters. Yesterday the committee heard that we have Cuban vessels in Canadian waters manned by inexperienced observers, observers who have never been involved in the silver hake fishery before but more important, who have never undertaken work on foreign vessels in an often hostile environment.

If an airport control tower were staffed by inexperienced controllers, we would know very quickly the sad results. The seas however are silent. We do not know if the Cuban vessels are taking a cod bycatch or dumping unwanted species at sea. We do know that their careless actions have led to the destruction of fish gear of Nova Scotia fishermen.

Problems have already arisen with vessels from Nova Scotia in 3-O, an area adjacent to the tail of the bank, an area specifically covered by Bill C-29. Just last week there were reports of Scotia Fundy vessels in 3-O without observers. Newfoundland vessels in the same area manned by observers were directed to leave the area because their cod bycatch was over 11 per cent, which is over twice the allowable limit.

The same reports indicated that vessels without observers appeared to have dumped their catch of undersized redfish overboard. Neighbouring ships reported sailing through three or four miles of waters covered by dead juvenile redfish.

Is it that Biorex cannot find enough observers to provide adequate coverage for Scotia Fundy vessels or is it that DFO does not consider it a priority to have observers on vessels in 3-0 where cod bycatch is often twice the allowable limit?

In an unrelated case the court in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia levied fines against two Scotia Fundy skippers in the last few weeks. The captains had dumped their cod bycatch of some 22,000 kilograms while fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There were no observers aboard the vessels.

I believe if the minister tabled in this House the coverage records and the number of days at sea over the past four years for the observer program, the records would show a declining number of sea days by observers and inadequate coverage.

This is the nuts and bolts of our conservation effort. It does not make headlines like stories of promised action against pirates by our naval frigates, but it is the story of our government and how it has failed to conserve our fish stocks.

Observers did not use expensive equipment or cost a great deal of money, but they were effective. I ask the minister to strengthen and protect a program that he knows works, a little program that works effectively to protect our dwindling ground-fish stocks.

Officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Department of Foreign Affairs have been careful to point out that Canada was not extending its jurisdiction with Bill C-29 but merely extending the protection to an endangered fishery. Despite this unilateral action Canada is still committed to bilateral and multilateral negotiations on managing fish stocks in international waters.

Government Orders

While Reform members agree in principle with the government's action, we are concerned that through a unilateral action Canada's role in the delicate ongoing multilateral negotiations through the UN and NAFO may have already been adversely affected. Also we are concerned about the implications of this action on the delicate negotiations currently under way to establish a new Pacific coast salmon treaty with the United States. Obviously the government's actions change Canada's negotiating framework in these different sets of negotiations.

While we give the government our support on this critical conservation issue, we would have preferred a multilateral approach to this uncertain unilateral action.

(1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robichaud: Madam Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to proceed immediately to the next stage of consideration of this bill.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Maheu in the chair.)

(Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

On clause 5—

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Madam Chairman, this is my first Committee of the Whole. We are talking about clause 5, on page 4, with reference to section 8.1 of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, right? There was something I wanted to know. Perhaps someone could enlighten me. When section 8.1 was amended, the Cabinet was to provide definitions in the regulations. I wanted to know what the meaning of "disable" was and how far that could go.

Do the minister and his officials have a definition ready for Cabinet now or can I get one later when it is ready?

[*English*]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Chairman, I would be glad to give an answer.

Clearly the intent of the Government of Canada is to use the least amount in the event that Canada decides to seize, arrest or inspect a vessel. We use the minimum amount of force required to conduct an inspection. In other words, it is clearly Canada's intention at every stage of the game to avoid injury or worse to any vessel on the high seas, our own or other vessels.

Government Orders

That is what is intended. We are signalling here that we want to proceed in a manner that is the most peaceful possible in the circumstance. That is what is intended by the wording in the clause.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): Thank you, Madam Chairman. I will accept that definition for the time being, but whenever something is put out in writing, I would like to get a copy.

While I have the floor, I have to say that I am unfamiliar with the procedure in committee of the whole. Would the minister or the House allow me to go back to page 2, clause 2 regarding section 5.2? I have another question on the meaning of certain words. It refers to a vessel of a prescribed class preparing to fish.

Can the minister define the expression “prepare to fish” for me, in general terms to begin with? I would also like to get any written definition his officials can provide me with, if at all possible.

[English]

The Deputy Chairman: Do we have unanimous consent to return to clause 2?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Chairman, I will refer to what is meant by section 5.2. Essentially the bill gives the government the enabling power, by amending the current Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, to act outside 200 miles in a manner consistent with how we act inside 200 miles.

(1635)

Generally when this kind of enabling legislation is proposed and passed by Parliament it gives legislation legal effect. Regulations will be published exactly as occurs with respect to any other piece of legislation. When those regulations are published they will be made public and will be available for the scrutiny of the member and all members of the fisheries standing committee.

With respect to the specific question as to what is meant by vessels of a prescribed class, it is simply a reference that allows the government to prescribe or designate a class, a type or kind of vessel we have determined is fishing in a manner inconsistent with conservation rules and therefore against which conservation measures could be taken.

For example, we could prescribe stateless vessels. Another example is that we could prescribe flags of convenience. That is all that is meant. Those regulations will be available to the member, to his party, and to the fisheries committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Madam Chairman, I have a slight problem with the expression “prepare to fish”.

