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Monday, June 13, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 13, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-207, an act to amend the Auditor General Act (reports), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted upon.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie) moved:

That Bill C-207, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing line 10, on page 1, with the following:

“under section 8(1), at least three”.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I am wondering whether the mover of the motion is in fact here today and, if not, whether we can address this matter. I believe a negotiation was discussed and, before making a decision about this matter, we could settle that question.

Mr. Bélisle: Madam Speaker, Bill C-207, tabled for first reading on February 1, 1994 by the member for Ottawa-Vanier, provides in clause 1 that the Auditor General shall report at least annually to the House of Commons. This bill also provides, in clause 4, that the Auditor General may report to the House of Commons on a study of any matter undertaken for the purposes of this act upon completion of the study.

After second reading, the public accounts committee considered this bill. The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board moved in the public accounts committee the following amendments, which were carried on division by the committee.

The Auditor General shall report annually to the House of Commons and may make, in addition to any special report made under subsection 8(1), not more than three additional reports in any year to the House of Commons. That was the main amendment moved in the public accounts committee by the parliamentary secretary.

Where the additional reports are concerned, the Auditor General shall send written notice to the Speaker of the House of Commons of the subject matter of the report the Auditor General proposes to make under subsection (1). Then, again according to an amendment moved by the parliamentary secretary, the additional report shall be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Commons on the expiration of 30 days after the notice is sent or any longer period specified in the notice.

(1110)

A third amendment was also moved, to subsection 8(1), concerning the presentation of a special report. It was worded as follows:

8.(1) The Auditor General may make a special report to the House of Commons on any matter of pressing importance or urgency that, in the opinion of the Auditor General, should be reported immediately.

That clause 3 was replaced by the following:

8.(1) The Auditor General may make a special report to the House of Commons on any matter of pressing importance or urgency that, in the opinion of the Auditor General, should not be deferred until the presentation of the next report under subsection 7(1).

This amendment was moved in the public accounts committee by the parliamentary secretary.

Since the present act, which is 17 years old, has existed, subsection 8(1) concerning special reports has never been used by an Auditor General.

As well, in his testimony before the public accounts committee on May 26, 1994, the Auditor General stated: “An amendment to allow the office to table, say, four times a year would enable me to do what I would intend to do anyway. There are few issues that cannot wait a month or two for reporting, and in those cases there is always subsection 8(1) of the current act for use in real emergencies”. In fact, that section has never been used in the 17 years of the acts existence.

Why not simplify this entire system, as proposed in the amendment by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, and add to the annual report, which will continue to be tabled, the possibility of not more than three additional reports?

Private Members' Business

I have already stated in the House that the request by the member for Ottawa–Vanier during Question Period on January 20, 1994 to allow the Auditor General to increase the frequency of that person's reports was the 16th such request since July 1980; there has been a 17th in the meantime. It is time that we took action on this bill.

The federal debt, combined with that of the provinces, has now reached the critical level of 91 per cent of Canada's GDP. Furthermore, according to economist John Richards, the author of a study published by the C. D. Howe Institute, the measures announced by the Liberal government to reduce the deficit will probably fail. In Mr. Richards' opinion, it is highly probable that the present program to fight the deficit will not even achieve the most modest objectives contained in the Liberals' red book.

In the present situation of indebtedness, since we have reached a critical point and have a program to fight the deficit that is worse than shaky, why not give the Auditor General more elbow room and promote a more flexible and workable way for that person to publish work and take action?

Why put the number of reports by the Auditor General in a strait-jacket of one annual report, to which in the long term no more than three additional reports would be added?

In order to give the Auditor General more room to manoeuvre and more latitude to take action, I move the amendment tabled this morning, that is:

That clause 1 of Bill C-207 be amended by striking out lines 4 to 11 on page 1 and substituting the following therefor: The Auditor General shall report annually to the House of Commons and may make, in addition to any special report made under subsection 8(1), at least three additional reports in any year to the House of Commons.

By means of this amendment, the Auditor General could publish at least three additional reports, indeed four, five, or even more. The Auditor General could still publish the annual report, to which could be added three or more additional reports, depending on the situation.

This amendment would avoid pointless and tedious proceedings to amend the act two or three years from now to allow for more additional reports, if the Auditor General considered that appropriate, and would be in the spirit of the initial bill tabled by the member for Ottawa–Vanier, which did not put a ceiling on the number of reports by the Auditor General.

That member's bill specifies only a minimum of reports each year; the amendment moved by the parliamentary secretary puts a ceiling of three additional reports in addition to the annual report; and the amendment I am moving today is in agreement with the bill tabled by the member for Ottawa–Vanier: a minimum of three additional reports, and thus a broader base, in addition to the annual report, which would still be published.

(1115)

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I am going to comment very briefly on this amendment requiring the Auditor General of Canada to report at least three times in addition to his annual report.

We considered such a provision when the bill was drafted, and we rejected it at that time because, in my opinion, the Auditor General should be left free to act. It should be his decision when to table a report. There should not be a minimum of three reports imposed on him.

What will happen if, for completely extra-parliamentary reasons, for factors entirely outside his activities as auditor, an election is called? It is easy to see that it would be impossible for him to table the three minimum reports plus an annual report in that year. I am puzzled that the Bloc Québécois is absolutely determined to impose three additional reports on the Auditor General, over and above his annual report.

The original idea behind Bill C-207 was to make possible greater transparency, greater freedom of action, and, what is more, greater accountability to the people of Canada with respect to the public accounts that are approved by this House.

I do not see why the Auditor General should be forced to prepare a minimum of three additional reports. I would have preferred that we stick to the original bill, which left him the freedom to decide when, how and why he would report, and did not impose a minimum of three extra reports.

I cannot support this amendment.

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Madam Speaker, I support the amendment of the hon. member for La Prairie to Bill C-207, under which clause 1 of the bill would be amended to enable the Auditor General to make at least three supplementary reports a year.

By allowing the Auditor General to report more than once a year we would be giving him greater latitude, and that is something we heartily support. The wording of the amendment sets a minimum.

It is not restrictive. It says the Auditor General will be able to present at least three supplementary reports. He could present more than that, but there will be a floor. I do not think it would be wise to introduce this kind of change and set a limit on the number of supplementary reports.

The Auditor General's strength is his credibility. Giving him latitude is also giving him the room to carry out his mandate fully.

Changing from one report a year to several is a response to a long felt need. The proposed amendment to section 7 of the Auditor General Act has been recommended four times by the public accounts committee and once by the Senate finance committee. The Auditor General would like to see this change.

With reports at regular intervals, information will be split up and will reach us in a shorter time, which will obviously result in savings.

The Auditor General will be able to report to the House of Commons as soon as he has finished an in-depth audit of a department or a federal body, instead of waiting until he tables his annual report. Parliamentarians will thus be able to have access to information faster, and act more promptly.

(1120)

The amendment gives plenty of leeway, and the necessary flexibility, to the Auditor General. Why opt for a ceiling? Where does this distrust come from? Why give with the right hand and take away with the left?

If it is felt that the Auditor General needs to produce more than one annual report a year, which seems to be an accepted fact, why restrict him to producing no more than three additional reports?

Moreover, the idea of regular reports reflects a trend that we can see in other countries: Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand. They have all adopted the idea. We are not abandoning a sacrosanct standard and striking out on our own.

The Auditor General's 1993 annual report has over 700 pages. If he reported at regular intervals all the information would be brought out over the course of a year and not just at the end of the year. That would be more efficient, more effective and more transparent. His auditing activities show how public money is being used, which meets a vital need. There can be no half measures in transparency.

Everyone is in favour of virtue, but when the time comes to act they get lukewarm and propose to limit the number of supplementary reports. This is backing and filling. Since 1980 there have been many attempts to amend the Auditor General Act but none of them has succeeded.

It seems to be difficult to go from words to action and give the Auditor General the latitude he needs. We are clearly running into resistance here. Apparent supporters of the idea say one thing but make a point of setting limits to what they call transparency. There is no room here for petty politicking. The

Private Members' Business

Auditor General is the government's watchdog, and he must not be muzzled.

The Bloc Québécois defines the Auditor General's role positively. There is no question of imposing limits on him: we want to give him the manoeuvring room he needs to carry on his activities.

The bill tabled by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier originally provided in its clause 1 that the Auditor General could table at least one report, whereas the text we now have before us stipulates that he can prepare not more than three supplementary reports a year. Limits are being introduced, things are being restricted. After they make their resounding statements of principle, put the Grits through the mangle and their real intentions gush out.

The Auditor General ensures probity in the management of public moneys. He is apolitical. In today's context, participating in the passage of measures that might make it possible to save money is not something to dismiss lightly.

The Office of the Auditor General does audits, and we would benefit from having the findings in a shorter time. The wording of the amendment is designed to achieve this by providing for additional reports. The Auditor General already has the power to make special reports to the House.

(1125)

Section 8(1) reads as follows:

The Auditor General may make a special report to the House of Commons on any matter of pressing importance or urgency that, in his opinion, should not be deferred until the presentation of his annual report.

However, since 1977, he has never invoked that section. The member for Ottawa—Vanier wanted to soften the original rule. In its place, he proposes the present wording which sets requirements too high, so high in fact that one wonders if they will ever be satisfied since the auditor has never used this prerogative in 17 years.

We submit that the requirements of managing a modern state call for a new way of doing things which allows for greater visibility. The auditor needs more leeway in the performance of his duties. For one or two weeks after he reports to Parliament, everyone focuses on the complexity of the task, on the visibility of his work. Then, it is back to oblivion for another year.

He must—and arguments favour more frequent reporting—be given the opportunity to make more than one yearly report. To achieve this, we will have to use general wording.

[English]

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to address the House on this bill to amend the Auditor General Act. I have followed the discussion with interest on the question of when and how the Auditor General reports to Parliament.

Private Members' Business

[*Translation*]

Since 1980, the public accounts committee and the Auditor General have repeatedly recommended that the Auditor General Act be amended to allow more frequent reporting to Parliament. Such recommendations were made in 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1993.

[*English*]

Both the former Auditor General, Mr. Kenneth Dye, and the current Auditor General, Mr. Denis Desautels, have supported initiatives to amend the Auditor General Act to allow them to report results of individual audits at their completion.

Both Auditors General have examined the merits of completion date reporting. They have noted that more frequent reporting would lead to a more even workload within the office of the Auditor General. This would lead to improved efficiencies. However there has been no estimate of the magnitude of these efficiencies.

The primary benefit for supporting change to allow the Auditor General to report more frequently would be to enable Parliament and the public accounts committee to discuss the findings of the Auditor General on a more timely basis.

This would imply that corrective action could be taken sooner and that Parliament would be in a better position to influence that action. These are indisputable goals. However, it must be clear that we are not referring here to the timely reporting of very urgent issues.

Section 8 of the current Auditor General Act already allows him to report at any time to the House of Commons on any matter of pressing importance or urgency that in his opinion should not be deferred until the presentation of the annual report.

[*Translation*]

This section allows the Auditor General to make a timely report to Parliament on any pressing matter. Yet, no Auditor General has never done so. Why is that?

[*English*]

Another reason advanced for changing the current act is that more frequent reporting will help the public accounts committee to do a better job. The committee will be able to hold department and agency officials more accountable to Parliament and the Canadian taxpayers.

For instance it will be more likely that public service employees called as witnesses before the public accounts committee will be the same ones involved at the time of the Auditor General's audit. In the past this was not always the case. Again this is an admirable goal which members should support.

Anything we can do to improve the results of this important committee should be seriously considered.

However the most important question we must ask ourselves today is what will be the impact of this bill on the effectiveness of the office of the Auditor General?

(1130)

The Auditor General is effective because of his independence and the credibility that results from that independence. We would not want to support changes to the act that would put the Auditor General's independence at risk.

The Auditor General recognizes the importance of his independence. It is a key component of his office's mission statement. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada conducts independent audits and examinations that provide objective information, advice and assurance to Parliament. We promote accountability and best practices in government operations.

The importance and the necessity of the work of the Auditor General and the public accounts committee is not a question for debate. It is how we can make the best use of these important tools that is the issue.

In the past when the issue of completion dates reporting was discussed in the House, it was noted quite correctly that the findings of the Auditor General have become more positive in recent years. The Auditor General has been reporting in his annual follow-up chapter that progress has been made in solving problems reported in earlier reports. Improvements in departmental management are being made and reported by the Auditor General.

Reporting audit findings closer to the completion date of the audit will result in early reports to Parliament, but this alone will not solve the timeliness problem.

[*Translation*]

The very nature of the auditing process is a partial explanation. Complete auditing within a department can in fact take up to two years. I know the Auditor General is working on a solution.

[*English*]

It should be remembered as well that audit findings are discussed with the managers responsible as they are being developed. Issues are addressed by government managers on a priority basis as they are identified by the auditee. Corrective action plans are generally developed well before the tabling of the Auditor General's report to Parliament.

I believe that the Auditor General would be happy to report that all the problems have been solved. In one of his first reports he noted: "Accordingly, the greatest professional satisfaction for me and for my colleagues in the office will not be the disclosure of error, waste and loss, but rather the evidence that management has corrected unsatisfactory situations".

Mechanisms are in place within the government to address observations made by the Auditor General. Furthermore, as I commented earlier, provisions already exist in the Auditor General Act that empower the Auditor General to report to Parliament on an urgent basis at any time.

This act is a very important piece of legislation. It is critical to the accountability process that takes place between the government and Parliament and the Canadian public. However, it is an act that is viewed as being very successful. Canadian taxpayers are happy that they have an independent and effective watchdog on their side.

I have another concern relating to the proposed amendments to the current act. I am concerned that the Auditor General could come to be used as a short term investigator asked by House committees and others to respond to the partisan controversies of the day. Pressures to agree to investigate concerns of this nature could place an unbearable workload on his office. This additional workload could put completion of his extensive statutory workload in jeopardy.

In summary, I would like to emphasize that we should be careful when amending the Auditor General Act. We should ensure that we have all the facts on the table. We should know all the consequences, both the positive and the negative.

In conclusion, the amendment proposed here at report stage is an inappropriate one. It calls essentially for mandatory quarterly reports rather than a more reasonable approach of one report annually with the option for additional reports as audits are completed.

The Auditor General opposes this sort of additional duty because it forces him to have a new report three more times a year, whether he is ready or not. The amendment has the potential to be an absurd waste, given the fluctuations of the audit cycle.

[Translation]

The Auditor General is opposed to the amendment because he does not feel he should be required to report until he is ready. He must have the choice, as given him by the act.

[English]

I urge all members to oppose this amendment.

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 amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Government Orders

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion negatived.)

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): As there is no further business before the House we will suspend until 12 o'clock noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.37 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12.02 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION ACT

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) moved that Bill C-35, an act to establish the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, there is something very strange going on this morning. For those viewers watching on television I was almost getting a standing ovation from my friends on the Reform side. I thank them for their generous and very thoughtful co-operation today. I thank my hon. friend, the Reform Party critic, for moving to second reading and showing some degree of flexibility to move to committee of the whole. I understand the Bloc Quebecois does not want to do so. I hope to find out the reasons why.

The bill before the House of Commons today is relatively short, straightforward and important. It is only six pages long and 22 paragraphs in all.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Its purpose is obvious: the creation of a Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

[English]

The House will recall that one of the commitments of our party during the campaign was that the business of immigration had no business being in the department of public security.

(1205)

That was a move made in the dying moments of a very desperate government that Canadians saw fit to replace. That is not the issue that caused consternation for the Prime Minister, this minister and all caucus members of the Liberal Party of Canada. It was that the move of putting immigration in public security was very directly a slap or a black eye for all those people who came to the country as immigrants and who are now for the most part full members of the Canadian family through their Canadian citizenship. Placing that in public security very much undermined the real story that immigration has played in the country.

Sure there are cases of abuse. Sure there are individuals who claim refugee status, are not refugees and are everything but. Yes, there are those who make multiple claims on our welfare systems. We have tried to address that through memorandums of understanding with municipalities across the country. We have those problems, but show me a department of government that does not have abuse problems. Show me a UI system that is not abused. Show me a CPP disability system that is not abused. Show me a welfare system that is not abused.

We are saying that regrettably there is abuse of various programs in society. Regrettably that is part of human nature not only in our country but the world over. Our system, when stacked up against other systems of the world, certainly speaks to a sense of clarity and a sense of integrity.

We are also dealing with a minority of cases that should not be translated to being the majority story. That is why I was personally offended, as was my party, by immigration being placed in public security. The Prime Minister made a commitment that if he were elected Prime Minister that would cease and desist. True to his word when he appointed his cabinet, lo and behold there was a new department called citizenship and immigration.

We have been carrying out our work notwithstanding the bill that gives legal authority to that department is before the House of Commons today. It enacts changes announced by the Prime Minister on November 4, 1993 and delivers on the principles contained in the red book.

The bill organizes the citizenship and immigration mandate and promotion functions of the government in a coherent and common sense fashion. More important, the legislation before

Parliament today modernizes and streamlines government to meet the needs of Canadians and to give us the tools needed to deal effectively with myriad complex citizenship and immigration issues.

The Prime Minister spoke on many occasions. Our party spoke very eloquently and indicated that immigration was a building tool for our country. It is a building tool that through the years has helped to build a modern day Canada. Immigration will also be part of our future. It is up to us how to shape it, how to mould it and how to help it address current day phenomena which are different from yesteryears. Nonetheless immigration is an absolutely vital part of the lifeblood of our country.

There is also citizenship. Sometimes citizenship gets lost because immigration is so overpowering or is such an emotional issue that the media clearly focus on it as opposed to citizenship issues. I might also add that oftentimes the media deal with immigration in a negative way. It is always the negative issue that screams the loudest on page 1 or on the first story on our TV sets or radios. Sometimes that is how news is covered. Negative stuff sells but if members of Parliament are interested, as we all should be, about talking fact and not fiction then there is also the need to distinguish for the public that the culmination of all those negative cases does not define the essence of the issue.

(1210)

Sometimes immigration gets covered the way media covers aeroplanes. Media covers aeroplanes only when they do not land. They do not talk about the ones that land safely. They ask why they should. We feel bad when aeroplanes do not land. We send our sympathies to the families of the victims of aeroplane crashes. We try to learn from aeroplane mishaps. We try to figure out whether it was pilot error or whether it was a malfunctioning in one of the motors, engines, wings or whatnot. We study and we try to prevent another one from happening.

We in the House of Commons do not go around and across the country as members of Parliament alarming our fellow Canadians because of an unfortunate accident. We know better. Ninety-nine per cent of aeroplanes land at airports seven days a week, 24 hours a day. In fact the statistics show that travelling in aeroplanes is safer than driving cars. Members are responsible to learn from those mistakes, but we have to be responsible about reflecting the total picture, the context of those aeroplane mishaps and landings.

I ask my fellow colleagues: Ought we not do the same when we talk about the emotional issue of immigration? I think we should and it is important that we do so. It is not to say that we forget about the negative cases or that we do not learn from the negative cases.