[English]

What is the meaning of “to prepare to fish”? Are we to cross the sea with our gear behind us or should our gear be in the water? What is the meaning of that?

Mr. Tobin: Madam Chairman, if I am wrong, the officials will jump up, leap on me and drag me out of the House kicking and screaming to be re-educated. The purpose of those words is to make clear that in cases where we believe a vessel is fishing in a manner contrary to proper conservation rules we do not put ourselves in a position where we actually have to get the boat when it has its gear in the water.

In other words, we know a vessel is fishing an endangered species. The vessel becomes aware it is under aerial surveillance or through the means of radar it is aware that Canadian enforcement vessels are in the vicinity and pulls up its gear. We are saying that we should not set a standard whereby we can only arrest the vessel when we actually catch it with its gear in the water.

As the member knows, we are able to do aerial surveillance and to record the fishing activities of vessels. We want a clear piece of legislation so that the regulations can be published in such a way as to allow us, once we have designated a class of vessels fishing in a zone where endangered species exist, to move those vessels out of that zone and not be caught up in the details of whether or not the gear is actually up or down.

(Clause 5 agreed to.)

[Translation]

(Clauses 6 to 9 inclusively agreed to.)

[English]

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill reported.)

(1640)

Mr. Tobin moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Mahau): When shall the bill be read the third time? By unanimous consent, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Tobin moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

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

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, if I may, I simply want to thank you for the manner in which you have conducted the business of the House with respect to Bill C-29.

On behalf of the only players that do not have a voice, the fish, I deeply thank all members of the House for their expeditious passage of this important bill today.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Government Orders

[Translation]

**PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AGREEMENTS
ACT**

The House resumed from May 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, an act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of Terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address this House for the second time on Bill C-22. The privatization of Pearson Airport has one important element that I think has not yet been addressed in this House, namely pilot training.

I have the honour to have in my riding Chicoutimi CEGEP, which trains pilots. The original idea of establishing a French-language public school to train aircraft pilots comes from Canon Jean-Paul Laliberté, then director of Chicoutimi College, Germain Hallé, then director of educational services, and Pierre Rivest, then aviation inspector for the federal Department of Transport. The first 36 student pilots registered in the fall of 1968. The goal was to give francophones a place in the aeronautical community.

Some 400 to 450 airline pilots have graduated from the school since it was founded. Fifty per cent of students choose this career option while the others become bush or helicopter pilots. A quarter century later, Chicoutimi CEGEP still offers this training through the Quebec aeronautical training centre. This centre is the only public school in Quebec that trains pilots. It is the only institution in North America that gives this training in French. Among its exclusive characteristics is the fact that the courses are free.

(1645)

So, we have developed in Quebec a public education centre which provides adequate training for francophones.

The training of a pilot requires about 260 hours of flying and 900 hours of theory. It costs Quebec taxpayers some \$80,000 to train a pilot. The school has an annual budget of \$3.5 million. So, this Quebec centre built a solid reputation for itself. It has expertise in a high tech field and it has made a name for itself.

We have shown that we can train pilots in French, away from major centres and still be successful. We have proven that we can do it. We have been able to provide specialized training for these students. We have established our structure and we provide skilled pilots to the industry. It is only normal to have a return on our investment.

Let us not forget that Montreal has played a predominant role in the development of the air carrier industry. Indeed, in the early seventies, Montreal was the hub of air transportation in Canada. Today, it comes in third place, behind Toronto and Vancouver.

The globalization of aeronautics has triggered a streamlining exercise, as well as a transfer of operations from Montreal to Toronto. Between 1976 and 1984, increases in passenger traffic occurred mostly in Toronto, which registered gains of close to 45 per cent, compared to a mere two per cent for Montreal over the last nine years.

In 1981, 7.5 million passengers were processed at Dorval and Mirabel airports, compared to 14.5 million in Toronto. In 1991, passenger traffic at Dorval and Mirabel airports was 8 million, whereas it was 18.5 million in Toronto. This results in a loss of jobs for Quebec, while elsewhere in Canada there was growth until 1989.

A study by the École des hautes études commerciales in Montreal, done in the late 1980s, estimates the contribution of the Montreal airports to the gross domestic product in terms of value added for the year 1992 at \$1.3 billion, taking only the direct impact into account, and at \$2.2 billion, if indirect effects are taken into account. According to the same study, the contribution of the Montreal airports to the employment sector is also very significant. In 1992, 24,000 jobs are related to the total direct production of the Montreal airports. Adding indirect and induced jobs results in a total of 48,500 jobs. This indicates the economic importance of airport activity.

In Toronto, the addition of a runway would increase the region's income over the next 15 years by \$3.5 billion and would enrich the province by over \$9 billion. The impact on employment would also be very large. Locally, adding runways would create 3,300 jobs annually, and 3,700 additional jobs elsewhere in Ontario. This would mean, for the entire province, an increase of more than 7,000 jobs. For comparison purposes, in 1969, Air Canada had 461 pilots in Montreal and 451 in Toronto. In 1992, there were 301 pilots in Montreal and 781 in Toronto, a negative balance of 480 pilots for Quebec. This is not a narrow gap, but rather an abyss.

(1650)

In 1988, Air Canada transferred all its pilot training operations from Montreal to Toronto, which was extremely significant. As of April 1, 1993, the status of the pilot training graduates from the 1992 program was as follows: 62.5 per cent of the graduates had jobs in their field, whereas 18 per cent did not. Their annual salary was only \$24,600.

Young pilots who enter the workforce start in small regional companies known as third-level carriers and build up their flying time. We are therefore training in Quebec, and especially in my constituency, workers whom we would like to see advance

Government Orders

here, since they have the opportunity to pursue their careers with all types of carriers. The concentration of operations at Pearson to the detriment of the airports in Montreal results in pilots leaving. After investing in training, our pilots will go elsewhere and pay taxes.

In conclusion, we want Quebec pilots to have a future. The airports in Montreal, as we have seen, are regressing compared to Toronto. We have invested collectively in the training of our pilots, and we have fashioned a development tool. We should also invest in Montreal.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak again to Bill C-22, which concerns the privatization of the airport in Toronto. Pearson Airport is the largest in Canada. It employs 15,000 people and is used by 20 million passengers annually. It adds an estimated \$4 billion to the economy of the province of Ontario each year.

The government was right to cancel the contract signed by the previous Conservative government during the last election campaign. However, the real question we must ask about Bill C-22 is this: Why does the Liberal government want to pay compensation to parties who feel their rights have been violated as a result of the present government's decision to cancel the contract awarded by the previous Conservative government to privatize Pearson Airport?

In my opinion, a government has no right to consider paying compensation to individuals who took the risk of signing a controversial contract in the middle of an election campaign and who are all in good financial shape, at a time when this government is cutting or intends to cut social programs. Or else it should apply the same principle to the cancellation of the helicopter contract or to any business or individual penalized by the coming into effect of new legislation.

For instance, there is a small business in my riding to which the government might consider paying compensation. This particular business packaged cigarettes.

(1655)

Bill C-11, which was recently tabled and debated in the House, will prohibit the sale of cigarettes in packages containing fewer than 20 cigarettes. This particular business, whose headquarters are in my riding, was the only one in Quebec that manufactured packages containing five cigarettes. It will have to close down as soon as this legislation comes into effect, since it is strictly engaged in the manufacture and sales of packages of five cigarettes.

I am not saying that I am against legislation to limit tobacco sales to young people. That is not what I am saying. My point is just that all of a sudden, a business operating legally and in good

faith sees its existence jeopardized by the implementation of a new act. Yet, no compensation is provided for in this case.

This start-up company cannot afford lobbyists. Does this mean that there is a double standard with regard to financial compensation granted by the government?

Many more examples could be provided; in fact, my colleagues have mentioned several already in this debate.

It seems clear and obvious that the affluent members of this society stand to gain more from their dealings with the government than the rest of the population. While the Pearson Airport contract appeared to favour mainly Conservative Party backers, many of these also contributed to the Liberal Party of Canada fund.

The most influential lobbyists are often former high-ranking officials in the federal system. They have established excellent relationships with officials in various departments, senior officials in particular. This means they have easy access to government policy makers and can thus position themselves faster and have an advantage over other firms. Lobbyists work for the most affluent members of our society. They care very little for ordinary people and even less for the unemployed and welfare recipients. They would rather reap the benefits at the expense of the less fortunate segment of our society.

People who attend the \$1,000-a-plate dinners still organized by the old parties are often lobbyists. Who else would pay \$1,000 without hoping to gain some favour in the short term? Ordinary citizens cannot afford to attend such meetings.

Despite the change in government, it appears that nothing has really changed. Today's government seems as much in the pay of big corporations and their lobbyists as the former government.

Will they have the courage to prove otherwise by refusing to pay any compensation to those who hoped to get richer in the Pearson Airport privatization project?

The best way to change this would be to pass a law to prohibit financing of political parties by businesses or interest groups. This government should draw inspiration from the provisions of the Quebec electoral law that deal with political party financing. The hon. member for Richelieu's motion to restrict political party financing in Canada should move this government to pass a new law. The hon. member for Richelieu moved that the government legislate to give only private citizens the right to finance political parties and to limit contributions to \$5,000 a year. The main objective of this motion is to ban corporate financing, which puts political parties at the mercy of lobbyists for powerful companies that donate several thousands of dollars and expect favours in return.

The same principle applies to individuals.

(1700)

Wealthy individuals give a lot to some political parties, always for the purpose of getting something in return. The reason for such a motion as this is to make the relations between individuals and political parties more fair and equitable, because someone earning less than \$30,000 a year cannot afford to contribute \$10,000 to a political party, whereas someone else whose annual income is over \$100,000 can of course give more.

Besides, big companies which can afford to give thousands and thousands of dollars to political parties also can afford to hire lobbyists who work to get something for the money which their bosses invested in the political parties.

Values like honesty, integrity and openness should guide political and democratic life. Well, in the Pearson Airport affair, there is a glaring lack of openness. We are faced with a shady deal that is a disgrace to the democratic spirit which should guide politics in this country.

The citizens and voters who sent us here to sit in this House must wonder whose interests we really serve when they see how our governments act. Men and women vote, not banks, unions or companies. Therefore, it is time that political parties stop being at the mercy of their financial backers.