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I will be presenting legislation before we rise for the summer on individual cases that have been in our newspapers which have driven Canadians, the opposition and this minister right up the wall and around the bend. We will learn from them and make amendments so that we make the laws as foolproof as possible from those who want to play with or abuse our laws.

Citizenship is also part of my mandate. I would suggest to hon. members that citizenship can help us with immigration. It is a natural fit when the Prime Minister put citizenship and immigration together. As immigrants come into the country and are facilitated, the processes of citizenship and making them Canadian take over. When a person becomes a Canadian citizen the process of him or her being an immigrant is over.

Immigration is a process that at some point stops and citizenship takes over and we are all Canadian citizens. Our origins may be different. I may have been born in Argentina of Canadian parents. Yet I went through the same school system as the children of hon. members today. We speak English or French; maybe badly but none the less we speak it. We have played hockey on the same streets. We have been in trouble for throwing snowballs at our schoolmates. My cultural origin is different. Am I a better Canadian than anybody else here? Absolutely not. Am I any worse? The same answer.

Citizenship helps us with immigration. It also helps us with immigration because in the offer to the standing committee to help us shape a new Citizenship Act one thing I asked it to do was to look into the responsibilities, obligations and values of Canadian citizenship.

Why is that? There are two reasons. In the debate about immigration we talk often about rights: the rights to make an application, the rights of family class reunification, the right to have rights defended under a refugee application, and the right of an individual to receive humanitarian and compassionate consideration on which I have had requests from members of the Chamber on a daily basis. It is rights dominated and that is legitimate. There is a place for rights to be defended and to be respected.

When we talk about citizenship the debate should shift quite properly and focus on the responsibilities and obligations of new citizens in Canada to defend, promote and stand on guard for Canada. What are the values of Canadianism that we want our new immigrants to embrace, cherish and respect? While we value the cultural identity that formulated my father's first 35 years, we are a mature country when we say: "Mr. Marchi, we are not asking you to leave your cultural vestiges at the door because who you were for 30 years no one can remove". Not even the former Soviet Union with all its armies and tanks was able to suppress that. The moment the Soviet Union came apart we saw a flourishing of culturalism, ethnicity and religion. Where was that during the time of the Soviet empire? It was still alive because that is who people are.

(1215)

We are a mature country when we have embodied an official policy of multiculturalism which was certainly there before it was crystallized by Mr. Trudeau in 1971.

There is also a complementary feature. When one comes to Canada one also needs to embrace that which is Canadian and which has given essence to our life in Canada.

Why is it that in the oath that we ask our citizens to swear that it speaks to beholding to the duties of citizenship and nowhere in our Citizenship Act or anywhere else do we define duties, nowhere do we define obligations, nowhere do we talk about responsibilities. Some people wonder why certain things are not done.

I would like to be in a position to move a bill in this Chamber in the fall, after the committee has had its study and reported, to talk about those things because those are unifying. It would not only help the newcomer to understand what Canadian society is about but it would also be a reassurance to all other Canadians that people are coming here and becoming Canadians are prepared as immigrants in the past to build, sacrifice, pay taxes, bleed when they get hurt and to rejoice in Canadian victories whatever those victories are.

I would like to be in a position as minister or those who may follow me to be able not only to give out a citizenship certificate or congratulations or for members of Parliament to do that when they go to the citizenship ceremonies, but also to give out a charter of responsibilities and obligations.

Let us strive to talk about that even though it is difficult. How long of a charter are we going to have if we start talking about responsibilities and obligations? We have to obviously capture the essence. What are the values of Canadian citizenship or Canadianism? It is pretty difficult and sometimes it can be a divisive debate. I think on the whole it will be a unifying debate, particularly at a time when our country in the next number of months will be seeing and hearing a lot about the negatives of this country and how federalism does not work and how people are in a funk.

When we eliminate those day to day problems and talk about Canadian citizenship as I have on radio shows, TV shows and in forums with Canadians, it is an absolutely positive and uplifting force. Nobody, despite the problems that we have in all of our backyards, is prepared to give up on Canadian citizenship. Everybody recognizes that it is the best passport in the world. Everybody recognizes that one of the difficulties in immigration is the fact that literally millions of people want to come to this country.

Government Orders

The biggest difficulty I have is dealing with members of Parliament who come to me and say: "Why has your department turned this individual down?", "We have a point system" or "Why was he refused his visitor visa?" The demand to come here is a reflection of how much of a good thing we have got going in this country and that we need to protect and promote it.

We cannot be home to everyone. That is why we need to be selective in our immigration program. Being selective is a natural part of the immigration program. We select to further the interest of our country. We also need to have a sense of compassion so that our immigration policy can be a lifeline to our brothers and sisters who are deserving and in search of simply a life that you and I have either adopted or that has come automatically to us. The responsibilities of this new department include immigration applications, level setting, federal-provincial relations in terms of immigration programs, visas, refugees, enforcement, settlement, citizenship applications and citizenship promotion. We are changing how we do citizenship in this country.

(1220)

No longer are we going to have citizenship court judges because the system imposed on them was a financial and time burden that simply was not worth it anymore. There were 10,000 people in the backlog every month who wanted to become citizens.

In my area of metropolitan Toronto it took almost two and a half years in some cases from the time they got an application until the time they swore an oath. That simply was not good enough. One court judge had to do a one on one. We were approving 95 per cent of all applicants. I concluded that for saying yes to 95 per cent it was simply taking too much time and costing too much money. Therefore, we have moved to an administrative process, a classroom style, a written test rather than a one on one verbal. We are also adding standards and consistency across the board.

We are not losing sight of the ceremony of citizenship which all of us as members of Parliament have or hopefully will participate in because it is such a moving tribute and it helps us with immigration. Why? Because we are not going to hide citizenship in a court. We are going to move it to a school auditorium.

When I was in the riding of the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, we did it in a school auditorium in front of the kids, the parents, the rate payer groups, police representatives and RCMP and the local media. Neighbours of these citizens came out to see them.

The bogey persons as we now call them because we have to be politically correct, and bogey persons is a name that people sometimes attach to those who are the newcomers, who are they? Are they like us? Who are these people? There they were

on a stage raising their right hand and swearing allegiance to our country. What a beautiful testimony it was. It is our Prime Minister and our government that is pushing those out to the community not as the exception but as the rule.

Citizenship court judges for the most part did a wonderful job. No one is blaming them personally at all. It was the system that needed changing. Instead of citizenship court judges we are now going to ask the Order of Canada recipients on a non-remunerative basis to officiate. That adds greater elegance and profile.

For instance on the opening day of Citizenship Week we held a special court at the University of Toronto. We had three Order of Canada recipients on stage with us: Knowlton Nash, June Callwood and Maureen Forrester. Those three were better known than the minister, never mind the citizenship court judges. Everybody lived with Knowlton Nash for 30 or 40 years in this country. For years the last thing people thought about before they went to sleep was Knowlton Nash. All of a sudden Knowlton Nash is there on the stage celebrating citizenship. Does it not add greater testimony to the importance of citizenship when we include Order of Canada recipients across the country? I think it does.

On July 1 it will be the first such occasion in Halifax in ceremonies on pier 21, our answer to Ellis Island, our Statue of Liberty. Millions of immigrants came through pier 21. Second and third generation sons and daughters go back when they visit Nova Scotia. They go to see pier 21 that their dad or mom talked about. That is our Statue of Liberty. There will be a citizenship ceremony at pier 21. There will also be one in Toronto. For the first time Order of Canada recipients will be officiating to let people know that the changes we made are happening.

Citizenship and immigration go hand in hand. That is why the new department will take a lead role in strengthening those values, obligations and responsibilities that I talked about.

This month marks the 125th anniversary of our immigration programming. Interestingly enough this is not the first time that Parliament has engaged in a debate on the establishment of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Almost 45 years ago today Prime Minister St. Laurent constituted a Department of Citizenship and Immigration. With today's legislation we are in fact learning from our history and from our past where we have to obtain lessons and inspiration from time to time.

(1225)

I would like to quote briefly what M. J. Coldwell said in the House of Commons 45 years ago. He was not a Liberal, but he was acknowledged as one of the great parliamentarians of his day. On November 26, 1949 Mr. Coldwell said, and I quote: "In my view the placing of matters related to immigration and citizenship under one Department of Citizenship and Immigration is a wise move. It is essential that people who come here as immigrants should be not only welcome, but also taught to value

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the citizenship of this country and to have an appreciation of what Canada means to them”.

Like Mr. Coldwell, I am a citizen of Canada and an immigrant and I am deeply aware of the value and importance of the words immigrant and citizen.

All members of Parliament recognize the need to overhaul our immigration policies and to consider the long term role of immigration in that nation building exercise. All of us recognize the need to improve the immigration system. No one has the virtue of a monopoly of concern. There are things that work very well. There are other things that clearly need modification.

That is one of the reasons we are doing a 10-year policy framework. I do not believe that immigration is done annually. I do not believe that immigration is done on a short term basis. Immigration to our country of Canada is a long term investment. You do not do settlement in six months. You do not take an individual and pretend that after six or 12 months that person is integrated. We know that it is more generational. We know that at the intake the country to a certain degree pays for the integration of those individuals. As the individual goes on in Canada, he repays that loan to the point that he is repaying more than the initial loan. That is then the net benefit to our country economically, socially and culturally.

That is why we are also doing a broader consultation. We cannot do a 10-year policy without inviting Canadians into the tent. The days when setting levels and not including municipalities are over. Why should we include municipalities in the business of immigration? We see mayors and reeves and councillors complaining that they never knew the levels for the next five years. They did not know the numbers more or less that would be coming to their city or town and, therefore, they could not plan a resource accordingly.

I went last week to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities meeting in Winnipeg. I delivered a strong commitment of this Prime Minister and government that those days are over. No one forced us to do this, but what makes sense is what is worth doing.

Why should boards of education be on the outside looking in when they too complain that they never knew the number of kids born of immigrants or refugees that came into the school system. They could not plan. They could not resource. So we have included boards of education in our consultations.

Unions and labour movements, the same thing, people who have a concern with our unemployed membership. How many people are you bringing in? What skills are you bringing in? Are you looking for scales in construction or high tech or the new economy? What is the mix?

For the first time in many years we are enlarging the tent and giving a place for people to stand. We have opened up the consultations in an unprecedented way since 1976, when another

minister of immigration offered the green paper and basically built the amendments, very significant amendments, as a result of consulting Canadians. We hope to do the same. That process is under way.

We are also including the public. We have five town hall meetings planned across the country. My first one tonight is in Montreal. We have eight study circles on specific issues across the country.

(1230)

We have 10 working groups working with Canadians on 10 specific issues which 50 Canadians from all walks of life identified as key issues.

All the members of Parliament in this Chamber were given from my office a kit that would try to provide information and direction on how members of Parliament could provide leadership in their own ridings, touching base with Canadians, NGO groups, lawyers and advocates. When we opened it up, sure we took risks. Do you not think it is a risk opening anything up? Of course it is because when you open yourself up you open yourself up to a spectrum of issues and this is not a public relations exercise.

If we are looking just for public relations then I am suicidal because the consultations that took place in October are the fullest that can be had, an election.

We have a majority government. We have a red book that we are following so we could have said that we are on course. We are not doing this for public relations gimmickry because no one makes us do this. We want to do this because we believe it is the right thing. If we allow things to fester on the outside and ignore them, my attitude is that those festers grow and become bigger and unmanageable, and we have a problem when things are left unattended.

The objective of government is to provide good government, leadership and inspiration and you do that by tackling problems or concerns or fears that Canadians have and we work them out.

I believe by being open we can work them out. I have people coming to me saying I should close the doors: “Why are the doors being kept open when my Johnny and my Susie cannot find a job? What gives you the right to keep those doors open?”.

I do not want to ask Mrs. Smith or Mr. Jones to get out of my way—“I have my mind made up. It is a red book. We are a majority government. Who are you?”. I am not going to be that kind of a minister because we cannot afford that luxury. Mr. Smith or Mrs. Smith, talking about Johnny or Susie, love Johnny or Susie as much as we love our own kids. If we heard one thing in the campaign it was that parents had it pretty good in Canada but they were really concerned about their kids, their future, their education, their career. If I heard one thing in my riding it was: “Mr. Marchi, we have had a pretty good shake but I am

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worried that my kids get the same kind of good shake I have and I fear for them now, given the state of the economy”.

Mrs. Smith or Mr. Jones has that concern out of love for their kids. I love my Adrianna as much as they love their Johnny and Susie and so I will never say to those parents “get out of my way”.

I also will not do something that some people are prepared to do and embrace Mrs. Smith and say “You are absolutely right. If your Johnny or Susie does not have a job obviously I have to close the doors”.

I am not going to be that minister either, as much as I care for that Canadian. What I prefer to do as a minister, which speaks to this consultation, is say: “Mrs. Smith, Mr. Jones, it is time that you and I sit down. It is time that you and I looked at the facts. It is time that you and I break some bread, look at the facts, ask ourselves if immigrants will help Johnny and Susie or hurt them, if economics is the discussion of the day”.

I can ask a Mrs. Smith and a Mr. Jones in Toronto if they think immigrants cost us jobs or create jobs. Toronto has been in an economic funk for a few years and I believe a lot of people would say they would cost us jobs today because of how that economy has dealt a fatal blow almost to the metropolitan area and that we are now coming out of it.

I am realistic to note that the feeling would be immigrants can cost us jobs. If I were to go to Vancouver, the part of the country the Secretary of State for International Affairs comes from, and ask a Canadian if they think immigrants create or cost us jobs, they would say undoubtedly: “Mr. Marchi, are you kidding me? Look at Vancouver. Look at British Columbia”.

(1235)

One of the reasons we do not know the *r* word, “recession” is because of immigrants, of business investment from the Asia-Pacific, for instance.

One Canadian in Vancouver, one Canadian in Toronto, they cannot both be right. There has to be one general answer and I know it depends on how many in a certain class we have, where they go and what their skills are. That is why it is not only the numbers game. Is it the 250,000 or is it the 150,000 the Reform Party talks about? I would like to see where it is also going to be prepared to cut. It does not tell me that.

However, let us put that argument to the side because the other numbers game is within the categories: what is the number of family versus independent versus refugee versus student visa versus all the other categories?

Both those Canadians cannot be wrong or right generically. I hope to sit down and find that common cause and common ground with Mrs. Smith. I believe that on the whole, immigrants create economic activity, whether it is because they buy a product and lead a recovery through consumership which we have not yet seen in this country—until we do we will not see a full economic recovery—whether it is because of the dollars they bring into this country through their savings, whether it is the entrepreneurs who create a business.

I believe that at the end of the day, and most studies will confirm this—we need to do more work on it—on the big picture immigration creates economic activity. If we can break bread on some common ground, maybe we will put to rest the popular wisdom that every time one gets into an economic downturn one needs to close the doors to immigration.

Maybe we can also do with that popular wisdom what they did with those who suggested that the popular wisdom was that the world was flat. If one thought it was round, they thought of taking that person away somewhere. It was clear that it was flat because one could look way out there and of course earth fell at the end of the last apartment building at the end of the highway. One can not even begin to think that the world is round when we are walking nicely and smoothly on a flat piece of green carpet in the House of Commons.

Popular wisdom was wrong there. We have a lot of popular wisdoms that do not build countries. Popular wisdoms do not build countries. They do not give momentums to countries. They do not create values. We know that and that is the exercise.

I believe that if you sit down with Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jones, they are fair minded. They are tolerant. This country is not less tolerant. Look over the course of 25 years where they measure unemployment and immigration. Sure there are ups and downs. Take the average. Do not point to me the worst case. Do not be the media on the negative cases.

I will admit that tolerance is down during an economic recession but then I will ask members to look where it is when we are having an economic boom. If members want me to look at one, they are going to have to look at the other. Then we will have to take an average and then we will say where the tolerance level is for Canadians.

I strongly believe that Canadians are fair minded and tolerant. They want to be presented with the facts. They do not like abuse nor should they. We should not be tolerant with people who have no business being here but we should not take that out on the entire policy. I believe in that tolerance.

I have speaking notes that my officials put together that I will not read because I tried to cover the essence of this department.

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I will end on a very personal note. Maybe I should not do it but I will do it anyway. I fought a nomination battle in 1984 that was the toughest battle that some of us go through. We had it Monday night at seven and we ended up on Tuesday morning at 3.30 a.m. on the third ballot. We then went to our favourite Italian banquet hall, Tony's ballroom, to celebrate until six in the morning. I went home and showered and went looking for a campaign office because Liberals were still fighting Liberals because their Liberal candidate had decided three days into the campaign not to seek office.

We were all in a tiff—the Conservatives that year as we know—and some of us survived, but it was a tough campaign. I felt so pumped up as we all do after a nomination that I went into the toughest part of my riding, the Conservative end of town, in the south end.

(1240)

I took my wife and we went door knocking right after we found a campaign office. I knocked on my very first door and a 60-year old gentleman came out and said: "Yes, what can I do for you?". I said: "Hi, I am Sergio Marchi and I am your Liberal candidate. I just wanted to say hello and hopefully capture your confidence in this election". He said: "What is your name?". I said: "Sergio Marchi". He said: "What kind of a name is that?". I said: "It is a Canadian name. My parents are Canadian and I am a Canadian so I guess that makes it a Canadian name". He said: "Don't give me that. What is the background of your name?". I said: "I was born in Argentina. My parents are Italian born and we came here in 1959". He said: "Kid, my parents have been dead 25 years and if they thought I would vote for an Italian MP they would turn over in their graves".

I looked at my wife and my wife thought I was nuts, but we both thought without saying it, "this is our first door and this is the response. We have to go through this for a campaign".

Being a stubborn Canadian of Italian background, rather than doing what each of our campaigns tells us to do—when you meet someone like that keep moving, do not waste time—I stayed there.

I stood there and said: "Who are you going to vote for?". He said: "None of your business". I said: "You are absolutely right, but I have lost your vote so what does it matter?". He said: "I am going to vote Conservative". I said: "Do you know who your Conservative candidate is?". He said no. I said: "Do you want me to tell you?". He said sure. I said: "His name is Frank DiGiorgio". He looked at me and said: "You think you're kind of a smart ass, don't you?". I said: "No, sir, I am telling you the truth". He said: "For the first time in my life I am voting Socialist". I said: "Do you know who your Socialist NDP candidate is?". He said no. I said: "I'll tell you". He said "I don't want to know". I said: "I don't care, I am going to tell you anyway. His name is Bruno Pasquantonio. Sir, you cannot get

any more Italian than that. So unless you want to vote Communism or unless you don't want to vote give me five minutes".

He invited my wife and me in for tea and I made a second mistake. Any campaign says not to have a tea or coffee or a glass of wine, keep moving. I went inside and we spent 10 minutes at our first door.

The beauty of this story was, and it is a true story, when we moved on to the next door there was a sign on that gentleman's lawn that said "Elect Sergio Marchi, Liberal, York West". It was not that he took a Liberal sign. The essence of that first door for me is the story of our department today, that once he had seen that I did not have thorns or horns in my head, that he felt I went to the local school, that I spoke English, that I was capable of mixing it with the best and not being any worse or any better, that the boogie persons came down, he said: "Put a sign on my lawn".

That is the debate and the discussion I want to have with Mrs. Smith or Mr. Jones because if I would have went to the second door I would have spoke ill of that first person who came out and offended me. However, we stayed there and the two of us chatted. He had up my lawn sign. That is the Canadian way. That is tolerance. You would not have thought it initially, but it was.

That is the essence of doing the consultations the way we are going to do them. Citizenship and immigration is a natural and it has worked for the country. None of us believes that nation building will stop at the end of this parliamentary day. Nation building is an ongoing march and an ongoing exercise and immigration is one of those tools to shape and mould a better Canada for all of us. That is why it gives me great privilege and honour this morning to move the acceptance of this bill at second reading.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to join the debate on Bill C-35, establishing a Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

(1245)

This bill also amends a number of acts: The Access to Information Act, the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Act, the Employment and Immigration Commission Act, the Financial Administration Act, the Immigration Act, the Department of National Health and Welfare Act, the Privacy Act, the Public Service Compensation Act and the Salaries Act.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, it is a fairly complex piece of administrative legislation. The minister has just told us that it was his decision to transfer immigration from the former Department of Public Security to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. The original switch was made arbitrarily by the Conservative Party in June 1993. We in the Bloc attacked that original Conservative decision, because it associated immigration and immigrants with criminal acts probably consti-

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tuting attacks on the security of the state. We strongly opposed the decision by former Prime Minister Kim Campbell.

In light of the far-reaching re-organization by the new Liberal government, and of the bill's complexity, we would have preferred the government, and in particular the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to provide us with a detailed document explaining the Bill.

We will vote against the bill at second reading, because it contains certain clauses that we cannot accept. For example, clause 4 provides that "the powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction relating"—and I want to stress that word "relating"—"to citizenship and immigration".

This strikes us as too broad and too vague a provision. We would like the Minister's area of jurisdiction to be defined clearly and precisely. In any event, we want to avoid abuse of these powers by the Minister, and duplication of work done by other departments and government agencies.

Above all we want the minister to respect scrupulously the scope of the provinces' jurisdiction over immigration. We have already criticized the minister's intrusion into an area of Quebec jurisdiction, the orientation and training centres for immigrants. We will never permit the minister to interfere in education, which is exclusively a provincial responsibility.

Another major objection to this bill is found in clause 5, which specifies as follows: "The Minister, with the approval of the Governor in Council, may enter into agreements with any province, group of provinces or any agency thereof"—and I stress the word agency—"or with any foreign government or international organization, for the purpose of facilitating the formulation, coordination and implementation of policies and programs for which the Minister is responsible".

We do not agree that the word "agency" should be included in the Act. It is dangerous. The federal government must negotiate and sign agreements with the provincial governments responsible for these agencies. Using a word like that, the federal government could short-circuit the authority of the provinces, something we find unacceptable.

(1250)

Another clause we cannot accept in its present form is clause 10, amending section 4 of the Multiculturalism and Citizenship Act; this clause reads as follows:

The powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction relating to multiculturalism and Canadian identity.

As well, clause 11 adds the function of promoting the understanding of Canadian identity. This provision does not exist in the legislation now in force. Why does the government want to

add it now, if not to block the rise of the sovereignist movement in Quebec? Furthermore, the respective responsibilities that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Department of Canadian Heritage will have are not clearly delineated.

Madam Speaker, you are not unaware that Canadian unity is a subject that profoundly divides Quebec and English Canada, the government and the opposition. Why does the government want to include this controversial provision in a bill whose sole objective should be to provide a legal structure for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration?

We shall vote against this bill on second reading, and we want it to be referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration for consideration.

I take this opportunity to criticize the minister, once again, for launching his show on Canadian identity at a time when the Bloc Québécois has elected two-thirds of MPs from Quebec, on the eve of a provincial election that the Parti québécois will win, and on the eve of a referendum to be held in 1995.

It is clear that the government organized these hasty and premature consultations on citizenship with the sole objective of blocking the battle by the people of Quebec. The review of the Citizenship Act was not in any sense a priority, either of the government party or of the opposition parties. A resolution to that effect and discussion at a recent convention of the Liberal Party of Canada held in Ottawa in May 1994 raised no interest among the delegates.

The minister should on the other hand concern himself with the solution to concrete, more immediate and pressing problems such as the backlog of more than 220,000 requests made by permanent residents who often have to wait several years before getting their citizenship and Canadian passport.

We also denounce the minister's intention to close the Citizenship Office on Saint-Denis Street, at the corner of Beaubien Street, in Montréal, and his decision to transfer and centralize visa functions in Ontario and Alberta.

In addition to citizenship, the new department is also responsible for immigration, a matter of shared jurisdiction between the federal government and the provinces ever since Confederation, in 1867, pursuant to section 95 of the British North America Act.

(1255)

Canada, then a country of 3 million inhabitants, adopted its first immigration act in 1869. On June 25, we will be commemorating, as the minister said earlier, the 125th anniversary of this first act and of the first Canadian programs in this area.

I would like to pay tribute, here, to the 12 million newcomers who have since arrived in Canada. Together with the First Nations and the two founding nations, they have built this country. They continue to arrive from all parts of the world to

participate and contribute to Canada's and Québec's economic, political, cultural and social development.

As an immigrant myself for the last 20 years and as critic for the Bloc Québécois in matters of citizenship and immigration, I want them to know that my party and myself greatly value their precious contribution to the building of this country.

We believe jurisdiction in immigration matters should belong exclusively to Québec. Québec must be able to exercise all powers in this area in order to maintain its demographic weight and its survival as a distinct society and as the only French-speaking state in North America. Québec has always claimed this jurisdiction and you know, Madam Speaker, that today it has its own department, the *ministère des Relations internationales, des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration*.

Québec has made progress, but insufficient progress compared to what is at stake. Since 1971, Canada and Québec have signed several agreements on immigration. In 1971, the Cloutier-Lang agreements were signed; in 1975, the Bienvenue-Andras agreements.

The third and most important is the Couture-Cullen agreement which was signed in 1978 under the Parti québécois government. The agreement signed in February 1991 by ministers McDougall and Gagnon-Tremblay increases and clarifies Québec's powers in the field of immigration. According to that agreement, Québec has the right to select the independent immigrants who wish to settle in the province.

Apart from selecting immigrants, Québec looks after their integration and determines the immigration levels for the province. The francization of immigrants is the responsibility of the COFIs.

According to this agreement, Canada remains responsible for national standards and objectives concerning immigration, the admission of immigrants and the control of visitors related to criminality, health and security as well as the administrative handling of requests and the physical admission at the various entry points.

Québec is therefore exclusively responsible for the selection, reception and integration of immigrants destined for the province. As for the immigration levels, the federal government must, before April 30 of each year, inform Québec of the options under study concerning future levels of immigration by category of immigrants.

For its part, Québec must, before June 30 of each year, that is in a couple of weeks, inform Canada of the number of immigrants, also by category, which it expects to admit in the year or years to come.

I might add that the Immigration Act requires the minister to consult the provinces on demographic needs, labour-market issues and regional distribution.

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(1300)

One very important aspect of this agreement is the formal commitment on the part of the federal government to withdraw from reception services, linguistic and cultural integration, counselling and placement programs for immigrants.

The Government of Canada provides fair compensation to Quebec in respect of such services. The province was awarded financial compensation as follows: \$75 million for 1991-92; \$82 million for 1992-93; \$85 million for 1993-94 and \$90 million for 1994-95. Any subsequent compensation levels will correspond to the basic amount of \$90 million and will increase to keep pace with overall federal expenditures.

Getting back to my historical narrative, with an eye to industrializing the country and opening up the West, Canada recruited a vast pool of foreign labourers, primarily Chinese peasants. The Rockies were breached and East and West were united by the railway. This migration movement which lasted until World War II involved solely the Northern Hemisphere. Immigrants were British, Americans, Finns, Italians, Russians, Germans, Ukrainians, Jews, French and Polish.

However, following World War II, decolonization and communication advances gave rise to new migratory flows, and these are likely to increase in the coming years.

In 1990, the United Nations Population Fund warned that the global population would increase by one billion during the decade of the nineties.

Most of this increase would occur in developing countries where the birth rates were highest. Many of those seeking to immigrate favour the more prosperous, less populated countries. Canada and Quebec rank high on their list because of their resources and wide open spaces.

Canada and especially Quebec are interested in taking in a considerable number of immigrants because of their low birth rates. Moreover, we also lose a part of our population to emigration. It is estimated that emigration levels represent one quarter of immigration levels. For example, during the 1980s, more people emigrated to Italy from Canada than vice versa.

Under the McDougall and Gagnon-Tremblay agreement, Quebec can receive a number of immigrant proportional to its demographic load, plus 5 per cent. This means that in theory, Quebec could receive 30 per cent of all immigrants admitted to Canada.

In fact, Quebec received 47,532 of the foreign nationals admitted to Canada in 1992, that is to say approximately 19.2 per cent, which is roughly equivalent to the average observed over the past five years, which was 19.1 per cent.

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This debate on Bill C-35 leads us to take a brief look at this government service, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which is seeking to legalize its organization but has in fact already moved beyond the preliminary stage. And what we have before us is not very encouraging.

(1305)

Because of timid, ambiguous and inconsistent policies, we cannot find out where the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is going. He favours never-ending consultations and takes forever to make decisions. He enjoyed a period of grace, but it is over. He had raised some hope after the questionable, inefficient and at times inhuman management of the Conservatives. Today, his inconsistent policies are widely criticized, in particular by immigration lawyers, refugee advocacy groups, ethnic groups, government officials, and so on. You will probably find that out this evening in Montreal.

He has made public two reports he had commissioned himself, namely the Hathaway report and the Davis-Waldman report. Clear and specific recommendations were made, but the minister does not know what to do with them. He suspends deportations, but does not say what will happen to the 10,000 refugee status claimants whose applications were turned down by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

My office has received numerous inquiries on this subject and officials know as little as we do. Meanwhile, asylum seekers are left in limbo. Which files will be reviewed? By whom? When? Under what circumstances? No one knows.

Another example of inconsistency is this announcement made by the minister to the effect that potential refugees may be submitted to a lie detector test to prevent fraud, which is illegal as far as we are concerned. What a ridiculous idea!

The minister and immigration authorities sometimes show deep ignorance of the extremely dangerous political situation in some countries that refugee claimants come from and occasionally they show a lack of compassion as well. For example, take this case of a pregnant young woman who was deported on February 23, given sedatives without her consent and returned to her country of origin, Zaire, which is devastated by an insidious civil war. I said to the minister and I repeat: "Such a serious case deserves an independent inquiry because such behaviour is unworthy of a civilized society". Why does the minister refuse to order such an inquiry?

There is another area where mistrust is systematic. More and more people who do not have passports are required to go to the consulate or embassy of their country to get one, even though they are already recognized as refugees. You know, if a refugee has to go to the consulate or embassy of his home country, his life could be in danger, and especially the lives and safety of his family still in the home country.

Furthermore, I ask the minister to refer any new appointment of IRB commissioners to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. So far, this committee has reviewed no appointment, despite allegations of patronage in some cases.

Finally, I wish to denounce the minister's decision to hold consultations outside Parliament on immigration levels and policies for the next five years, at a cost of over \$1 million.

(1310)

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration should be responsible for these consultations, which are a priority for the Official Opposition and for public opinion in Canada and Quebec. All parties are represented on the committee—the government party, the Official Opposition and the Reform Party. This is not the case on the various working groups set up by the minister, from which the Bloc Québécois is totally absent. It is not democratic to hold these consultations without the opposition being present.

For all these reasons, we will vote against Bill C-35.

[English]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, let me preface my remarks by saying I support the consolidation of the functions of immigration and citizenship within the new ministry of citizenship and immigration. It is a logical combination and needed to be done. I am glad it has been done with such expediency providing the hon. member from the Bloc here a follow through, at least not with objections but rather support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish my hon. colleague, the soon-to-be official Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the very best. This portfolio needs a lot of support and I realize it is a difficult position. It requires extreme wisdom, caution and concern. The department deals with more than just dollars and cents. It deals with people's lives. At the same time we must also realize that this department, along with all other departments in the government, must examine their financial commitment and the way money is spent.

As opposition members we must bring to the attention of the department of immigration the requirement to examine all its expenditures and do its share in reducing the massive debt and deficit that the country faces. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is also required to balance the needs of Canada with our international commitments, that portion of the hundreds of millions or so of migrants in the world that are seeking a place in Canada.

Canada has a long tradition of humanitarianism when it comes to immigration. We have a legacy that is unique to just a few nations on earth of being built almost entirely by succeeding waves of immigrants. That legacy has become etched into Canada's collective conscience. It has become part of our self-image as Canadians.

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However, the present day manifestation of a legacy of immigration in Canada is now in a precarious position. The majority of Canadians, while being thankful for our immigrant past and while still treasuring Canada's tolerance toward newcomers, are mystified at the direction the immigration policy has gone in the last 10 years or so.

They see present day immigration patterns no longer as a boon but are concerned about what is happening. That is a problem to which our new immigration and citizenship minister must pay very careful attention. Any government that ignores the wishes of the majority of the population for significant policy change is staring grave political danger in the face.

While I congratulate the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on his post and on behalf of Canadians wish him the best of luck I am saddened to report that some of the policies of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration have gone awry. Canada had grave problems with immigration policy six months ago and those problems are even greater today.

Six months ago concern was expressed that Canada was accepting too many immigrants. That is a frank statement I know. It is a statement that will send many stakeholders, as they are called in modern bureaucratic parlance, into a tizzy. It is a fact. Today there are but three major immigrant-accepting countries in the world: Canada, Australia, and the United States.

(1315)

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is fond of talking about immigration targets in percentages, so let us do that. The United States and Australia both take in yearly about .4 per cent of their population as immigrants. This year, as this government frequently points out, Canada will accept 1 per cent of its population as immigrants. That is .25 times the number of immigrants per capita as the next closest immigrant accepting nation on earth, 2.5 times as many immigrants yearly.

The Reform Party on the other hand thinks that Canada should accept about 150,000 immigrants yearly. For this modest proposal my colleague, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, accuses us of being inflammatory and anti-immigrant. Getting back to percentages, 150,000 immigrants per year represents about .55 per cent of the population.

Therefore, if the policies of the Reform Party were enacted Canada would still be accepting by a wide margin more immigrants than any other nation on earth, even with that adjustment. For that we have sometimes been accused of being anti-immigrant and inflammatory. Who is being inflammatory: the Reform Party for suggesting that Canada continue to be the leading immigrant-accepting nation on earth, or the minister for

suggesting that we are anti-immigrant or that we have an anti-immigrant bias? The answer is more than clear.

The Canadian people have been told that immigration targets were based on facts, that there was data which suggested the necessity of accepting one-quarter of a million immigrants per year. Well, we are still waiting. Where are those facts? They have not been presented in this House and they have not been presented to the Canadian people.

The closest the minister has come to presenting a factual basis for his government's claim that Canada needs to accept the equivalent of the population of Calgary in the next three years has been to dredge up a 1991 report by the Economic Council of Canada, despite the fact that on page 32 of the report in its conclusion it calls this year for a target of about 175,000 immigrants. It also says that 250,000 immigrants per year or more would not be advisable because Canada would have difficulty integrating that level. Some facts, and that is all this minister has been able to produce.

I am happy to say there are facts out there. If this minister is short on empirical data, I would be more than happy to help him with some of the numbers. Here are some facts: Since 1979 the performance of immigrants in the economy has dropped dramatically. It used to be that immigrants had a higher level of education and higher levels of income than Canadians. Well, no more. The sheer number of immigrants means that immigrants are having more and more difficulty adapting socially and economically than they ever did before.

The minister talks about the need to replenish an aging population. The facts are these: Canada's population is not in decline. In fact it is growing and will continue to grow even without immigration until the year 2026, when our population will top 30 million. That is without immigration. From then it would go into a slow decline before levelling off some 100 years from now at between 18 to 20 million. The fact is that even the demographic review says if Canada really wants to increase its population, the way to go about doing that is to create incentives to fertility, in other words within and not through immigration.

The minister has spoken about an aging population and about a demographic shift that can only be cured through immigration. Again the facts are quite different. All the demographic research to date makes it very clear that immigration will never solve the aging of the population. Why? Because immigrants are getting older too. Research has already clearly proven that the average age of immigrants coming into our country is about four years younger than the average age of the Canadian born or the Canadian population.

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(1320)

Research indicates that trying to make the population younger with immigrants will not solve the impending social security crunch. The only way to do that is to raise the productivity of all Canadians, to raise everyone's standard of living in order to replenish and enrich the tax base. Right now, countries like the United Kingdom and Sweden are where Canada will be in the future in terms of an aging population. They have solved the social security crunch not with immigrants but through sensible economic measures.

Those are just some of the facts. Unfortunately, I do not believe this minister has the facts to support the government's contention that 250,000 immigrants are vital to Canada. Why 250,000? Why are these incredibly high immigration numbers maintained? I do not know and I do not believe the Canadian people know. Does the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration have the answer? If he does, where is the data to support it?

When this year's immigration targets were released in February the question remained about selection and the selection process. The government said that of the 250,000 immigrants to Canada this year 44 per cent would be immigrants from the independent class. Those are immigrants who have been selected according to their skills, their education and their ability to quickly adjust to Canada and to make a positive contribution.

The government's own numbers reveal that there is not 44 per cent from the independent class, not 40 per cent, not 30 per cent. In fact only 15 per cent of a quarter of a million immigrants this year will be from the independent class. The minister arrived at this questionable 40 per cent figure by adding to the number of independent immigrants their spouses, their children and their parents, all brought in under the family reunification program.

That is not what we should expect from this department which indicates the minister and the department wants to make the immigration program more transparent for Canadians. Let us lay it all out on the table the way it really should be.

The Reform Party wants to bring some sense back into the refugee system. Canada should be proud of its record of accepting immigrants. Over the past few years no other nation on earth has accepted as many refugees as Canada on a percentage basis of our population. However, our refugee determination system is out of control. We are now accepting as refugees about 70 per cent of all claimants who make it to our shores. The world-wide average for refugee acceptance is 14 per cent. We will accept about 30,000 refugees this year.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has estimated that there are about 60,000 people in the world who meet the description of a true or genuine refugee. That same agency estimates that last year of those 60,000 refugees fully 35,000 did not find a safe refuge. In other words they had no country that would accept them. How is it possible then that Canada could accept 30,000 refugees while the UN estimates that world-wide between all of the refugee receiving nations on earth less than 30,000 refugees were accepted?