Let me give you the example of the Bloc Quebecois, which won 75 per cent of the seats in Quebec, yet only accepted contributions from individuals. The Bloc has shown to other federal political parties that the important thing is not to get corporate financing but to defend legitimate ideas. The other parties will not go bankrupt if the motion tabled by the hon. member for Richelieu is passed. In fact, it will give them an opportunity to get closer to their constituents.

One thing is certain: The House must implement measures to avoid a repeat of the Pearson Airport scandal.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question!

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Yea.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 39)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Allmand
Anderson	Arseneault
Assad	Assadourian
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bellemare	Berger
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Chrétien (Saint—Maurice)	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Comuzzi
Cowling	Crawford
Culbert	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Discepola
Dromiskiy	Duhamel
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Fewchuk	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Fry
Gaffney	Gagliano
Galloway	Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier)
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Guarmieri	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Ifody
Irwin	Jackson
Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint—Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacDonald	MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McTeague
McWhinney	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Nault
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pillitteri	Reed
Regan	Ringuette—Maltais
Robichaud	Rock
Sheridan	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Szabo	Terrana
Tobin	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Verran	Volpe
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
Young	Zed—132

Private Members' Business

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bouchard
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brien	Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Chatters
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Cummins
Dalphond—Guiral	Daviault
Debien	de Savoye
Deshaies	Dubé
Duceppe	Dumas
Duncan	Epp
Fillion	Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gilmour	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Guay
Hanger	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hayes
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Jennings	Kerpan
Lalonde	Langlois
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Ménard	Nunez
Paré	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Péloquin	Ramsay
Ringma	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	Silye
Solberg	Speaker
St-Laurent	Stinson
Strahl	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Venne
White (Fraser Valley West)	Williams—82

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Crête
Godin	Guimond
Jacob	Landry
Leroux (Shefford)	MacAulay
Manley	McKinnon
Mercier	Proud
Rompkey	Stewart (Northumberland)

[English]

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

The Speaker: It being 5.47 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur) moved that Bill C-216, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act (jury service), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member should just wait a second. I will recognize him on a point of order and I will hear him.

(1750)

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I will not take much of the time because I would like to enter into debate if possible later, if that is the ruling. I would like to raise a very important point of order. Not being well versed on how to do it, I may stray from the procedure. I would appreciate your indulgence.

What I would like to point out is this. I would like to invoke Standing Order 73(1). That standing order gives a minister of the crown the opportunity to refer a bill to a committee before second reading. What I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that it would not be right for a minister to be able to do that for a public bill presented by a private member.

I would point out that there is a parallel in the book. It may be an oversight. I would refer members to page 35, Standing Order 68(4)(a) and (b). It points out that ministers have certain authorities, according to the standing orders, and there are parallels for private members.

It says: "for a motion by a minister to prepare and bring in a bill". In the following section, it says: "motion by a member to prepare and bring in a bill". I repeat, "private member". I say to members that in Standing Order 73 that by extension of 73(1) and the parallels that I just mentioned, as a member I should have the authority, as sponsor, also to refer my bill. A minister has the authority to refer a bill to a committee that the government sponsors, a government bill.

I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that as the sponsor of a private member's bill I would have that authority. If not, then I do not think it is right for a minister to have that authority over my bill. It is very important that we get a clarification on that.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: The hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur has raised a point for invoking Standing Order 73 in relation to Bill C-216, the item standing in his name on the Order Paper for today's Private Member's Business.

Standing Order 73 states in part: "Immediately after the reading of the order of the day for the second reading of any public bill, a minister of the crown may propose a motion that the said bill be forthwith referred to a standing, special or legislative committee. The Speaker shall immediately propose the question to the House and proceedings thereon shall be subject to various conditions".

The terms of the standing order in my view are very clear. The prerogatives under Standing Order 73 are given to ministers of the crown. As such, they cannot be invoked by private members and the Chair cannot therefore accept the hon. member's argument at this time.

I would however point out to the hon. member that he does raise a very interesting point for the Chair. I would like to take at least some time to go through the precedents on this matter and come back to the House. In the meantime, I would suggest that the hon. member proceed with his private member's bill for today and I will get back to the House after further deliberation.

CONSIDERATION OF SECOND READING

(1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Arseneault: Madam Speaker, I have the honour and the pleasure to rise to present my bill to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act.

As you may know, section 14 of this Act prevents persons who are obliged to exercise their civic duty as jurors from receiving unemployment insurance benefits when they are without work.

You will no doubt agree that this is clearly unfair and that many persons find themselves between a rock and a hard place when they are obliged to perform their duty as citizens. In addition, I feel that this section runs counter to the spirit of the Unemployment Insurance Act. This Act was passed more than 50 years ago to provide all Canadians with income security and not to punish them when they are obliged to perform their duty as citizens.

[*English*]

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act to ensure that persons in temporary service as jurors are not regarded as disqualified from a benefit merely because of their participation in such an activity.

At present anyone performing their civic duty while collecting unemployment insurance benefits is penalized by the federal government for no valid or obvious reason. Anyone performing jury duty for more than two days is no longer considered eligible

Private Members' Business

for benefits since the law considers that he or she is not available for work. Although jurors are usually granted a stipend for expenses incurred while performing their duties, anyone submitting unemployment insurance claim cards to receive the difference in UI benefits will receive nothing.