(1325)

The truth is that only a small percentage of the people Canada accepts as real refugees are real refugees. The hard truth is that the majority of people who are granted refugee status in Canada are not refugees at all but economic migrants. These are people who see how attractive Canada is and want to start a new life here. We certainly cannot fault them for that, but they are not real refugees. They are not genuine refugees.

If they desire to start a new life in Canada then they should have the opportunity to apply through regular channels like all other immigrants. Let us leave the quota spots open for real refugees, people who are languishing in camps and are displaced overseas, people who the United Nations tell us are in the most desperate of straits. Those are the truly needy. Those are the most deserving: Rwandans, Bosnians.

The inland refugee determination process is an unbelievably expensive mire. When the minister says that Canada is living up to its humanitarian commitments, that just will not wash. We are not. We could be doing far more with far less.

On page 337 of this year's estimates under the Department of Citizenship and Immigration we read that the inland refugee claims cost Canadian taxpayers anywhere from \$30,000 to \$50,000 just to process their claims. Those are direct costs. Multiply that out and the bill to Canadian taxpayers is somewhere around \$750 million to \$1.25 billion, just to settle 16,000 people whose refugee claims are accepted inland. It is easy to misunderstand big numbers like these until they are put into the correct perspective. Allow me to put that billion dollar number into perspective.

The entire budget last year for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees was just over \$1 billion. With that amount of money the UN resettled or repatriated five million refugees. With that amount of money Canada resettled 16,000. There is something wrong.

The refugee determination system is an injustice of mammoth proportions. Not only is it an injustice to Canadian taxpayers who have to foot the bill, but also to those tens of thousands of desperate genuine refugees overseas who are literally bumped

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off the list to make way for economic migrants who arrive, along with some refugees, and claim refugee status in Canada.

The minister is aware of these facts. The minister is more than aware of the outcry which has been issuing forth from Canadians over some of the people the Immigration and Refugee Board is either allowing into the country or allowing to stay when their deportations are appealed.

Several weeks ago in this House the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration promised to get tough with the system. Those are fine words but they do not correlate with his actions. This get tough minister has to answer for the following record which he has created in just six months on the job.

The number of refugees accepted through the inland determination system has skyrocketed even from the non-refugee producing nations.

This minister has appointed several dozen of the most unrepresentative appointees to the IRB that have ever graced the board. The vast majority of them have been immigration lawyers or advocates. It is little wonder that the acceptance rate has gone through the roof.

He has supervised the expanding of the definition of refugee well beyond what it used to mean in Canada. It is well beyond anything the UN which wrote the definition ever intended. He intends to create a whole new layer for refugee determination, making it easier for failed refugee claimants to stay in Canada under humanitarian and compassionate grounds. All this is to happen in six months.

(1330)

The minister says he wants to do what all Canadians want for the refugee system. They want a fair, sensible system that is humanitarian, which takes care of those who are genuine refugees. We want to do our international share but we are not doing that.

The minister says he wants to get tough. That is what we need to do. We need to get tough with the inland refugee determination system so that we can channel more of our resources into helping people who we know need the most help. That is not happening. Instead, the system is being fed this massive immigration and refugee bureaucracy. It feeds this massive industry of advocates and lawyers who are earning more than a decent living at the expense of the taxpayer and real refugees.

Some years ago Canada began the process of drafting a treaty agreement with the United States relating to asylum. This treaty would mutually recognize Canada and the U.S. as safe third countries for the purpose of asylum. The effect of such a treaty would be to stop people from asylum shopping between Canada and the United States. It would prevent those with the economic

wherewithal to travel from passing through the United States before entering Canada and declaring themselves to be refugees.

This is not a hard measure. This is not an inhumane measure. It is common sense. This process should stop. Over 7,000 people last year travelled through the United States before registering a refugee claim in Canada. That caused an enormous drain on our refugee determination system and has the effect, once again, of limiting our ability to divert our resources to those refugees who need our help the most.

There have been calls for the minister to sign the agreement which has been in the drafting stage for some time now but he refuses. The minister says that until the United States adopts a refugee determination system similar to Canada's, he will not enter into the treaty. I can assure the minister that will not happen. The Americans will never adopt our system.

Canada has an international reputation for accepting almost anyone as a refugee who manages to make it here. This year, almost 70 per cent of all claimants have been accepted as refugees. The U.S. would never agree to adopt our system. In fact it is talking otherwise. Neither will Australia and neither will Europe.

I believe the minister, before he left for the western European nations really could not teach those European nations much about immigration that would be acceptable to them. It is time for Canada to sign the treaty with the United States. It should have been signed a long time ago. It is not enough just to talk tough. There has to be some action.

Since this department began its operation, the minister promised he would consult Canadians to determine what the future would hold in terms of immigration policy. The minister is spending \$1 million to set up town halls, to distribute questionnaires around the country in order to determine what Canadians think about immigration. At least that is what he says.

In fact the concluding document of the Montebello meeting where this consultation process was devised makes the minister's real intention more than clear. In the document, we read of the need to convince the majority of Canadians who oppose current immigration levels that they are wrong and that the government is right. We read of the need for public education. We read of constructively engaging the press and putting a positive spin on ultra high immigration levels. That is called consulting when in fact it is nothing of the sort.

(1335)

The Reform Party stands for including the public in national debates on vital issues. It is necessary. The minister knows that Canadians want to be included, so this process was set up. Is it to pacify Canadians? Is it to make them feel included when the real goal is to shut them out by controlling the dialogue? It is a good question to ask.

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Needless to say the Reform Party wants all Canadians to have their voices heard in the immigration debate. In fact we want to let Canadians decide the major immigration issues by way of national referenda. Why could there not be a referendum on the levels, the numbers and why should there not be one on the selection process? It is quite easily arranged. However there will be no immigration debate under this government. There will be an immigration mandate. If Canadians do not like it, then they can attend one of the education classes to learn how to properly think about immigration.

The minister said that he wanted an expanded role for the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. What has been done? The committee has derailed the important work and a strawman issue has been developed instead. The minister has decided that the Citizenship Act needs to be rewritten. He has decided that the committee needs to spend its valuable time looking at issues that no one thought needed review at this point in time, certainly not a review that would cost the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars, a review that would take up weeks of the committee's time, a review that will call on Pierre Trudeau and Mr. Dressup to tell us what it means to be a Canadian.

What a waste of time. The committee ought to be spending its time reviewing the very questionable appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board. It ought to be examining the effect that the highest rate of immigration in the world is having on Canada. It ought to be looking at ways to make the refugee determination system more effective, more humanitarian. Instead the minister insists that we redefine Canadian citizenship. Is that reasonable?

It was revealed to the House that immigrants are not tested for HIV before entering Canada. They are tested for TB. They are screened for cancer or kidney disease. They are tested for syphilis. But there is no testing for AIDS.

After this revelation the minister promised to look into the issue and take the necessary steps to bring Canada's medical testing requirement into the 20th century. That was a month ago. What action has been taken? Nothing.

An hon. member: No committee?

Mr. Hanger: No improvement. At one time immigration was a boon for Canada. It could be again. But in order for immigration to play a positive role, in order to truly balance the needs of Canada against our humanitarian role in the world, we need to bring a little common sense into the debate. We need to make tough decisions. Talking tough is not enough. Talking about lie detector tests and opening the doors even wider to inland refugee claimants and appointing people with vested interests to the Immigration and Refugee Board is the height of hypocrisy. It is pandering to the old style. Talk tough and then take the opposite direction.

Canadians expected more from this government, much more, but they have gotten the same old gang. Nothing has changed. It is just getting worse. With the consolidation of the functions of immigration and citizenship in one department came a mandate to really do some good: to respond to Canadians, to make some changes that would benefit newcomers to Canada and Canadians born here. But we have nothing of the sort. Canadians are demanding change. They want immigration levels to be tied to economic cycles. They want immigration to have a positive net effect on the economy. That is not too much to ask. The world's other immigrant receiving nations tie immigration levels to the state of the economy. Why do we not?

(1340)

In fact one of the provinces sets immigration levels to the economic priorities of the province, the province of Quebec. I believe that the government has something to learn from what the province of Quebec is doing on immigration levels.

Canadians are telling me that the bulk of immigrants, not just a tiny percentage, should be chosen by Canada as independent immigrants. We need immigrants. We need immigrants with education, high tech skills, an ability to quickly adapt and contribute. Instead 85 per cent of immigrants are not chosen by Canada. They chose us.

It is neither unreasonable nor uncompassionate for Canadians to demand that those immigrants who come to Canada be chosen by Canada. The minister knows that. He has had the time to react or enact reform that would ensure that a higher percentage of immigrants are hand picked but that has not been done. If anything, the number of independent immigrants could actually be falling.

We need this new ministry to fundamentally re-examine the refugee determination system, a review that is more than just window dressing and more than just adding new layers of bureaucracy in an attempt to streamline. It is time to make the refugee system answer to taxpayers and to answer to a world-wide need for Canada to accept a higher percentage of UN recognized overseas refugees.

Canadians want the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration to have the sort of review and reporting power the government has promised. The committee should be choosing its agenda rather than having an agenda handed down to them from the minister in order that it be distracted from the real job at hand. Immigration is in trouble in Canada. Never has a higher percentage of Canadians expressed such opposition to the current immigration policy.

The *Financial Post* over the weekend reported that even the government's backbenchers are expressing outrage and frustration in their communities over an immigration policy which has gone wrong.

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Canadians recognize, rightly, that immigration is no longer working for anyone. It is not working for Canada. It is not working for immigrants. Most disappointing of all, the minister in the past six months has not taken any substantial action to solve the immigration problems. In fact he has exacerbated them by increasing the levels, loosening the refugee system, appointing the wrong people to the IRB, and trying to manipulate the opinions of Canadians.

I would caution the minister. The Canadian people are not easily manipulated. It is time to start listening. It is time to take real action, action that is in line with the get tough promises that the minister made in the past.

I wish the minister success for the sake of Canada and for the future of immigration to Canada. I hope he does well but if the past several months of the workings of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration are any indication I am not optimistic.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I would advise the House that we are now on 20 minutes for debate and 10 minutes for questions and comments.

(1345)

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise and take part in this debate today. Although this effectively is basically a piece of housekeeping legislation, it nonetheless has quite significant meaning.

The previous government had moved the Department of Immigration into the realm of public security as if perhaps there was some danger to the security of Canada to be feared from those who choose to come here or who come here to find refuge from countries where law and order and justice and those values that we treasure so dearly in Canada are not treasured quite as dearly.

We on this side of the House do not feel we have anything to fear from people who seek to come to this country for a variety of reasons. We on this side of the House are proud that Canada is one of only four countries in the world which receives people.

There is a certain amount of babbling going on across the way, but I shall endeavour to rise above it. The hon. member from Calgary tells me he is returning the favour. He should return it slightly more sharply. I might appreciate it more.

In any case, there are a number of points that were raised by the other hon. member from Calgary who is the third party critic for immigration and citizenship. A couple of those I would like to address because I was offended. I want to say that I was offended.

I am offended that the hon. member does not think that citizenship is important in this country. I am offended that here in this wonderful and historic Chamber, the Chamber of Laurier and Macdonald and Trudeau, that someone who represents the people of Canada could think that citizenship is not important, that someone could suggest that the people who have been

requested to give their opinions on the review of the Citizenship Act are somehow not of importance.

I am surprised this would be the response. I am surprised given the very hard work that has been put in over the last number of weeks and the hard work that will be continued into this review on citizenship. I am surprised and a little bit disappointed. To be quite frank, I am a lot disappointed. However, in the words of a former great cabinet minister in this House, the late Angus L. Macdonald, when he was premier of Nova Scotia, perhaps one should just consider the source.

I have a few other things that I would like to say. First of all, I am absolutely astounded at the numbers that the hon. member suggests are legitimate refugees. We know that the displacements in the world, the horrors in the former Yugoslavia, the problems in numerous African countries, and the problems with totalitarian governments in other areas of this world have created an unprecedented number of refugees.

To hear the hon. member speak, you would think this was not even a ripple on the horizon. That is just not so. There are more refugees than that in one refugee camp. The hon. member should retract that statement. However, I leave that to his notable good judgement.

I am also absolutely astounded at his percentages. There are words that can be quoted, for example his very famous quotation that even the devil can quote Scripture. With regard to his statement that the percentages that we are allowing in are somehow at an unprecedented high, if the hon. member would like to look back just to two or three years ago, he would see that the number of refugees accepted in this country was higher by, I believe, 12 per cent than it is today. Where we are is definitely within the normal realm of acceptance of refugees.

He talked about the 14 per cent that is the world average. Of course that would be the world average if we add in all those myriad countries that do not accept any at all. Either the hon. member's logic or his mathematics tends to suffer. Of course it would be unkind of me to say that, so I will not.

(1350)

I also want to talk about something the hon. member raised with regard to the fact that people coming into Canada are not tested for HIV and that the minister promised to do something about it four weeks ago. The hon. member should know—I thought he knew; maybe he does not know—that the enabling legislation and regulation on medical matters under this department's aegis has remained unchanged for 40 years.

Perhaps the hon. member advocates a screaming leap into the void by the government without a proper review before bringing in legislation and amendments, but I want to make perfectly clear that neither this minister nor the department has any intention of bringing legislation before this House until it is adequately prepared and until the situation is adequately covered. That is the way good government works, to make sure that when we bring in legislation to change things that definitely need to be changed in this country, that we have covered all the bases. In other words, going from A to B to C to D will probably

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prevent grief as opposed to jumping from A to D and probably falling in a ditch, if I may mix my metaphors, on the way there.

Mr. McClelland: Careful the wheels don't fall off.

Ms. Clancy: Oh no, they will not fall off. The hon. member for Edmonton knows very well that will not happen.

The figures and statistics quoted by the hon. member for Calgary were most puzzling, given in particular that I know he has received many of the briefings from the department. For example, the \$30,000 to \$50,000 for the processing of a refugee in Canada is far out of line. That is so incorrect as to almost be ludicrous except for the fact that when the hon. member stands in this House and makes this statement with his authority as a member of Parliament, people out there might believe that he was accurate if it was not corrected, if the facts were not brought forward.

It reminds me of the old joke I know what I believe in, don't confuse me with facts. The facts are that when a processing costs that much—oh, they are getting upset, calm down, take a Prozac—it occurs when all avenues of the system are being exhausted. In other words, that includes an appeal to the Federal Court of Canada. It includes all of the side venues that may be taken by a refugee in dealing with the Immigration and Refugee Board. It is not the average. It is not even close to the average. What is particularly offensive is that the hon. member knows that. If he does not know it, he should try and find out.

What we are talking about ostensibly today is the setting up of the immigration and citizenship department. This is long overdue. It is very important. What it does is streamline and modernize government to give government the tools needed to deal effectively with all of the complex citizenship and immigration issues.

On that note, it is necessary to remind hon. members opposite who sometimes look at the area of immigration with perhaps, forgive me, a less than generous attitude of mind that these are very complicated issues. We live in very complicated times.

In my travels around the country since I was honoured to be appointed the parliamentary secretary to the minister, I have talked to many, many people about the subject of immigration. I am absolutely edified every time I come away from town hall meetings, meetings with NGOs, meetings with people who live and work on the front lines of day to day Canadian society dealing with the settlement of new Canadians. I am edified at the generosity, at the open hearts of communities across the country, at the belief in the hearts of average Canadians that immigration is something that built this country, that immigration is good for this country and that continued and expanding immigration can only improve this country. Every one of us here is an immigrant. Whether we came here 50 years ago, 200 years ago or whether, like my hon. colleague the member for the Eastern Arctic, we came across the land bridge from Asia 5,000 years ago, we are all immigrants.

(1355)

I look around on this side of the House right now. Just in front of me I can see four different ethnocultural backgrounds. Over here in this corner we have too many Irish people. However, that is the glory and the wonder of this country, that we come here together, that we represent all the aspects of Canada at its most diverse and that we continue to do so. Immigration is what made this country strong. Immigration is what made it diverse and immigration is what will keep it strong, diverse and unified.

I think it is a little sad that some of our colleagues are not prepared to understand just how important not just for Canada to thrive but the survival of Canada the continued inter-weaving of this mosaic is. We are not a white—red country. We are not a country that is homogenized and ever so slightly dull. Sometimes it can be a little too exciting living in this country, fortunately not dangerously so but sometimes stressfully so.

I do not think that any one of us, certainly on this side of the House, would change where we live. I do not think we really want to change the conditions under which we live our day to day lives in spite of some of the things we hear from day to day. In spite of some of the things that are said I think we as Canadians understand just how desperately important the peace and security of this country is to our continued success.

Part and parcel of that is the way the government deals with immigration. The government feels so strongly that on the day the government was sworn in the Prime Minister stated that the creation of a separate Department of Citizenship and Immigration under its own minister which would bring together all immigration policy and program activities currently in the Public Security and Human Resources portfolios plus the citizenship registration and promotion programs of the Canadian heritage department would be established. This is what this legislation is doing.

I might make a comment also on some remarks made by the critic from the Official Opposition when he talked about the fact that there was confusion because of overlap between immigration, citizenship and multiculturalism. With the greatest of respect to the hon. member, I beg to differ. I beg to differ with the hon. member on a number of things but I beg to differ, there is no confusion. Yes, there are overlapping areas. This is only sensible and only to be expected because clearly there are areas in all three that tend to come together.

I want to assure the hon. member that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration along with the Department of Multiculturalism are very clear where the complementary and where the overlapping policies lie. This government has a very strong commitment in each of the areas to ensure that policy and program go forward in the best interests of all Canadians from coast to coast.

The hon. member needs to be reassured that we on this side are not confused, just as the hon. member from Calgary needs to be reassured and perhaps to a degree re-educated on the benefits of immigration to Canada. I feel most strongly that the hon. member is missing out both as a member of Parliament and as a Canadian if he continues under this misapprehension with regard to the benefits that immigration brings to this country. I think he also misses out if he feels that somehow the number of people who come to this country—

The Speaker: That was so good we will let you continue after question period.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE LATE ARTHUR ANDREW

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to pay tribute to a truly great Canadian, Ambassador Arthur Andrew.

The late Mr. Andrew was a resident of Halifax and I am proud to say my friend. He made a career out of promoting Canada and Canadian values. He described himself as a professional Canadian; a very accurate phrase indeed. He had a distinguished 32-year career with the Department of External Affairs serving in various high ranking diplomatic posts across the globe, including ambassador to Israel, Sweden and Greece. He was assistant undersecretary of state for External Affairs for three years.

After this major career with the Department of External Affairs, Mr. Andrew became a professor at the University of Kings College in Halifax. While teaching at Kings he continued to be involved in Canadian diplomacy and foreign policy publishing many articles on these issues. He also was one of three founders of the Ethiopian airlift out of Halifax along with our colleague the MP for Don Valley West and Peter Dalglisch.

On behalf of the House of Commons I would like to extend my most sincere condolences to Arthur's wife, Joyce; his daughters, Stephanie and Victoria; and to the rest of the family. He was truly a great Canadian.

[Translation]

RESTRICTED WEAPONS

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, Canadian citizens are still allowed to own a very large number of military and paramilitary weapons and they can also own revolvers as long as they first obtain a free certificate. A majority of Quebecers and Canadians favour a complete ban on these weapons. I think that there should be a ban on the possession of military—and paramilitary—type weapons and of most semi-automatic weapons.

It is unacceptable that the Mini-Ruger 14 used in the Polytechnic massacre is still a legal weapon in Canada. This and other types of weapons cannot be tolerated in a free and democratic society.

We can no longer hide from the reality that weapons are a scourge in our society. And we can no longer ignore the smuggling of military armaments and weapons of all kinds that the Liberal government prefers not to see. The time to act is now.

* * *

[English]

COMMENTS IN CHAMBER

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound): Mr. Speaker, I want to apologize to all members of the House, aboriginals and residents of the Atlantic provinces who have been offended by remarks I made or was alleged to have made in the House recently.

From the controversy over my remarks I have learned that it is not wise in the political arena and in front of the media to use the same techniques I have employed successfully during my long career as a lecturer. In the future I will be very careful in the use of strong analogies and illustrations to bring out crucial points of analysis.

The main point of my remarks was that the policies of the government toward those in need of support require a fundamental re-examination because they have not worked. These policies have created dependence and significant social problems. New approaches to these problems are needed.

I am saddened that analogies taken out of context and the misrepresentation of my basic points have distracted from an open and frank discussion of problems which are of vital importance for the well-being of all Canadians.

Judging from the messages I have received, very many Canadians want to see such a discussion.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

SECOND INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul): Mr. Speaker, from June 2 to June 5, the city of Verdun hosted the second international kite festival. Fifteen countries were represented and 54 special guests displayed their skills. A total of 200 people participated. I myself had fun as both a spectator and a participant.

At least 150,000 spectators came and all agreed that it was a great show.

I commend Georges Bossé, the Mayor of Verdun, for his work and Sandra Carmichael for organizing the event. I also want to thank the team of 200 volunteers who showed unequalled community spirit.

The atmosphere was fantastic and the festival was a success.

* * *

(1405)

[English]

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, today at a press conference in Quebec City the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food together with other governments involved announced that Canada and the province of Quebec, Quebec City, and the Food and Agriculture Organization would host an international symposium from October 11 to October 13, 1995 to commemorate the founding of the FAO in Quebec City 50 years ago.

Canada played a leading role in preparing the groundwork for the FAO's founding through an interim commission chaired by Lester B. Pearson. The organization has grown from 42 to 171 members since 1945 and has carried out field projects in more than 140 countries around the world.

The 50th anniversary of the FAO will be October 16, 1995—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Boniface.

* * *

[Translation]

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all parliamentarians, I want to congratulate our high school graduates across the country.

[English]

Congratulations to all our high school students. We wish them well in the future, whatever path they choose to follow, whether it is further education or entering the work force.

Graduation normally means parties, and we want to alert the young people to be careful. Driving to and from parties can be dangerous. Sometimes it is difficult to avoid drinking. If possible it should be avoided. If that cannot be done there is a program called Safegrad, managed almost totally by students.

Safegrad has a program to help increase travel safety and to ensure that if drinking takes place it is done under safer conditions.

[Translation]

On behalf of all those who love you a lot, I urge all graduates to be careful.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the president of the Université du Québec à Montréal, Mr. Claude Corbo, concluded to the failure of a federal policy. Indeed, by stressing ethnical and cultural features, the Canadian policy on multiculturalism leads immigrants to the impasse resulting from a fragmented culture and an extended marginalization.

According to Mr. Corbo, the efforts made by the federal government for ethnic and cultural communities are suspicious. Mr. Corbo added that the policy could increase the minorization of the Quebec identity or to rob it of its originality.

We can only conclude that this policy, which dates back to the Trudeau era, has failed in two ways. Indeed, on the one hand, it has not helped integrate minority groups, while on the other hand it has failed, in spite of the unspeakable objectives of its architects, to rob the Quebec identity of its originality.

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[English]

THE FAMILY

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, the importance of the Canadian family is beyond question. It is vital to the well-being of our society. It is vital to the nurturing of our children. It is vital to the preservation of our sense of justice, our values and our convictions.

Given the significance of the family's role in society, state or special interest agendas must not be allowed to diminish the role of the family. The freedom of the family to raise its children according to its own unique needs and convictions must be

preserved. Government programs should encourage rather than discourage parental responsibility for their family and any trends that demean the role of the family must be challenged.

Canadian families have been lacking a clear, strong federal voice. My colleagues and I intend to change that and provide leadership by speaking for the family and developing policy alternatives that would encourage, strengthen and protect the fabric of this most basic unit of our society.

* * *

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK

Mr. John Maloney (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about National Transportation Week which took place last week, June 5 to June 11.

The importance of the transportation component to business is fundamental. We are reminded of it almost every day. Transportation plays an essential role in the competitive cycle. In the business community where advantages are harder than ever to come by, efficient, intermodal and competitively priced transportation is essential to success.

With the emergence of a truly global economy, the ability to forecast and adapt to international and national change is essential for transportation.

Given the world-wide demand for effective intermodal services, it is most appropriate the theme of the 25th National Transportation Week was "Intermodalism: The Perfect Fit".

(1410)

We can also be proud of the dedication, professionalism and hard work of the scores of men and women who keep our transportation industries on the go year round.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members of the House as well as all other Canadians of the anniversary of the Department of the Environment last Saturday, June 11.

In just 23 years Environment Canada has made significant contributions to our understanding of the environment and the consequences of our interaction with it. The department in broadening its approach to environmental issues no longer focuses on individual problems but treats the entire ecosystem as a unit of interdependent elements.

In keeping with the department's quest for sustainable development and the notion that everything we do affects the environ-

S. O. 31

ment, we as Canadians should continue to do what we can to help preserve our planet for the future.

* * *

THE LATE RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, those concerned about humanist values and religious faith have lost a powerful voice and a champion with the passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, spiritual leader of the Lubavitch Hasidic community.

Rabbi Schneerson operated from Brooklyn but his was a vision without boundaries and without borders. He was not a parochial figure. He cared and spoke for people of all walks of life and in all parts of the world.

He was a tireless supporter of prayer in schools, Christian as well as Jewish. He built the movement which today has representatives in every centre of Jewish life working to build a better quality of life for Jews and non-Jews alike.

We are witnessing in his departure the end of an era. I am sure, though, that it is not the end of the ideals of Jewish values and Jewish internationalism which he championed.

I would ask all members of the House to join me in extending our condolences to the Lubavitch community and our hope that his inspiration will help them to continue his good work.

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[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday's issue of the daily *Le Droit* mentions that a report tabled in the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages reveals, once again, the true nature of Canadian federalism. The Prime Minister refers to an idyllic country where one can freely express himself or herself in French from coast to coast. However, that vision does not reflect the daily reality in the federal public service.

Indeed, some French-speaking civil servants feel they could be severely penalized, by being isolated, excluded or by having their career opportunities affected, if they express their right to work in their mother tongue. The notion of a bilingual Canada was probably a nice dream, but the fact is that the public service is not bilingual: francophones are merely tolerated. Also, Canada is not recognized as the union, based on equality, of two founding nations, since Quebec is also merely tolerated in that federation.

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[English]

THE FAMILY

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, Reform Party principles are designed to preserve and strengthen the family of Canada.

Reforming our parliamentary system and putting the levers of direct democracy into the hands of Canadians will ensure that family values carry more weight with the federal government. It will also ensure that national policies reflect the interests of all Canadians and their families rather than the interests of a politically connected elite.

Through fiscal and economic reforms the burden of taxation would be reduced, sparing tomorrow's families the economic consequences of still more borrowing and wasteful spending.

Reform's tax policies would ensure fair treatment for families. Through our party's reforms to the justice system we would place the rights of victims and protection of families above the rights of criminals, making our schools and streets safer places for our children to learn and play.

These are the common sense policies that families across the nation want and need.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John): Mr. Speaker, it was my intent to rise today to ask for an apology from the Reform member for Capilano—Howe Sound for his insulting and unacceptable comments to the people of Atlantic Canada.

The Speaker: I take it the member still wants to continue with a statement. I would again remind all hon. members that we should not be attacking each other personally. We should be attacking, if need be, ideas. I would caution all of us not to attack each other personally.

Mrs. Wayne: From the first days of Confederation, Atlantic Canadians have worked to make a contribution to our country.

(1415)

I would ask that all members of the House when they have questions about what we contribute in Atlantic Canada to feel free to come to any one of the Atlantic members of the House and put their questions before they make any statements, such as what was made in the House.

I am very pleased today to hear that the member has apologized to our people. They are wonderful people, very warm.

THE LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. John Loney (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this opportunity today to bring to the attention of this House the results of a recent Angus Reid survey conducted across the country a number of days ago.

Although it comes as no surprise that the federal Liberal Party maintains considerable support from the vast majority of Canadians, it is very interesting to note that for the first time in decades the Liberal Party also tops the polls in my home province of Alberta.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Loney: Due largely to the fact that the Prime Minister and his cabinet have demonstrated their commitment to the party's promises made in the red book, the Liberal Party enjoys the support and confidence of 52 per cent of Albertans, up from 40 per cent in late April and 25 per cent on election day last October.

I applaud the efforts of this government and encourage the membership to maintain the course.

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[Translation]

MICHIGAN INTERNS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, this is the tenth year that I have had the pleasure of welcoming young interns from Michigan to my staff in Ottawa. Every year, for about six weeks, these American students provide me and other hon. members from all parties with invaluable assistance in our various parliamentary duties. It must be said that their work is as impeccable as their behaviour is exemplary.

[English]

I want to take this opportunity to praise the work of Professor Helen Graves, the co-ordinator of this program. Many thanks to this year's crop of interns: David Backus, Caroline Borhani, Nancy Bortz, Thomas Corbin, Richard Frank, Matthew Hader, Stacie Littlebury, Kathryn Lloyd, Kathey Majid-Smith, Janice Smith-Scott, Craig Miller, David Mingus, Robin Mitchell, Sandra Nader, Dayna Robinson, David Rowe, Jalil Saad, Thomas Seely, Jonathan Shill, Susan Welsh, Christina Zini, Robert Entin, Stuart Sandler and Elizabeth Krug. Thanks to all these young—

The Speaker: I of course did not want to interrupt the hon. member because all of those names are important. I would ask all hon. members to please keep their statements within the limits.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

SITUATION IN HAITI

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this question is directed to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Tension is mounting now that a state of emergency has been declared by puppet president Jonassaint. The decision by the military junta of Haiti follows the announcement that trade sanctions will be stepped up, including the recent prohibition on air travel which is to start on June 25.

I want to ask the government whether it will acknowledge that prohibiting air communications is a sign that reinforcing economic sanctions has failed?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to reply to this question from the opposition.

Canada has agreed to do its utmost to reinforce sanctions against Haiti at this time, including the cessation of commercial flights into Haiti. Commercial flights on the part of Air Canada are to cease by June 25. We are doing what we can to make sure that all Canadians who are in Haiti do leave Haiti. We have given advice to Canadians in Haiti that they ought to leave.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in fact, we know that between 2,400 and 2,500 Canadian nationals are now in Haiti. I would ask the government to tell the House what steps it intends to take to guarantee that all Canadian nationals who wish to leave Haiti will be able to do so before June 25.

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that 2,400 to 2,500 people in Haiti are Canadians citizens, many of whom, however, have dual Canadian-Haitian citizenship.

We are in day to day contact with Air Canada to make sure that all those people who so desire will leave Haiti. Air Canada today did not send a flight into Haiti as intended because of threats against the airlines. Every effort is being made to make sure that there are at least two additional flights to get Canadian citizens out of Haiti.

(1420)

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we know that seventeen different countries have recently urged the United States to send a military intervention force to Haiti.

Is the government prepared to indicate whether Canada still rejects the option of military intervention in Haiti, an option that is apparently mentioned more and more in Washington and that is apparently the only option that will be sufficient to get rid of the military junta and bring back President Aristide?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed as I said before to strengthening existing sanctions against Haiti including an increase to commercial sanctions in terms of the freezing of bank accounts against Haiti. It is our view that sanctions have to be given a full opportunity to be effective.

I just returned from a meeting of the Organization of American States in Belem, Brazil last week and it was also the view of the majority of the states of the hemisphere that sanctions should be given as much support as possible at this time in order that there could be a peaceful resolution to the difficulties in Haiti and that President Aristide can be returned to his rightful place as president of Haiti.

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[Translation]

LUMBER

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, in *Le Devoir* on Saturday, Quebec's former legal adviser in Washington, Mr. Elliott Feldman, said that trade interests were not well defended in the softwood lumber question and that federal negotiators were more concerned about presenting a pan-Canadian position than about defending provinces whose trade practices are above reproach.

My question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. Would the minister agree that in the softwood lumber question, the federal government should insist that Quebec producers not be subject to countervail measures applied in Canada, since Quebec does not subsidize its exports?

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as a general comment, the hon. member will know that the matters discussed in the newspaper article to which he refers occurred at a period when this government was not in office. It is difficult for me to comment on the motives and the reasons of the government that was in office at that time.

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On the specific issue of softwood lumber, the Government of Canada did support the assertion that Quebec lumber exporters should have a separate rate. Unfortunately, the free trade panel which ruled that Canadian practices do not constitute a counter-vailable subsidy upheld the decision of the U.S. Commerce Department not to exempt Quebec from the national duty deposit rate.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, would the minister agree that if he were prepared to technically treat Quebec as a country—in the meaning of U.S. trade legislation, not in the political sense—he would have saved Quebec lumber producers tens of millions of dollars in countervail duty?

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, no.

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THE FAMILY

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

World-wide and throughout history jurisprudence has confirmed the common understanding of the family. Canadian law also reflects a common understanding. To change the definition of family would be to shift some of the most deeply felt foundational values of our culture.

Could the minister on behalf of the government define family for this House?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think I would refer the hon. member to a much more reliable source of dictionary definition than I can provide. I can tell her that those of us on this side of the House share her sentiments about the importance of family. It motivates what we do. It influences policies we develop. Strengthening the family is a fundamental objective of the government.

(1425)

Insofar as a definition is concerned, we are quite happy to go with the commonly accepted definition. I commend the dictionary to the hon. member if she wants more detail than that.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the Dictionary of Canadian Law gives this definition: “Family includes a man and a woman living together as husband and wife, whether or not married, in a permanent relationship, or the survivor of either, and includes the children of both or either, natural or adopted—and any person lawfully related to any of the aforementioned—”.

The Speaker: The Chair is having difficulty in that we are asking for definitions and then giving definitions. The Chair always waits for the final question to come, but I would ask the hon. member to please couch her questions so that they deal with the administrative responsibility of the minister in charge. If the hon. member could please put her question.

Mrs. Hayes: Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell us if he agrees with the definition as found in the Canadian Dictionary of Law?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if that is indeed what the Canadian Dictionary of Law says I am sure that for the purposes of that dictionary it is quite adequate.

I am sure also that, as the hon. member well knows, the English language is a rich and beautiful one which can be used and adapted to suit contexts as appropriate. I am sure the hon. member will bear that in mind.

The Speaker: I am sure that we do have ministers who can deal with the more precise English, but if the question is to be put to a specific minister I would ask that it deal with his or her administration responsibility in government.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, not long ago the minister floated a trial balloon suggesting that the Liberal government is considering redefining the family perhaps as households.

Given the historic gravity of such a redefinition, will the minister commit to a broad formal process of consultations with Canadians before undertaking such a monumental task?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can remember testifying before the standing committee on human rights and persons with disabilities, speaking in answer to a question about the prospect of relationships being relevant for the purposes of government programs. I did not deal with households but rather with relationships, a term for which there is a precise definition available.

At the same time I made it clear that we would be consulting, discussing and listening to Canadians as we explore the best possible ways to deliver essential government programs in accordance with fairness and equity.

* * *

[Translation]

PEACEKEEPERS IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday after visiting Canadian peacekeepers in Visoko in the former Yugoslavia, the Prime Minister hinted that Canada could withdraw its peacekeepers if, in his words, “there is no progress toward peace”.

Oral Questions

My question is directed either to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of Defence.

Can the government confirm whether it intends to pull its peacekeepers out of the former Yugoslavia if no progress is made in the peace talks or if the arms embargo is lifted?

(1430)

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it would be premature to take any such decision because, as the hon. member implied in his question, there is still time for discussions to be under way and we hope to have a positive outcome.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, my supplemental is for members of the government. Instead of worrying, as it did last January, the civilian population which has survived until now largely because of the presence and assistance of Canadian peacekeepers, as the Prime Minister himself remarked during his visit and as I myself have noted, why does the government not reassure civilians by maintaining its presence in the area and its participation in peace efforts, thereby guarding against any further escalation in the violence and killings?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the government has not announced any change in the present position of the Canadian peacekeepers. I appreciate very much the hon. member's support for the peacekeeping forces of a strong and united Canada. We appreciate that very much.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. For millions of parents the preferred method of caring for their preschool children is to care for them at home. The Income Tax Act only allows tax breaks for parents who send their children to daycare, but not for those who forgo income in order to take care of their kids at home.

Will the government adjust its tax policies to give equal treatment to the majority of families who prefer to care for their children in their own homes?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, that is a matter which can be properly and very effectively addressed during the course of the major review

we have under way on a wide range of social programs. I advise the hon. member to submit his views in a brief for consideration.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, my brief was duly submitted about two weeks ago. I hope the minister gets a chance to read it.

An Angus Reid and CTV poll released today suggested that most parents would rather care for their preschool children in their own homes. This confirms much of what my colleagues have been saying all along. The current federal tax rules make it more expensive for parents to care for their children at home than to send them to daycare. All parents should have the freedom to choose what form of care is best for their children.

When will the government stop penalizing millions of parents who choose to care for their preschool children at home?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is expressing a strong concern about the strength and value of the Canadian family. I am sure he also recognizes there is a wide variety and diversity of family activities.

Many families are involved in the workplace these days. It has become a very major change and a very positive change in our society. It also creates certain pressures and certain kinds of responsibilities which can best be handled if good child care is available. We want to make sure there is a balance between the interests of looking after children, whether the parents decide to stay at home or whether they are in the workplace. In keeping with the broad philosophy of our party we want to make sure there is a balance of views and not simply one-sided views.

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*[Translation]***STATUS OF WOMEN**

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): My question is for the Secretary of State for the Status of Women. In answer to a question raised last Monday about grants to women's groups in Canada and Quebec, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development said that delays in granting the subsidy to the Quebec women's federation were due to their evaluation reports being late.

A representative of the federation said this morning that all women's groups in Canada are still waiting for their grants.