As some of the hon. members may be aware, I originally introduced a bill similar to this one in the last Parliament. While similar in some respects, Bill C-216 includes a number of improvements over the earlier bill. I would like to take this opportunity to explain to the House how I was made aware of this flaw in the Unemployment Insurance Act.

When I was originally referred to this case I thought the situation was the result of a simple misunderstanding and so did the person in question. To our surprise, we both came to find out that such a regulation was in fact on the books. The best way of explaining it is to read this letter which I received a couple of years ago now from one of my constituents. It was a letter to the editor and as it happened before it was published the editor phoned me up for a comment and I thought it was a misunderstanding. But I will read parts of it.

To the Editor:

In September I experienced the luck of having been laid off after paying maximum unemployment insurance premiums for the past 25 years. In November I experienced the luck again of having been selected as a juror for the murder trial recently held in Campbellton. I clenched my teeth and resigned myself to the fact that I had a dirty job to do and might as well do it to the best of my ability.

Having never followed trial proceedings previously, I found the whole process rather interesting. The mental stress of trying to absorb nine days of testimony and summations was emotionally draining.

At the conclusion of the trial I requested and was given a letter which stated the days I had been present in court and the amount of money that I would receive from the court. I mailed this letter along with my UI card on November 27.

Needless to say, this woman was refused unemployment benefits. She goes on to say:

I am outraged to say the least. We are taxed to death by every level of government known to man. My tax money helped pay the salaries of the participants in this case, including the RCMP, the prosecution staff, the public defender, the sheriff's department, the court staff, not to mention the room and board of the prisoner. In retrospect I could have ignored the summons to appear for jury selection and I would have been fined \$50 like the dozen or so other good citizens who failed to show up. I could have requested a letter be sent to the court by a sympathetic doctor exempting me. I could have lied and said I knew someone connected with the case. I could have lied on my UI claim. Someone suggested that anyone showing up for jury selection with a rope thrown over a shoulder would probably be rejected by the defence team. However, I did none of these things. I tried to be a good citizen. But I have come to the conclusion that when dealing with big brother honesty is really not the best policy.

(1800)

That puts it in its context. To go on:

After receiving notice of this letter another problem came to my attention in other provinces whereby members of the justice system, honourable judges, recognized that there was indeed a problem with the system.

Private Members' Business

Here I want to quote from an article that appeared in the *Moncton Times*, a New Brunswick paper, referring to something that happened in Nova Scotia. The headline says: "Calls UI rule Stupid—Judge excuses potential jurors". I will read it. It is short: "A Nova Scotia Supreme Court judge—that is not a regular judge, not just a lawyer, not just an MP walking down the street making these comments. Remember it is a Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice—"excused nine people from jury duty Tuesday because they would not be able to collect unemployment benefits if the trial took more than two days. Canada Employment states that people must be available for work to qualify for payments".

Justice Nathanson said: "I think it is a stupid ruling. But who am I?". He is a Supreme Court Justice from Nova Scotia. "Who am I?". Here we have a Supreme Court Justice for Nova Scotia telling us that there is a regulation that is stupid. It is very obvious it is stupid. Someone is forced to do something. They are not available for work, they are forced to do it. It is not their own doing if they are not available for work. They are forced to do it as a good, honest citizen. It goes further than that because it goes to the root of the justice system.

I am not a legal mind. I do not have a background in the legal profession but I do know that every accused person has a right to be judged by their peers. Judges, and they have been across Canada in various provinces, have been excusing jurors who are receiving UI because they would lose their UI. They have been excusing them from their jury duty.

If an accused who is receiving UI goes to court and wants to be judged by his or her peers, odds are that there will be no one in the jury box that would be considered his or her peer. So it goes to the root of the justice system. We have to correct that. There is only one way to correct it and that is by simple amendment here.

I would ask members to throw away their prejudices if they have any. We have been told that Parliament has to be more responsive to the people. This is not Guy Arseneault's private members' bill, this is Canada's private members' bill. This is a problem with the system. I am just someone here who is trying to correct it along the way. This is part of the process.

I ask my colleagues today to look at it on an individual basis. Go back to your constituents. It has more than likely happened in every constituency in Canada. If you look hard enough that problem will be there.

Is it a cost to the system? No, because the juror who is excused is getting UI anyway. They are going to get their UI. They just do not go on jury duty anymore. I ask members to look at that.

[Translation]

I would also like to point out that some members might claim today that the justice system is a provincial responsibility.

(1805)

I say again to all the members of this Chamber that the justice system is the responsibility of every one of us. It is a personal responsibility.

[English]

If they are against this, some members are going to tell us today that the justice system is a provincial responsibility. It is not. It is everyone's responsibility. We cannot wait for another jurisdiction to correct a problem if we are aware of a problem. That is what we are here for. This is a law and a regulation here that we can change to make the system better.

[Translation]

I say to you as well that the injustices that mar the system and can be put right should be rectified by all the levels of government. In the matter at hand, it seems to me that an injustice was done and that another will be committed by our group if we do not agree with this bill. I will try not to be too biased, because I feel in all honesty that it is a good bill. Moreover, when you are biased, you risk losing people's support sometimes. I am compelled to say that if others claim it is a matter for the provinces, they are trying to shirk their own responsibilities. I think they are trying to pass their responsibilities off on others.

I would like to go back to what concerns us today and correct an injustice in the system.