Can the Secretary of State for the Status of Women tell us when the \$9 million in grants will be paid to the organizations that look after the interests of women in Canada and Quebec?

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)): Thank you for the question, Madam. According to my information, the money has been allocated. It is nearly \$10 million. If there is any delay in this regard, I consider your question very important and I will look into it with the minister responsible.

Oral Questions

(1435)

The Speaker: I would always like hon. members to remember me both in their questions and in their answers. I am still here.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question. How can the Secretary of State for the Status of Women claim to be helping groups when many of them have to lay off their employees because of the government's negligence on this issue?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member would be very pleased to know that at a time of very tight fiscal restraints, where in the past budget certain requirements were made to cut budgets across the board, we made the very deliberate and important decision not to cut the funding for women's programs but to have it stay the same.

I can further inform the hon. member that last week in the time I had available, when I was not preparing my responses to the questions from her hon. colleagues, I was very busy signing off all the allocations for women's groups within the province of Quebec and throughout Canada. I am sure they will all have their funding in proper time. We so informed the representatives of the national action committee this morning that those signatures were already in place.

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THE FAMILY

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, on May 13 the Prime Minister made a statement in support of the International Year of the Family. In this speech he affirmed that his government supports a phrase which has been used in some of the literature of the United Nations. It refers to the family as the smallest democracy at the heart of society.

Could the Acting Prime Minister explain what he interprets this definition of the family as a small democracy to mean?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is not for me to interpret the words of the Prime Minister. They very much speak for themselves and frankly, they sound pretty good to me.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, they were not the words of the Prime Minister. He only recited the words of the UN in referring to the family.

There are alternative ways of interpreting this term that are much more alarming. It is important to know whether or not the Acting Prime Minister agrees that parents should be able to direct the behaviour of their children, prescribe teaching and reasonable discipline, and impart their own values to the children without interference from the state.

Will the Acting Prime Minister confirm that the state has no place in the nurseries of the nation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this requires discussion and debate that we do not have the time for in Question Period.

What about the role of the state in making sure our children have enough food, clothing and education? What about the role of the state in making sure that children in nurseries are not in abusive situations? This matter cannot be sloughed aside the way my hon. friend is attempting to do.

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[Translation]

MIL DAVIE

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the minister politically responsible for Quebec, the Minister of Transport, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, the minister responsible for Quebec's economic development and the Minister of Finance.

Quebec has already done more than its share to rationalize Canadian shipyards and MIL Davie has also done its duty by submitting a new business plan. Yet its order book remains empty and the federal government is still slow to make clear its intentions regarding the contract to build a new ferry for the Magdalen Islands. The government is always talking about putting Canadians back to work. We have here a concrete project that is ready to start.

My question is this: When will the government finally make a decision regarding the construction of a new ferry for the Magdalen Islands, thus giving a little renewed hope to the Quebec City region and the MIL Davie workers?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, we now have a business plan for MIL Davie that has not yet been approved by the unions. A real business plan that will be the basis for MIL Davie's future must first be approved by the shareholders and the unions before we can say what MIL Davie's future will be like.

(1440)

However, it must be noted that, with respect to the ferry issue, which my colleague, the Minister of Transport, has addressed on several occasions, we first have to decide whether or not a new ferry is really needed. After that decision is made, we will be in a position to answer the other questions.

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, although some questions may be addressed to one, two or five ministers, it is not always necessary to name them all; perhaps you could name just one.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I must tell you that William Shakespeare was not on the list of ministers I addressed my questions to.

Can the minister tell us where his government stands on the multifunctional smart ship project that could contribute to MIL Davie's long-term recovery and maintain thousands of jobs in the Quebec City region?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, again, the smart ship was proposed but there are other interests involved and the Minister of Defence has still not decided whether it is needed.

I am a little confused by the Bloc Québécois's attitude. Let me explain, Mr. Speaker. According to the Bloc member for Richelieu, contracts should be awarded on the basis of free competition and therefore on capitalism's basic principle of the right to make offers.

I am not sure if the Bloc supports the position of the hon. member for Richelieu or if they are asking the government to award non-competitive contracts to MIL Davie. What is their position?

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FESTIVAL FRANCO-ONTARIEN

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The 19th edition of the *Festival franco-ontarien* will take place from June 21 to 26. This festival attracts 600,000 visitors to the National Capital Region and generates \$12 million in local economic benefits.

With the opening of this festival only eight days away, can the heritage minister tell this House the amount of the federal contribution to the *Festival franco-ontarien*?

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, that a grant of \$300,000 will be awarded over two years, that is, 1994–95 and 1995–96. Of this, \$180,000 will go to

Oral Questions

the Festival's basic activities and \$120,000 will be to help make the Festival financially self-sufficient.

I would remind my colleagues that the *Festival franco-ontarien* will open on June 21, which more or less coincides with the end of this session. It therefore offers an excellent opportunity to celebrate the success of this session of Parliament.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

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

In British Columbia the RCMP represents the largest portion of police protection. Bill C-17 froze pay and movement within the increment pay grid for two years. Last year the RCMP worked over 600,000 hours of unpaid voluntary overtime equaling \$20 million. Fifteen hundred officers met to say quite angrily that this overtime is over if the freeze continues.

Would the Solicitor General please tell this House how he proposes to make up the 600,000 hours while still protecting the community at the highest possible level?

(1445)

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner and I are aware of the concerns of the members of the RCMP. We are sensitive to them and we are working to find solutions. In the meantime the commissioner designate Mr. Murray has said that members of the RCMP are quite responsible and will carry out their duties in due course. I think we continue to have confidence in the professionalism of the RCMP in British Columbia and throughout Canada.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the minister previously promised to do something for the RCMP and now he has let things boil over to the point of rebellion in the ranks.

The broken promise of the pay grid may be the watershed for officers to defy the law and form a union. Will the minister admit that the RCMP is a special case and take the obvious required action before there are resignations from the force?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member will join with me in saying that if anybody is going to obey the rule of law it will be the RCMP and that he will join with me in encouraging that to be the case while we work together to find solutions to the concerns of some members of the force.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec.

While the federal government is multiplying programs—the minister has to admit—federal action in the area of regional development is uncoordinated. The activities of the Federal Office of Regional Development in the various regions of Quebec are not coordinated with the Department of Human Resources Development, which is about to merge business development centers and community futures committees, another regional development stakeholder from the same level of government.

Will the minister responsible for regional development not agree that he has a duty to better coordinate the action of his government in order to eliminate costly overlap within its own administration?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we do agree that duplication and overlap must be eliminated. That is why the Prime Minister has asked the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal to thoroughly review each program and each departmental administrative procedures, while I pursue discussions with the human resources minister to achieve this goal of coordinating our efforts in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not agree also that jurisdiction squabbles between the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Human Resources Development in connection with regional development make his government's action in that area inefficient and result in millions of dollars being wasted for lack of coordination?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that there are no squabbles whatsoever between myself and the Minister of Human Resources Development or myself and the Minister of Industry. In fact, our actions are perfectly coordinated and that is why we are so efficient.

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[English]

TOBACCO PACKAGING

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

It would appear that the minister's proposal to legislate plain packaging is in serious trouble. Health committee members from her own party have told the *Toronto Star* they will not

support the proposal because there is no evidence that plain packaging will reduce smoking.

The Minister of Health says she is concerned about the health consequences of smoking. If the minister is really serious about the health of Canadians why does she not put the taxes back on tobacco?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned with the health of Canadians. We know that contraband cigarettes were really working against the health of Canadians and cheap cigarettes were readily available for young people to start up smoking. We had to take action and we did. We have a very comprehensive program to battle smoking. It is a wonderful program. One part of it is to look at the feasibility of plain packaging.

For someone who has been working in the medical field, I am appalled that he would not be willing to seriously consider all items that might encourage young people not to take up smoking.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, as a physician I have taken into consideration all of the data that has been presented to us. There is no evidence so far that plain packaging will reduce consumption. We know that if costs go up consumption will go down. The minister appears to have his priorities a little bit confused. If she wants to reduce smoking, we need to put the taxes back where they were. We keep on hearing about the commitment on the national forum on health care before the end of June. This is June 13. For the fourth time in this House I would ask the minister this: What are the terms of reference for such a forum? What role will the provinces play? When will it be held and where will this forum be held?

(1450)

The Speaker: The Chair can readily accept one or two questions, but surely not three or four. If the hon. minister would perhaps address herself to one or two of the questions.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am quite happy to address any of the questions the hon. member would ask.

On the question of cigarettes, obviously when the contraband problem has been decimated we will certainly consider raising taxes again. We have said that before. On the forum, we are continuing to work with our counterparts at the provincial level. When we are ready, we will release the terms of reference.

* * *

THAILAND

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, a recent *Globe and Mail* article painted a disturbing picture of how Canadian taxpayer money is being mismanaged in Thailand. The article alleged that private Thai investors were

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profiting greatly from CIDA loans and not repaying one red cent.

This article implied that Canada has not been receiving a satisfactory return on investment for many of CIDA's initiatives in Thailand. What is the government doing to improve the accountability of CIDA's operation in Thailand and other Third World countries?

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)): Mr. Speaker, this article contains a number of inaccuracies. Quotes were taken out of context. For example, the investor cited is repaying his loan on schedule.

Accountability is critical to CIDA's work in Thailand as in other countries. CIDA regularly monitors its projects to make sure that they are efficiently managed and that funds are properly used.

More broadly, CIDA is taking action in response to the Auditor General's report and recommendations. It is implementing a series of matters to make its management more effective and to improve its accountability.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Prime Minister, or the Deputy Prime Minister.

According to representatives of the Rwandan community in Quebec, it appears that a Hutu immigrant, Léon Mugesera, who arrived in Canada in August 1993 and who is currently a trainee at the Université Laval, would be partly responsible for the massacre in Rwanda.

Before his departure for Canada, Mr. Mugesera is said to have urged his fellow Hutu citizens to go on the warpath and decimate Tutsi families.

Given the serious allegations made by the Association des immigrants rwandais du Québec, will the government inform us of the findings of the Immigration inquiry regarding Mr. Mugesera?

[English]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we have all been horrified by the atrocities and the recent reports of these atrocities in Rwanda.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I am unable to go into the specifics of this case because of the ongoing investigation. I want to assure this House that the serious allegations against this individual are being investigated by immigration officials.

The situation in Rwanda being what it is at this moment, it is very difficult to corroborate the allegations that have been made. The individual in question also has to be given an opportunity to explain his case.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary what is being done by Immigration Canada to make sure that people who are responsible for such slaughters will not be able to take refuge in Canada.

[English]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has frequently stated his opposition and his deep concern over situations like this.

The situation is ongoing right now and under investigation. There will be, as the minister has promised, further legislation coming into this House.

* * *

(1455)

HAITI

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, we have heard earlier today that flights into Haiti are being suspended. We have heard that nationals are being asked to leave Haiti and we have heard that many nations are now asking for military intervention.

Will the minister please clearly state the Canadian position regarding military intervention in Haiti.

Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate what I said the last time I was asked this question. Canada is committed to trying to make sure that sanctions are enforced and that they have their total possible effect before any other action is taken. Canada is not contemplating or supporting at this time any other action except the support of total sanctions. For that reason we are cancelling our commercial flights into Haiti and strengthening our commercial sanctions against Haitians at this time.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I think the problem is that the sanctions are just not working. In fact the abuses are getting worse and worse.

I think the Canadian public is demanding more serious answers to the questions that we are raising about decisions that are being made. I think the big concern is what kind of clean-up action might be necessary for Canadian peacekeepers if in fact military intervention did occur.

We need to know the answers to these questions before we can make that decision.

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Hon. Christine Stewart (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that up to now sanctions have not been as effective as they might have been. But the fact is also that we have not had the opportunity to enforce total sanctions against Haiti. We believe that given that chance and the co-operation of all members of the international community that sanctions can have a positive effect and we will be able to bring about peaceful change to democratic government in Haiti, including the return of President Aristide to Haiti.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, last February 21, the Official Opposition asked the Minister of Indian Affairs what Mr. Jerry Peltier's responsibilities and status in that department were during the Oka crisis, in the fall of 1990. The Minister of Indian Affairs was not able to provide an answer. Can the minister now tell us what Mr. Peltier's mandate was as a civil servant working for the Department of Indian Affairs during the Oka crisis, in 1990?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, similar to what the other minister has said I do not know if I could look into what the former government's thought process was or what it was doing.

My friend makes mention of a response. I did give him a response. I gave my friend the response in writing. It was to the extent that there was, I forget the exact numbers because it has been a couple of months now, about \$200,000 paid to a group in Oka. Of this I think \$50,000 approximately—I will give him the correct figure later, as a matter of fact he has it in his letter—was paid to a numbered company. Beyond that I do not know the role of Mr. Peltier in any shape or form. I know he was in there. I know he was helping out. We would have to go back to what the former government was doing in the circumstances.

* * *

ANTI-SMOKING ADVERTISING

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Government Services.

I understand that the Minister of Health is planning a new \$55 million media campaign to urge people to quit smoking. I am concerned that the present agency of record for the Department of Health may automatically receive this lucrative advertising contract in the same way that its contract was renewed without a tendering process four months ago.

Will the minister give his assurance that all Canadian advertising agencies will be able to bid on any and all new contracts?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, no request has been made by the Minister of Health to my department with regard to the comments made by the hon. member.

* * *

SOCIAL SPENDING

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Last week in Paris the minister stated that the government would not cut old age security payments. He said: "This helps to protect the purchasing power of Canada's seniors and adds a measure of stability to their income". I am glad to hear that.

With the cuts in the last budget and the proposed cuts that the Minister of Finance has indicated, can the minister explain why the rationale for protecting seniors' pensions is not applicable to younger Canadians who cannot find a job and who are trying to feed and clothe their children? Why is not protecting their purchasing power and adding a measure of security to their incomes reason to protect them from cuts?

(1500)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, let me give him one example. Because of the changes we brought about in unemployment insurance, a substantial reduction is taking place in the premium rate.

As a result, beginning in July of this year the net addition into the pockets of all workers covered by unemployment insurance will be \$230 each. That is a lot of purchasing power. It can buy a lot of kids' clothes, a lot of furniture and a lot of extras.

That is the reason we need to reduce the premiums. Not only will it bring about more employment but it will put more money back in pockets so they can take it out and put it on the counter to buy Canadian goods or services.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks there have been several concerns raised in the media and by many responsible sports persons regarding gun control.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Will the minister reaffirm in the House today that he and his department have no intention of further limiting the ownership and the use of

Privilege

qualified rifles and shotguns by responsible sports enthusiasts? Will the minister tell the House if the required training courses introduced by the previous administration will be maintained and implemented in a cost efficient manner?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the primary focus of our effort is safety in the community and attacking crimes of violence. We will focus on illegal weapons being smuggled into the country. We will focus on enforcing those laws already on the books whereby people are punished for using guns in the commission of criminal offences.

We will also look at other steps that can be developed with the support of caucus for making this a safer society. We will, as the hon. member has suggested, bear in mind the use which is made for sporting and other purposes of rifles and shotguns in the course of that work.

The Speaker: I have a request for a question of privilege by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege.

On June 2 and June 3 when I was not present in the House, the member for Simcoe Centre made some serious allegations, allegations which I think damage my credibility and thus impede my ability to function as a member of the House. The member opposite has brought into question my compliance with the conflict of interest code.

I would like to set the record straight. I am disappointed that the member for Simcoe Centre made no effort to contact me or the assistant deputy registrar general in advance to ask for clarification. If he had taken the time to do some research he would have found that he was incorrect in his allegations.

Within 30 days of my election as a member of Parliament, I spoke to and clarified with the assistant deputy registrar general what my requirements were to comply fully with the federal conflict of interest code. I then proceeded to meet these requirements by formally resigning as director and officer from the management of Dynamic on December 1, 1993.

I would like to point out for the record that I was not technically required to resign from Dynamic until April 5, 1994, 120 days after my appointment as parliamentary secretary. I did so because of my desire to act responsibly as a member of the House.

I received a letter from Mr. Howard Wilson dated March 31 of this year in which he stated that he was satisfied that I had met all the requirements of the federal conflict of interest code. From this letter I quote: "I am pleased to approve the arrangements you have made to comply with the requirements of the conflict of interest code". With the unanimous consent of the House I would like to table this letter.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: My colleagues, the Chair of course never wants to cut off debate, especially on something so important as a point of privilege. I wonder if the hon. member for Vancouver South could please indicate to the Chair precisely which point of privilege he is raising and how this has impacted on his ability to serve in the House.

(1505)

Could the hon. member please be a little more precise.

Mr. Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, my integrity is in question and I will be getting to that in just two more statements.

The member for Simcoe Centre stated that on May 24 I was still an officer of Dynamic. This statement is incorrect. The member stated that I currently reside at the same address as my father. This too is incorrect.

Let me state categorically for the record that my father does not live with me and, for that matter, I would be very honoured in my culture if my father did live with me. I would be happy to have him stay there.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Is this on the same point that the member is bringing up now?

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Yes it is.

The Speaker: With all respect to my colleagues, I am not inclined at this point to see a point of privilege but perhaps if we heard from the other member who is involved in this there might be clarification.

At this point, always keeping in mind that I reserve the right to come back to hear the wrapping up of the point of privilege, I would like to hear from the member for Simcoe Centre.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I make these comments as government House leader with the utmost respect to you and your position. I think if we search the precedents of the House you will find many occasions when members have risen to make a personal statement under the guise of a statement of personal privilege to put on the record their understanding of a situation involving themselves per-

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sonally where things have been said about them that they do not consider to be accurate.

I respectfully ask you, Mr. Speaker, to follow these precedents and allow the hon. member for Vancouver South to finish his statement before calling on anybody else.

The Speaker: With your permission, my colleagues, the Chair will finish hearing a wrap-up from the member for Vancouver South and then I will go to the member for Simcoe Centre.

Mr. Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, this member has questioned my integrity. He has not offered a shred of hard evidence. I ask the member for Simcoe Centre to apologize for misleading the House and for spreading misinformation.

The Speaker: I will hear from the hon. member for Simcoe Centre.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, on June 2 and again on June 3 I raised the issue of a possible conflict of interest with regard to an arm's length blind trust set up by the member for Vancouver South for his company Dynamic Maintenance Limited of which he is a 50 per cent owner. The company was doing business with the government.

The issue was brought to the attention of the government because of public information on file with the B.C. Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations regarding the officers and directors of this company.

The public record from the last annual statement with an accuracy date of May 24 showed the member as an officer of the company and listed both his father and father-in-law as directors.

The home address—

The Speaker: Order. I believe the hon. member for Simcoe Centre has put that information on the record prior to this. I wonder if the House would give the Speaker a chance to review the statements made prior to today and to come back to the House tomorrow with a ruling on this particular issue.

The hon. member, would you please finish.

(1510)

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, it appears that someone agrees with the point we raised since on Monday, June 6, just three days after I raised the issue, the B.C. ministry received a notice removing both the father and father-in-law as directors of the company.

Rather than demanding a retraction, the member should be offering answers to questions raised about arm's length relationships.

The Speaker: My colleagues, any time we get into this type of views in the House of Commons, by their very nature we are going to have different opinions. The Chair will review every-

thing that has been said by the hon. member for Vancouver South and the Chair will review what has been said by the hon. member for Simcoe Centre.

I would prefer not to make a decision now but I will come back to the House with a decision at the earliest possible time.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these appointments are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-41, an act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing) and other acts in consequence thereof.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition wherein the citizens ask the government to request the CRTC to monitor different forms of abuse whether it be inappropriate language, physical or other forms of violence.

They point out that it is not necessary to have abusive kinds of relationships or language or behaviour portrayed on television in order to entertain or inform.

These petitioners believe that many of the efforts they make to raise their families are counteracted by the abusive forms of behaviour we see on television and other media.

RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition on behalf of my constituents asking the government to amend the Divorce Act to grant grandparents access to grandchildren.

At this time I am receiving calls pretty well daily from across the country from grandparents who are under stress because they do not have access to grandchildren. I hope all sides of the House will work hard to amend this injustice.

[Translation]

POSTAL SERVICE

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul): Mr. Speaker, I want to table a petition signed by over 2,800 Verdun residents who want their post office to remain open.

(1515)

That petition follows another one on the same issue, which was tabled last March 17.

My constituents enjoy the professional service provided to them at that post office, where the Canadian flag flies proudly.

[English]

ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House three petitions calling on the government to retain the existing laws that prohibit the aiding and abetting of suicide and euthanasia.

A total of 75 constituents have signed these petitions which state physicians in Canada should be working to save lives, not to end them.

I want my constituents to know that I concur in their view that Parliament should keep and enforce the present laws regarding doctor assisted suicide.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition of several hundred names signed by residents of Pembroke, Petawawa, Chalk River, Deep River, Stonecliffe and many other areas.

Mr. Frank Cirella, the store owner who sponsored this petition, has been robbed three times, each time by young offenders.

The petitioners want the law to provide for the release of names of young offenders. They want the lowering of the age limit to allow prosecution to meet the severity of the crime.

Routine Proceedings

They feel that the law must be greatly tightened up in order to provide for the proper punishment of young offenders.

Since this petition was signed the new legislation relating to young offenders has been tabled in the House of Commons.

ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand before the House and introduce a petition on behalf of some members of my constituency who are asking that this Parliament not repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way and to uphold the Supreme Court of Canada's decision of September 30, 1993 to disallow assisted suicide or euthanasia.

I wholly concur with this petition and submit it to this House.

ABORTION

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to table a number of petitions on behalf of my constituents.

The first one is asking Parliament to act immediately to extend the protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by the born to unborn human beings.

ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is asking Parliament to 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 and abetting of suicide to achieve passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I present two petitions, one with 849 signatures and the other with 236 signatures.

The petitioners request that Parliament not amend the human rights code or 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.

On behalf of these citizens I present these petitions and I also support their point of view.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I present a petition on behalf of a number of constituents of Parkdale—High Park.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon the Government of Canada to intervene immediately in the decade old national ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The petitioners report that basic human rights of the Tamil people are violated by Sri Lankan security forces and that economic sanctions imposed on the

Routine Proceedings

northern province of Sri Lanka for the last three and half years have led to severe shortages of essential items such as food, medicine and fuel.

The petitioners therefore urge the Government of Canada to bring about an unconditional ceasefire in Sri Lanka through the good offices of the United Nations; second, to further bring the parties to the conflict to the negotiating table; third, to suspend forthwith all foreign aid to the Sri Lankan government and if necessary impose sanctions until there is a cessation of hostilities and human rights violations.

(1520)

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition with 62 signatures. The Criminal Code of Canada, section 241, states: "Anyone who counsels a person to commit suicide or aids or abets a person to commit suicide, whether suicide ensues or not, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years".

The purpose of the petition is to request that the House of Commons not change that particular section of the Criminal Code. I would like my constituents to know that I concur with this petition and I am proud to present it.

ABORTION

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting three petitions on behalf of some of my constituents.

One calls upon the government to amend the Criminal Code to protect unborn children.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, my next petition requests the government to prohibit assisted suicide.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, the final petition is one which opposes same sex benefits.

ABORTION

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I stand, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to table a petition. I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of 40 of my constituents, all from the town of Three Hills, Alberta, who wish to draw the following to the attention of members in this House. Whereas the majority of Canadians respect the sanctity of human life and whereas human life at the preborn stage is not protected in Canadian society, the petitioners ask that Parliament act immediately to extend

protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings. I support this petition.

WITNESS PROTECTION

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. The first one contains approximately 250 signatures from people all across southern Ontario and draws to the attention of the House the very great need for the protection of witnesses and for the ability of the state to help to relocate witnesses and people who are able to help in the prosecution of crimes.

The petitioners go on to request that this House enact Bill C-206, which I have had the honour to put before the House, at the earliest opportunity so as to provide a statutory foundation for a national witness relocation and protection program.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, the second petition concerns violent crime and young offenders and the petitioners request that Parliament recognize and address the concerns raised in the petition, in particular to amend the Criminal Code of Canada and the Young Offenders Act and to provide heavier penalties for those convicted of violent crime. I am pleased to note that our government has moved in precisely that direction.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, at the request of a colleague I am presenting on behalf of some of the citizens of Victoria, British Columbia a petition which prays and requests that Parliament not amend 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, including amending the Human Rights Act to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

ETHANOL

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition: "We, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to maintain the present exemption on the excise portion of ethanol for a decade, allowing for a strong and self-sufficient ethanol industry in Canada".

KILLER CARDS

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present two petitions brought forward by constituents in the riding of York South—Weston that asks the Parliament of Canada to amend the laws of Canada to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of killer

cards in law and to advise producers of killer cards that their products, if destined for Canada, will be seized and destroyed.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

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

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, an act to establish the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

(1525)

Ms Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I believe I have three minutes but I would like to wind up, particularly since hon. members of the third party were so anxious to hear more of my speech before we broke for Question Period. I did not want to disappoint them.

In conclusion, this bill is, as was stated by the minister and by others earlier, basically a housekeeping bill but it is a very important bill. It sets up the Department of Citizenship and Immigration as a department standing on its own, not in the realm of public security, but in the realm of nation building.

We are here in this government to fulfil our red book promises. We believe that a great way to fulfil those promises is through the method of immigration. We know that setting up this department in the manner to which the minister has alluded and in the manner the legislation sets up will be a good thing for Canada. We are in the business of building this nation to make it as strong and united from coast, to coast, to coast as we can.

I support this bill with great hopes for the future of our great country.

Government Orders

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, I would like to get one item clarified on where the Department of Citizenship and Immigration stands with regard to criminals who are non-citizens in our country.

I want to make it perfectly clear that I am honoured to be here as an MP and an immigrant who received his citizenship not too many years back. I consider it a privilege to have been selected by my constituency to represent these people.

One thing that is quite concerning in the hearts of the individuals in Wild Rose reverts to the case of Charles Ng in which we kept this individual in the country for a number of years, an extremely costly venture, millions of dollars I understand. We also recently had a conviction in the city of Calgary by another non-citizen who was considered to be here illegally and was a corrupt policeman I believe in his country of origin. He was convicted of murdering a policeman in my riding.

Having visited the Kingston penitentiary recently I talked to a number of inmates who are non-citizens. Drumheller, Bowden in my riding, federal institutions, have a great number of non-citizens. One of the inmates who was a non-citizen stated that he purposely came to Canada because he found it easier to operate his particular drug ring in this country than anywhere else on this continent.

I hear these kinds of things. What I am concerned about is the fact that we do have a number of non-citizens, serious criminals who are now confined and others who are awaiting indictment. Would the Department of Citizenship and Immigration support the idea of deportation of non-citizens who are convicted of serious crimes?

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Wild rose for his intervention and his questions. I might add that we too are delighted that he is here both as an immigrant and as an MP and I hope that at a future time the hon. member as an immigrant and as a member of Parliament will stand in this House and talk about his own success story as a new Canadian and the success stories of many other new Canadians as well.

As the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration frequently says, unfortunately it is too often the planes that crash that get coverage and get notice even here in this House as opposed to the planes that land. I look forward to the hon. member's intervention in that area.

(1530)

With regard to his comments about criminals and deportation, certainly the hon. member should know that the minister has said frequently, on more than one occasion both in the House and outside, that he has zero tolerance for abusers of the system, for people who commit crimes in this country or commit certain acts that were they within this country would be considered

Government Orders

crimes. We do not want to see or tolerate that kind of activity within our policy levels.

I can assure the hon. member that the minister has promised legislation addressing these concerns will be forthcoming very soon in the House.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the point raised by my hon. friend from Wild Rose. I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary a question based on a statement he made which perhaps was not quite clear. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary will comment.

If I understood the hon. member for Wild Rose correctly, he was proposing that criminals upon conviction be deported. If this is the suggestion in my respectful submission it does not make much sense at all. We would then be saying that if somebody who happens to be a non-citizen commits a murder and is convicted his sole penalty would be deportation to his country of origin, which does not make the slightest bit of sense.

If the hon. member is suggesting that upon completion of serving any sentence imposed for the commission of a crime the Government of Canada should consider deporting a criminal, that is an entirely different matter.

Would the hon. parliamentary secretary agree that it does not make much sense to deport criminals who have been convicted immediately? In my view that would encourage more people to come to Canada to commit crimes, knowing that their only penalty would be deportation.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Scarborough West, my colleague both as a member of the House and as a member of the bar. Of course the member is absolutely right. The forthcoming legislation will respect all the principles of due process.

If the hon. member for Wild Rose is suggesting that we would be saving money—heaven forbid that I should anticipate the hon. member's theories—the hon. member for Scarborough is absolutely right that we would be opening ridiculous floodgates for people who would come here and think they could do pretty much as they please: walk into any place in Canada and rob a bank and the only sanction would be deportation to the country of origin because there is no real process for these people to be tried, convicted and punished elsewhere.

The point we are concerned about is ensuring at the end of the process that these people do not abuse the immigration and citizenship system in our country.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should have clarified that a bit. I am talking specifically about those people who come here, commit crimes and are desperately wanted in their countries of origin.

I am thinking of Charles Ng particularly. Why did we house him and spend millions of dollars for six years? We did not want to send him back to California where he was wanted for 22 murders or something. Inmates from Drumheller, for example, have expressed openly that even though they were caught the penalties in this country were not very severe. They would rather be caught here than go back and face the penalties they would have to face in other parts of the world.

I think we should analyse the whole issue. If it is a bigger benefit financially than punishment wise or whatever, we should probably consider sending them back.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I understand and sympathize with the sentiment of the hon. member. He and I have had this discussion before on other matters.

One cannot legislate for individual cases such as Charles Ng. One has to legislate in the broad spectrum for all people. We cannot create a law that says this is what we will do here because we would be omniscient. We cannot anticipate what every situation will be.

(1535)

We have to pass laws within the context of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, within the context of our criminal law and its precedents, and within the context of English common law and its belief in justice and due process. We have to do the very best we can within that context. The passage of law and the philosophy behind the criminal law, the immigration law, et cetera, is not entirely driven by financial exigency.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-35 to formalize the department of immigration and citizenship. I do not oppose the creation of the department. However it is important for the House to consider the mandate of the department and the way that mandate is fulfilled. I would like to discuss one aspect in particular: the department's processing of refugees.

Canada has undertaken, with the support of its citizens, to offer safe haven to people the world over who are in danger of death or serious harm in their countries of origin. It is help we are proud to be able to offer.

I therefore want to talk not about whether we should continue to accept refugees—I believe we can and should do that—but about the process of how we determine to whom we should offer assistance in this regard. More specifically I want to talk about the acceptance of inland refugee applicants, those who are now in Canada, and how it affects refugees who cannot afford to come to Canada before applying.

There are literally millions of people from all over the world who are in dire need of help. Even as we sit here safe and comfortable, many of these people are experiencing starvation, injury and even death. Most cannot afford or find a way to travel

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to safety in other countries and are instead forced to wait until help reaches them where they are.

According to a report by the executive committee of the United Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, in 1992 the world refugee population rose to a staggering 19 million. Some of the numbers mentioned in the same report were as follows: 420,000 Somali refugees in Kenya; 80,000 Bhutanese in Nepal; 250,000 refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh; and 280,000 Togolese in Benin and Ghana. These are only a few of the many people around the world whose lives have been shattered and who are often living on the edge of survival. Nor is there any end in sight. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, already strained to the limit, has said in stark terms that "the number of refugees continues relentlessly to grow".

In the face of this massive need for safe haven, Canada has offered to take in approximately 30,000 refugees this year. Of these, approximately half of the spaces are reserved for inland refugees already in Canada. Many of these refugee applicants are legitimate refugees who have overcome incredible odds to arrive on our shores and ask for help.

We should also realize that a large number of inland refugee applicants are not legitimate refugees and come to Canada simply to find a better life. This is understandable and we should continue to encourage the arrival of productive individuals through immigration.

Under the present policy there are well over 200,000 spaces available to people wishing to come to Canada as immigrants but a very limited number of spaces for refugees. In view of this it is important to take special precautions when deciding which inland refugees are legitimate claimants and which ones are simply seeking to skip immigration procedures, seeking to jump the queue by claiming refugee status.

The United Nations has issued a warning to countries that offer asylum to refugees. In the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

The line between the voluntary migrant and the refugee is a fine one. Yet it is important for states to be able to make the distinction in a fair and consistent manner so that people who genuinely need asylum are granted it, and so that the protection system for refugees is not overwhelmed with economically motivated migrants.

(1540)

I share the concern of the UNHCR that if we continue to increase the numbers of inland refugee applicants accepted in Canada we will take away spaces from those people who cannot afford to come to Canada before applying for refugee status.

A confidential report recently leaked to the media from the office of the minister of immigration brings to light some troubling facts. First, the acceptance rate of inland refugees has

jumped under the minister's newly appointed board members. It is not a small increase but rather in the words of the minister's own staff it is: "the first really significant quarterly increase since the board's inception".

The report shows that fully 67 per cent of all inland refugee applicants are currently being accepted by the new board. This has had the effect of allowing 4,855 refugee claimants to stay in Canada or almost one-third of the total annual target of 15,000 in the first quarter of 1994 alone. At this rate the full annual target of inland refugees will be met well before the year is up.

What happens then? Will the minister expand the total available refugee spaces in Canada even though the services we are able to provide to Canadians are already strained because of our economic situation? Or, will the inland refugee category alone expand and take away spaces from refugees who cannot afford to come to Canada to apply for refugee status?

If all inland applicants for refugee status currently applying were truly in fear of their lives it would be one thing, but the increase in acceptance rate leads to the conclusion that the immigration board is weakening the criteria in the case of inland refugees. The new refugee board vice-chairman has offered two alternative explanations for the increase but the facts tell a different story.

One explanation is that a new streamlining process is in place. Yet the leaked report states:

The proportion of claims completed in under four hours at traditional full hearings declined from 60 per cent during 1993— to 53 per cent in the first quarter of 1994.

The report goes on to state:

New CRDD member appointments may largely account for the general decrease in the percentage of claims completed at the regular hearing in less than four hours.

This can hardly be characterized as streamlining.

The second explanation is that a large number of Somalis and Sri Lankans have finally had their claims heard. It is understandable that the recent crises in these countries have produced a large number of refugees. However, again according to the report, the acceptance rate for inland applicants from nine out of ten source countries mentioned has similarly shot up; the most significant rates of acceptance being for refugee claimants from China, Pakistan and Israel. This across the board increase suggests that something other than recent outbreaks of violence in the two countries mentioned or a streamlined review process explains the increased rate of acceptance for inland refugees.

I believe we owe it to ourselves and to the millions of legitimate refugees the world over not to apply sloppy procedures or the lowering of standards to dictate who will fill the limited number of refugees Canada can afford to help.

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We have already broadened the category of what constitutes a legitimate refugee to be the most open in the developed world. With increasing budgetary restraints in the country and with the tenfold cost of processing refugee claimants here instead of overseas, perhaps it is time we re-examined the criteria under which we admit inland refugee claimants to Canada. At the very least we have to stringently apply existing criteria.

The recent case of Pedro Hugo, an admitted terrorist, is a case that exemplifies the current laxity of our refugee laws. After being returned to Peru and living there for 18 months, Hugo was returned at taxpayers' expense to Canada because it was alleged that the board had "erred" in judgment. Only after Canadian taxpayers, including hard working immigrants, had paid for Hugo's plane flights, legal aid and housing did the board come to the obvious conclusion for the second time that Hugo was not a legitimate refugee.

(1545)

In the face of 19 million refugees world-wide the vast majority of whom cannot afford to come to Canada to claim refugee status, we have a moral duty to be very careful about which inland refugee claimants we allow to stay in Canada. It is imperative we do not let misplaced generosity interfere with these decisions. Every person who comes here claiming refugee status because they want to find a better opportunity or because they simply do not like it in their own country is taking the place of someone who is in desperate circumstances or truly in danger for their lives.

The decisions to be made are not easy ones but they have to be faced. In the words of Sadako Ogata the UN High Commissioner for Refugees: "Resettlement should be driven by need rather than want". Let us make sure we find and admit the real refugees.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Calgary North for her very fine remarks. I think we are all very much in agreement in this House that the problem of refugees is a very delicate and sensitive one. Although I do not agree in the case of the inland refugee situation right now that there has been laxity on the part of the government, it is certainly true those who are here have an advantage over those who are not. We certainly should bear heed to what she says. We must be very careful to try to be as fair and just as we can.

My comment pertains to a little slip the hon. member made in her speech. When she began she referred to the department as the ministry of immigration and citizenship. I immediately took note of that because of course in this bill we are talking about combining citizenship and immigration in the ministry. If I may say so it is citizenship and immigration rather than the other way around.

The very important point I am about to make is that it struck me as very wrong because there is one thing I would have changed in the bill. I would have changed it to immigration and citizenship instead of the other way around simply because immigration is the body of this country. When immigrants come here they come to be fed and to find shelter, heat and warmth and to sustain their physical selves. I would say that citizenship is the soul of this country. It is what the people of this country give in terms of their minds and whole beings.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's remarks. I assure him that referring to the department with the name reversed was not a Freudian slip. However, I do agree with his remarks. I believe that immigration comes before citizenship and if he would like to make an amendment to the bill to change the name of the department I would be very happy to second it.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made a distinction between refugees who are outside Canada and those who come here and apply for refugee status. She expressed a number of reservations and apprehensions, but I would like to tell her that we have a system in this country, the Immigration and Refugee Board, whose commissioners are asked to determine who is a bona fide refugee under the Geneva convention and who is not.