[English]

I would like to inform hon. members that at this point in time I have the support of the majority of members of Parliament. I have the support of the human resources minister. I have the undertaking from the chairman of the human resources committee that it would take the bill and look at it quickly. I am not saying it would pass it. He did not say that, but it would be ready to study it.

I would ask members today to take a second look at the bill and consider sending it to committee. I leave that with the House. It is a request made by a constituent. We are here representing constituents. We have heard a lot about the justice system in the last couple of weeks from all parties.

Everyone has a concern. I have heard about the Young Offenders Act. I have concerns about that too. At the same time here is an item that can improve the system. I am waiting to see how my colleagues respond. I hope it is in a positive way.

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure my colleague from Restigouche—Chaleur right away that the official opposition will support the amendment he is proposing to the Unemployment Insurance Act. I will also support his efforts to have the Minister of Human Resources Development move as quickly as possible on an amendment of this nature.

After listening to your argument, I would like to call to mind the difference between a jury and a juror. A jury is a group of citizens legally appointed to hand down a verdict in a case brought before a court. The jury has an important responsibility, namely to settle differences in personal, delicate and often emotional cases. A jury may be called upon to hand down a verdict in a criminal case and in cases of summary offences and minor crimes such as thefts. In society, juries are considered to be the underpinnings of our judicial institutions and most of the studies carried out have confirmed that they do indeed serve a valid function.

Jurors, on the other hand, are selected at random from voter registration lists. They cannot be excused from jury duty unless they work for the National Assembly, a provincial legislature or the House of Commons or unless they suffer from a physical handicap or sensory impairment. The fact of being unemployed is not a valid reason to be excused.

(1810)

Jurors are entitled to only \$25 a day in compensation, including a midday meal, two snacks and two bus tickets. So they only get \$25 a day to perform what we admit is not only a task but also an important social and collective responsibility.

The law already forbids an employer to dismiss or penalize an employee for jury duty. However, the law does not require the employer to pay that employee—this is a matter in provincial jurisdiction. Nevertheless, unionized employees in big companies are usually paid by their employer, but employees of small companies are not, except in unusual circumstances.

What happens with the Unemployment Insurance Act, which concerns the hon. member? This Act does not exempt someone for being a juror. So if I understand Bill C-216 correctly, an unemployed person who is entitled to unemployment insurance and not available for work because of jury duty will be disqualified from collecting UI.

This is a flagrant injustice which is not in provincial jurisdiction since it is simply a matter of applying the Unemployment Insurance Act which applies to everyone.

I would add—and I think that this is the most important point, basically—that most of the time, jurors are ordinary people. They are just regular folks and these days, with so much unemployment, they are indeed likely to be without work when they are chosen.

Private Members' Business

Although this House cannot vote on your bill, I think that it should find a way through some ordinary process or institution or the minister's ability to amend his law to do justice to people who are already penalized by being unemployed. Accordingly this amendment should be approved without hesitation and without delay. I commend the hon. member for his initiative.

[English]

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Madam Speaker, first I want to say how pleased I am to take part in this debate and to give my wholehearted support to this private member's bill, C-216. I congratulate its sponsor, the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur, for bringing in the bill because I believe it to be an important one. I also congratulate him on his tenacity. He brought in a bill in the 34th Parliament on this subject and he is back at it again. It is encouraging to see a member stick to a principle and stick to a cause.

The sponsor of the bill indicated in his remarks earlier that he does not have a legal background. Nor do I, but I think I have been around long enough and have enough experience to evaluate what is justice and fairness.

(1815)

I truly believe this bill is about fairness and justice. It is about stopping government hypocrisy and all of us know government can be quite famous for hypocrisy. The bill is about attempting to stop at least some of this hypocrisy. The bill is about encouraging people to tell the truth. It is about asking and encouraging the citizens of this country to participate in the public process and to take their civic responsibilities seriously.

On the matter of fairness and justice, these people who are required under the law of the land to serve as jurors do not have a choice. They are required by law to meet their obligations. They are not unavailable for work as a result of their own choosing. This is not a matter of sloth. This is not a matter of indifference. They are required by the law of the land to serve on a jury when summoned.

However when they meet their legal obligations and serve on a jury for more than two days another government department comes along and says: "You are not available for work and as a result of that you are not going to get your UI benefits". If that is not a denial of fairness and justice, I do not know what is.

On the matter of government hypocrisy, government should not be allowed to speak out of both sides of its mouth. The government cannot say: "It is your responsibility and we are going to make it mandatory under the law. It is mandatory for you to serve on a jury, but by golly if you do serve on a jury for more than two days you are not going to get your UI benefits". That is a classic example of hypocrisy. It is a classic example of government speaking out of both sides of its mouth. Government cannot be allowed to do that. It cannot have it both ways.

Private Members' Business

The matter of encouraging people to tell the truth, my Lord, have we not all been encouraged from the cradle to tell the truth? Yet the situation here is that if you tell the truth it is going to cost you. It is going to cost the loss of UI benefits.

Therefore it does not surprise me that the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur tells a story about a woman who is tempted to come up with little white lies so she can avoid this unemployment insurance ruling and receive her benefits. In that particular letter cited by the hon. member the woman talked about faking illness or coming up with some other trumped up story, some cock and bull story so she would not miss her benefits.

I do not think we want that. We want laws of the land, policies and regulations of government that promote telling the truth. Certainly we do not want policies promoting lies, even little white lies.

It is the same thing about encouraging people to take their civic responsibilities seriously. We want that. We want people to get involved in democracy and in their communities. We should not be putting blocks and impediments in their way. We should be making it easier for them to take part, but this silly regulation does exactly the opposite.

(1820)

A constituent in my riding of Winnipeg St. James by the name of Jamie Murray has gone through this. Last February she found herself summoned to jury duty. She served only three days. She was not in the situation of some jurors in which they have had to serve not days, but weeks and perhaps months.

I was speaking to a colleague of mine from the London, Ontario area today. She told me about one of her constituents who was on UI and got involved in a trial that lasted not eight days and not eight weeks, but eight months. That is a pretty extreme case but it can happen as well.

Getting back to Jamie Murray, she served on a jury for three days. She told the truth and the unemployment insurance people said: "Sorry, you are not going to get your benefits for those three days". She pointed out: "If I had served only two days I would not have been denied my benefits. So why not strike a deal? Give me the benefits for two days"—she is a very reasonable woman—"Give me the benefits for the first two days because that is what you would have done if the trial had lasted only two days and I will absorb the expenses for the third day". The civil service being what it is and how it is charged in its duties could not do that and she was denied all three days of benefits.

This regulation is wrong. We as parliamentarians and politicians simply have to show Canadians more understanding. It is not just a case of compassion. It is a matter of showing some understanding of the situation they find themselves in. They are following their obligations by serving on juries and then they are

smacked, not because of their choosing but because of their unavailability for work.

I understand that ministers, especially the Minister for Human Resources Development, are in favour of this. I hope this goes to committee. When unanimous consent is asked for I hope members on both sides of the House will find it in their hearts to at least allow this bill to go to committee so that more questions can be asked and more information can be garnered. Surely this issue is compelling enough that we should allow it to be examined in detail in committee.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Madam Speaker, the purpose of this private member's bill is to change the rules of the unemployment insurance program to allow claimants to collect UI benefits while they are on jury duty. That is the intent.

The guidelines used by claims adjudicators in unemployment insurance state: "As a general rule a UI claimant who is on jury duty is not considered to be available for work during a trial. The unemployment insurance plan was not designed to provide compensation for lost wages in such circumstances".

The guidelines also state that a person serving as a juror may not be disqualified from receiving benefits if the jury duty is only for one or two days. Rare exceptions have also been made for those jurors or claimants who can prove that they would be released from their obligations and report for work within 24 hours.

The policy experts at unemployment insurance comment that the problem is not with the UI rules on availability but rather the poor compensation provided for jurors. That is what the people at UI are saying and the Reform Party agrees. It is not a problem with the UI rules, it is a problem with compensation for jurors. That is the problem that needs to be addressed in this.

(1825)

The Reform Party supports the return of unemployment insurance to its original function: an employer-employee funded and administered program to provide temporary income in the event of unexpected job loss. This has been our policy since 1988.

If the employers and the employees who pay for the UI program had a say in how their money was spent, I do not think they would agree to provide benefits to claimants while they are serving on a jury.

It does not seem reasonable to compromise fundamental insurance principles regarding availability for work in order to provide additional compensation to UI claimants who serve as jurors.

The law is simple. If UI claimants are serving on a jury they are not available for work. If they are not available for work they are not entitled to unemployment insurance. For years now fundamental insurance principles have been compromised so that unemployment insurance is now seen more like a form of welfare than a form of insurance.

Private Members' Business

Unemployment insurance is not a right. It is an insurable program that workers are entitled to, provided they qualify and meet certain obligations. One of the obligations they must meet is that they are ready, able and willing to work immediately.

If we can compromise our principles of availability to allow jurors to collect, then who is the next group deserving of special treatment and special status? Who next would claim that right?

The UI program has to be returned to a true insurance program. We have to keep our focus in this regard. In order to do this all of the special programs, exemptions and exceptions including the discriminatory elements such as variable entrance requirements and regionally extended benefits, have to be eliminated.

This private member's bill would take us in the opposite direction to where the Reform Party wants to take unemployment insurance. This is the main reason why we cannot support the bill.

While this is our main reason it is not the only reason. If this bill were to be adopted, even the principle of equality is jeopardized. Let me explain. An employed person is expected to take time off work for jury duty and often they are not compensated for their lost pay if they have a job. How would a worker feel sitting with a person on a jury knowing that he was losing money to do his public duty and a UI claimant that was sitting next to him was getting paid by the government to do the same job? He would not regard that as being fair.

The hon. member raises the point that often employers pay their employees while they are serving on a jury and that it is unfair to the UI claimant to have his benefits cut off. If this change were allowed to pass and employers found out that their employees could get UI benefits for serving on a jury, how long would it take before employers started laying off workers who have to serve on juries? It opens up the system to abuse. This would undoubtedly lead to an increase in UI claims for people serving of juries and therefore an increase in costs to the UI program which is already \$6 billion in debt. It is something to consider.

While there may be a problem of fair compensation to all persons who serve on a jury regardless of their employment status, we do not believe that tinkering with the Unemployment Insurance Act will solve it. We propose a simpler solution. Judges should use their discretion to excuse UI claimants from jury duty as has been done in the past.

The hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur even provided me with a copy of an article from the *Moncton Times-Transcript* which reported on a judge in Sydney, Nova Scotia who did just that. Maybe that is what has to be done in this circumstance.

In February 1991 a Supreme Court justice excused nine UI claimants from jury duty. I appreciate very much the information that the hon. member has given me in regard to this. It has provided valuable background information.

This leads me to my final point. It is obvious that jurors are not fairly compensated. On this point my hon. friend and I agree. Everyone else involved in the trial is fairly compensated: the judge, the lawyers, the court workers, the police and the janitor who cleans the courtroom floor. It is inexcusable that jurors are asked to work for days, weeks and in some cases even months for \$15 or \$20 a day.

(1830)

The Reform Party was founded on the principles of equality, fairness and common sense and we find that this is an area that needs to be addressed. To this end I pledge to my hon. friend that I will start work immediately to research the issue of fair compensation for jurors whether they be employed, unemployed, on unemployment insurance or not. If the appropriate action can be taken at the federal level I will ensure that a private member's bill is introduced.

I hope my hon. friend will agree to work co-operatively with me and my staff in this initiative.

In summary, the intent of this bill may be very good but the justice system needs fixing. We do not need to tinker with the unemployment insurance system. We need to fix it where it is broke. That is why I feel this is the approach we need to follow. I offer that I will work together with the rest of my colleagues on this. I feel that if we can work together on this maybe we can get somewhere.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, in the time that remains, I think members on both sides of the House have fairly addressed the main principles here. I want to touch on just two.

First is the reference to jury service as a mode of employment. I do not see jury service as being a job, as being an employment. It is the fulfilment of a civic duty. People who go into jury service do not do it to earn income. There is not much income there. As was said by the last speaker, \$10 or \$20 per day in some places might pay for the parking tab.

In addition the remarks pertaining to compensation for jurors relate to areas of provincial jurisdiction. These amounts are settled by the governments in each province. It is a tenfold problem if you want to look at it that way.

The mover of this bill has referred to the remarks of a judge, I think it was in Nova Scotia, who referred to the ruling at the Unemployment Insurance Commission as a stupid ruling. I think, as the previous speaker has pointed out, that the ruling was correct. However, I feel that the rule is stupid.

Private Members' Business

I think the rule in the Unemployment Insurance Act interferes with the ability of the citizen who happens to be unemployed at the time in fulfilling their civic obligation. That is an important civic obligation. It is such a civic obligation that governments do not even bother paying very much for the fulfilment of that obligation. It is basically come and get in here and serve as a juror because you are obligated to do it as a citizen.

As has been pointed out by the mover of the bill, that circumstance with the unemployment insurance rules causes the person called to do jury duty to perhaps lie or refuse to serve when they should be ready, able and willing to serve. I think that is a misfit in the UI rules.

As the previous speaker has pointed out you can fix it on either end. The mover of the bill believes, and I agree with him, that the quickest route to a solution is to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act as suggested.

The mover of this bill has had success in this House previously in relation to the same bill. If I am not mistaken the matter was referred to the committee by the House after an hour's debate in private members' hour at some point in the last Parliament. As he said, the minister, the parliamentary secretary, the chair of the House human resources committee and others all on the government side and other members on both sides of the House have agreed it is an issue that should be addressed and can be rectified.

I chair the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business. When the matter came before the committee all of the members conceded that it was an area that could and should be addressed. For other reasons the bill was not included in the votable bills.

I want to indicate that I have always been and I continue to be supportive of this legislative amendment. Perhaps it is too small an amendment for the minister who is working on huge projects now involving UI and the social safety net to include as a single legislative item. But it is acknowledged by virtually everyone to be an issue which should be rectified.

As a result, it would be a shame if as an item of private members' business this matter could not be dealt with at the standing committee. It would be easy to get it there, but as you know, Madam Speaker, and as all members know, at this point in the process it would require unanimous consent of the House. It would be second reading and adoption in principle. I intend to ask the House for that now. I think all members have heard the arguments lying behind the bill and I hope they will accept it.

I am torn between moving adoption of the bill at second reading and referral to a committee or simply asking members to agree unanimously that the subject matter be referred to the human resources committee.

Since I am still standing, maybe I will move the former and perhaps, Madam Speaker, there might be a disposition in the House to adopt the bill at second reading and refer it to the human resources committee. If that were not the case, perhaps I might be allowed to continue with my remarks for another 20 or 30 seconds to wrap up.

I would put the motion now. I would ask that the motion as now placed before the House be moved and ask Madam Speaker to ascertain whether or not there is unanimous consent to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): It being 6.38 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.38 p.m.)

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(Title agreed to.)	4222
(Bill reported.)	4222
Motion for concurrence agreed to.	4222
Motion for third reading	4222
(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)	4222

Pearson International Airport Agreements Act

Bill C-22. Consideration resumed of motion for second reading	4223
Mr. Fillion	4223
Mr. Dubé	4224
Motion agreed to on division: Yeas, 132; nays, 82	4225
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)	4226

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Unemployment Insurance Act

Bill C-216. Motion for second reading	4226
Mr. Arseneault	4226

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker	4226
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Consideration of second reading

Mrs. Lalonde	4228
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Mr. Harvard	4229
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	4230
Mr. Lee	4231
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)	4232