I sometimes think such apprehensions are unfounded. I would also like to inform the hon. member that in all countries, in the United States as well as in Europe, refugees knock on the door to ask for political asylum. This is not unique to Canada. This is common throughout the world. That is why independent and autonomous bodies are asked to determine who is a refugee and who is not.

(1550)

[English]

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge my colleague's expertise in this area. Having been an immigrant he probably has greater knowledge in some areas than I do.

The concern is that one-third of the spaces available in our inland refugee program were filled in the first quarter of the year. That means either one of two things: Very few inland refugees will be able to be admitted as the year progresses because the quota has been filled so early; or that the quota for inland refugees will displace some of the quota for refugees who are in other countries and under severe stress. It was more a word of caution that our system be very careful to make sure it balances those two competing interests.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-35, to consolidate citizenship and immigration functions, I believe is a laudable one to attempt to streamline and reduce duplication. I can only applaud this manoeuvre and hope

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that when the two ministries are brought together there can be a streamlining of administration, increased efficiency and significant savings to the taxpayer, particularly important in these days of deficit spending. I have no real problems with the bill, but I think this might be a superb opportunity to address many of the unanswered questions on immigration and some of the efforts the new department should undertake.

One of the greatest characteristics of our beautiful country and one I am very proud of is our cultural mosaic. Very few countries in this world of ours have been able to assimilate a heterogeneous group of people from all over the world. In fact, every country in the world is represented within our borders. We have managed to create a melting pot with a minimal amount of civil strife, prejudice and intolerance. As a result of this, we have produced a rich culture that has benefited all individuals who live within our borders.

The exposure to different cultures, ethnic groups and religions is something that enriches us all and breeds tolerance. It is perhaps this tolerance and understanding that we as Canadians seem to have that sets us apart from almost every other country in the world giving us our unique international characteristics. It is this unique level of tolerance and understanding that has given us such a high level of esteem in international circles. There is no doubt in my mind that immigration has proven to be a benefit to us.

Today in the 1990s much has been said about immigration. Often passionate and divergent views are extolled about immigrants from many quarters. The numbers of immigrants: Are they too high? Are they too low? Their characteristics: Are we allowing too many in with certain characteristics that would not benefit the country? The country of origin: Are some countries better suited to adapt to the Canadian way of life than others? Are immigrants a boon or are they a loadstone to this country?

Those questions are even more pertinent today. They have a certain imperativeness about them in their response because of our high unemployment levels, our uncertain economic future, the rapidly shifting trends in the economy and our relatively lower standard of living that plagues current generations more so than others in the past.

The arguments also become more passionate and more subjective as these pressures on Canadian society grow. Immigrants are often taken as a scapegoat for some of these problems in this country. In order to serve the Canadian public, the country and the immigrant population better, I believe it is imperative that these questions be addressed and that these problems be met head on instead of trying to avoid them.

It does not pay to ignore life's realities. Thus there has never been a better time to ask for the truth about immigration. What immigration levels should we have? What type of immigrants

should we be selecting? The only way to get this is through cold, hard data. Let us not hide from this.

First it would serve to have a brief overview of immigration in Canada. As I have said before, immigrants no doubt have been a tremendous boon to this country. I am an immigrant and I am proud and very thankful at being allowed to come to this country. In fact, I like to think of this country as a founding country of many different races.

(1555)

Between 1967 and 1978 immigration policy favoured highly qualified and skilled immigrants with high education. They came to this country and got jobs. Their earnings grew and in fact exceeded those of indigenous Canadians. They became a net contributor to the treasury and there was minimal job displacement.

After 1978 the immigration policy changed. The education of immigrants fell and their earnings fell. There was more job displacement, particularly by unskilled workers from third world countries.

There is also less integration now than before. Immigrant adaptation has also taken longer than before. This adaptation is dependent upon a number of characteristics: the immigrants' education, language, age and the nature of the receiving society, the level of skills required by the country, the labour market and the extent to which the country is receptive toward them.

In the last 10 to 15 years we have had a decreasing number in the independent class of immigrants, those who were selected to come to this country and went through a selection process and had a very high chance of getting a job. An increase in the number of family reunification class of individuals has happened in Canada in the last 10 years. Those are people who were allowed into the country purely on the basis of having a relative here.

The immigration policy from 1967 to 1980 was undoubtedly successful. That was due primarily to the selection process I mentioned and the commitment of our country to minority cultures, tolerance, equal rights and human rights for all.

However, recent trends in the labour market performance of immigrants have been disquieting. Much has been stated by various people on the level of criminality among immigrants and whether or not they are a loadstone or a benefit to Canada in terms of social services. I have not been able to see any data or information on this subject, but I think it is high time we started to look at the truth, not to create any scapegoats for this country's problems but rather to better serve the immigrant population and the citizens in Canada.

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If immigrants are having a difficult time and are going to the social services in a disproportionate fashion, then we need to determine what we can do to alleviate this problem. Perhaps the solution is in having a better selection process for what Canada needs in terms of its economy and also providing the immigrant population with more targeted services.

It is also time that we looked at immigrant populations and determined what they are doing at perhaps six months, one year and two years after they come to Canada to determine whether or not they are an economic benefit. In times of deficit spending our country cannot tolerate a greater strain on social services. As I have said in the past, Canada cannot help other countries unless it itself has a vibrant and strong economy with low unemployment and a reasonable level of growth. It is only by providing this strong economy within our country that we can extend our hands economically and technically to other less advantaged countries.

Another question is as to how many immigrants run foul of the law. This has been mentioned today. It would be prudent for us to determine this if the statistics are there, but they are not. We need to know what we should do about it. Other issues which are important are the individuals who commit indictable offences in this country, after having their guilt or innocence proven, should automatically be deported back to their country if they are proven to be guilty. It is completely unfair for the Canadian taxpayer to foot the bill in excess of \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year per person for an individual who is incarcerated in a penal institution. Currently 85 per cent of individuals who commit a crime and are thought to be eligible for deportation stay in this country. This must stop now.

Another aspect that is unfair is that we should not allow visitors to come to this country with the express interest of having babies on our soil so that their children will automatically have the rights and privileges of Canadian citizenship. In other words, Canadian citizenship should not be automatic if a child is merely born in this country to a person who is a visitor.

Immigrants and Canadian citizens will benefit from a well thought out immigration policy.

(1600)

I would implore the hon. minister to do the following: Tie non-refugee groups of immigrants to the economic needs of the country and make these rules colour blind with no bias in terms of country of origin. We must also not forget our humanitarian obligations under the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Let us tighten up the definition of refugee class. It does not serve the legitimate refugees in this country or the independent class of refugees if they are queue jumped by individuals who come to this country with fabricated reasons.

Let us also look at New Zealand and Australia as examples of countries whose policies of family reunification classification we should adopt. They are well thought out and they are fair to all parties.

We also should do HIV testing for individuals who wish to immigrate to this country. People are tested for other groups of infectious diseases. There is no reason why HIV, a disease that tragically has a 100 per cent fatality rate, is not tested for.

Also, amalgamating citizenship and immigration I would lastly suggest that the ministry consult with a private group that specializes in giving advice on streamlining the ministry. It may serve the Canadian public and the minister as well to have this expertise as it costs about \$50,000 per year to have an immigrant processed.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, just a short question to clarify one portion of my hon. colleague's speech and in particular in connection with what I believe I heard him say, the automatic deportation of criminals who have been convicted of crimes who are not Canadian citizens. I want to be perfectly clear and I want to ask the member if he has actually thought this through.

I want to give him an example and ask for his comments specifically. Is the member saying that if a person who is not a citizen is convicted of a crime in this country he should be immediately deported or is he saying that he should be deported after serving his sentence?

Let us suppose someone comes up from Washington state and robs a bank using a handgun. If that person is apprehended and convicted of armed robbery in British Columbia, is the position of the hon. member that the only thing that should happen to that person is that person be returned to Washington state or is the hon. member in fact saying that after having served the appropriate sentence for armed robbery then the person should be returned?

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member's question the person should go through our courts, guilt or innocence should be determined and if he or she is found to be guilty then they should be deported to the country of origin with the understanding that the person should be faced with serving a sentence appropriate to the crime in the country of origin.

My constituents have told me they think it is grossly unfair that the Canadian taxpayer has to foot the bill in the order of \$50,000 or \$60,000 per year to have this person sit in a penal institution for that period of time. It is a cost that I do not think Canadian taxpayers should have to shoulder.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I too am looking for some clarification. I do not hold any particular brief for immigrants who commit especially serious crimes. If I understood the hon. member correctly I think he indicated that he would like to see the collection of some data on the criminal

activity of immigrants here in this country. I really wonder about that, where that would take this and what some people might do with it.

My concern would be that if we were to compile data on the criminal activity of immigrants it would be easy for some people to strike an average for any group of immigrants, whether it is Iran, Haiti or Scotland or wherever. If they were to be committing crimes above average, any more of them would be discouraged from coming to Canada. Those committing crimes below average would be encouraged to come to Canada. I am not too sure.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I do understand what the hon. member is saying. The last thing I want to do is institute any element of prejudice into this at all. There has been much said by various people in the media and groups in this country that certain immigrants are criminals and they should not be allowed into the country.

(1605)

I am looking for answers that have not been provided by the minister of immigration. I think it is important for us to determine whether there are individuals coming into this country who are criminals or who commit criminal acts in this country. If we can do a better job of determining who those individuals are beforehand, in other words have some way of predicting this behaviour in the future such as, for example, if they have a criminal record in the country of origin, perhaps we can use this data to protect the citizens of this country.

That is what I am driving at, not to institute any prejudice on the country of origin. Rather, if there are characteristics of an individual who comes to this country who has had criminal behaviour in the past and is an incorrigible criminal, we should know this information before they come here in order to protect the citizens of this country and not allow them to enter into our borders.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the member on the other side is an immigrant and a new Canadian and that he will have some sensitivity to other new Canadians. I also understand that the member opposite is a physician. I was wondering if the member was educated in Canada.

I would also like to ask the member, just as a bit of clarification and edification on his earlier remark, whether we should do an economic analysis of the benefits that immigrants provide this country. If indeed the member on the other side was educated as a medical doctor, which is an incredible cost to the Canadian taxpayer, I was wondering if he has figured out his economic benefit to this country.

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Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I came to this country when I was eight years old from England. I will clarify what I said. I was saying in my speech that we need to find out whether or not individuals who come to this country are going on social services or are not.

The only reason I say this is to dispel a lot of the myths that are being thrown around. I am trying to get at the answers. I am not making any prediction as to what immigrant groups are or are not doing, but I think it is important for us to find out if immigrants are or are not going on our social services. If they are, then perhaps we are doing something wrong and perhaps we can find ways of helping them to ensure that they do not go on social services or perhaps integrate them into Canadian society in a better way.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: 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.)

* * *

MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT, 1994

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-23, an act to implement a convention for the protection of migratory birds in Canada and the United States, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

(1610)

Hon. John Manley (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Manley (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in his book *The Living Planet*, David Attenborough, the British zoologist, tells the story of an ecosystem off the coast of Peru. Several decades ago, two islands, Chincha and San Gallan, were home to about 5.5 million guanay, a type of cormorant. The guanay lived within this very rich ecosystem, feeding on small anchovies that were abundant in the area.

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The guanay produced guano, the accumulated excrement used by Indians and others as fertilizer. Excrement fell into the sea and fed the plankton which, in turn, fed the anchovies. It was a perfectly balanced ecosystem.

When chemical fertilizers were developed, the Peruvians decided it was easier to buy fertilizer at the store instead of harvesting it on the islands. The birds were no longer needed. And meanwhile, the Peruvians started harvesting more and more of the small anchovies. In one year, they caught 14,000 tonnes! As a result, hundreds of thousands of guanay died, and guano production dropped to zero. The plankton were no longer fertilized, and their numbers deteriorated to the point that the anchovies practically disappeared.

The moral of this true story is that the ecosystem maintains an almost perfect natural balance. However, when one link is removed, the whole chain is destroyed.

[*English*]

I guess this is the reason for Bill C-23. We are trying to preserve the ecosystem by doing our utmost to preserve our species in Canada. Therefore I am glad to have this opportunity to speak on the amendments to the Migratory Birds Convention Act and to commend fellow members of Parliament for the interest they have shown and for their tremendous contribution in the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development to strengthening this legislation which protects these important species.

Bringing this bill before the House for third reading is an appropriate follow-up to Environmental Week. Bill C-23 is part of the current effort to improve federal wildlife and habitat legislation, including amending the Canada Wildlife Act. These amendments will lead to the proclamation of the wild animal and plant protection, regulation of international and interprovincial trade as well as consultations which will lead to negotiations with the United States on amending the migratory birds convention itself.

On April 25 Bill C-23 was introduced in the House of Commons on behalf of the Minister of the Environment. It will replace and repeal the current Migratory Birds Convention Act which was enacted 77 years ago in 1917.

In the early 1900s, exploitation of birds led to the drastic declines in their population, particularly in eastern North America. The migratory birds convention was therefore signed by Canada and the United States in 1916 committing each country to protect migratory birds from indiscriminate slaughter and to sustain their populations.

The Migratory Birds Convention Act was enacted in 1917 to implement the terms of the convention in Canada by managing the harvest of ducks, geese and of other game birds and by protecting migratory non-game birds.

(1615)

Provisions of the act are designed to regulate hunting, prevent trafficking and commercialization, control the uses of migratory birds through permits and allow for the creation of migratory birds sanctuaries in order to control and manage areas important for the protection of the birds. There are currently 101 migratory bird sanctuaries in Canada which together protect approximately 11.3 million hectares.

The act has remained relatively unchanged over the last 77 years with only minor additions and amendments. In the context of the 1990s natural resource management must incorporate not only the environmental objectives but also must meet social, cultural and of course economic concerns.

The amendments proposed in Bill C-23 are designed to ensure the sustainable life of migratory birds and their enjoyment by Canadians. They also address our international commitments to the wise management of an internationally shared resource, and are consistent with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most tangible and important results of the earth summit in Rio two years ago. It was ratified by Canada in December 1992 and requires that countries regulate or manage biological resources to ensure their conservation and sustainable use and that countries establish a system of protected areas to conserve biodiversity.

A comprehensive review of Environment Canada's regulations was conducted in 1993, including a review of the regulations adopted pursuant to the Migratory Birds Convention Act. The consultation process involved a broad range of stakeholders including hunters, aviculturists, taxidermists, farmers, members of environmental and wildlife groups, representatives of aboriginal peoples, researchers, provincial and territorial wildlife agencies, outfitters and representatives of industry. The findings of the review suggested improvement to streamline the administration, to modernize procedures and make the regulations more enforceable.

A process not related to this bill is currently under way to amend the migratory birds convention in order to address aboriginal and treaty rights, harvest birds during the closed season as well as harvest eggs. That process involving extensive consultations with aboriginal people's organizations will lead to negotiations with the United States to amend the convention itself. In the meantime, special measures that allow continued pursuit of traditional harvesting in the spring and early summer are in place to address the closed season harvest of migratory birds.

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[*Translation*]

Preparing amendments to the Migratory Birds Convention Act has required extensive consultation on the federal regulations designed to protect these birds.

After second reading, there was another opportunity for consultation on the proposed changes when the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development carried out a thorough study of the bill, with some excellent comments by a wide range of witnesses. Several changes proposed by the committee have been included, and I am therefore confident that the bill now better reflects the interests of all Canadians and will help us protect migratory birds effectively, now and in the future.

Many of these amendments are so-called housekeeping amendments to update and clarify existing provisions. Major changes include much higher fines for offences, greater flexibility in sentencing for the courts, better protection for migratory birds and stricter and more efficient implementation procedures.

In using its power to legislate on these issues, Parliament reflects the values of Canadians and their interest in protecting our wildlife heritage. These changes will be compatible with other federal acts that regulate natural resources and the environment. Implementation of this legislation will be flexible, while acting as a major deterrent to unlawful activities.

(1620)

[*English*]

The poaching and smuggling of migratory birds is a lucrative and growing business. Growing demand for Canadian species of migratory birds and eggs is increasing their value and could put some species at risk.

A serious offence under the act is one in which an illegal activity is detrimental to the survival of a species, as such is the case when the activity involves an endangered species or a large quantity of specimens of a threatened or other species.

Based on these factors, the committee decided to increase substantially the penalties for offences beyond what was proposed in the original bill. It must be recalled that the original bill, passed in 1917, is now 77 years old and what used to constitute significant fines then are completely insignificant today.

For serious offences, the maximum fine will be increased from \$300 in the existing bill to \$100,000 for an individual or \$250,000 for a corporation with provisions for increasing fines for a continuing or subsequent offence.

The courts will also have greater flexibility in imposing sentences by providing court authority for special orders. Such orders can be particularly effective in the case of environmental

legislation where those convicted can be ordered to remedy the harm, pay for their remediation, avoid activity which could lead to repeat offences, publish the facts relating to the case or perform community service.

They allow the courts to take into account not only the nature of the offence but also the particular circumstances of the person convicted. Therefore it allows for constructive and creative sentencing.

[*Translation*]

Amending the Migratory Birds Convention Act has given us an opportunity to consider how, in the future, we can react to activities that are a threat to migratory birds. In accordance with the Biodiversity Convention, the sperm, embryos, and tissue cultures of migratory birds will now be included under the act. Eggs are already protected under the legislation. Although there is no immediate threat to migratory birds in this respect, there are constantly new developments in the use of biological materials.

Instead of preventing such uses, the act, as amended, is designed to ensure that these developments do not threaten the conservation of migratory birds and the many benefits they bring to Canadians. Activities associated with tissue cultures and the use of sperm, eggs and embryos of migratory birds will be regulated and managed through licensing programs.

[*English*]

As I mentioned previously, natural resource management must incorporate not only environmental and economic concerns but social and cultural values as well. Canada's aboriginal people have lived in harmony with the land and its wildlife for many centuries, for thousands of years as they say. Their heritage and even their survival have been linked to the sustainable use of wildlife resources.

Migratory birds have had a particular significance to aboriginal peoples with a great tradition of knowledge developed over many generations, engendering both respect for the birds and an ability to ensure their sustainable use.

In response to testimony from several witnesses, the standing committee amended the original bill to better reflect aboriginal concerns by including a non-derogation clause in the bill. It states: "that nothing in this act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982".

This in itself is not sufficient to accommodate and respond to the traditional practices of Canada's aboriginal peoples. For this reason, a separate process is under way, as I mentioned earlier, to address aboriginal and treaty rights to harvest migratory birds during the closed season as well as the harvest of eggs.

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(1625)

Consultations with aboriginal peoples have been intensive over the past four years and will lead to negotiations with the United States later this year to amend the migratory birds convention. In the meantime special enforcement measures that allow continued pursuit of traditional harvesting in the spring and early summer are in place to address the closed season harvest of migratory birds under the existing and amended act.

[*Translation*]

The standing committee believes that Parliament must be given the opportunity to examine any changes to the convention following these or any future negotiations. For this reason, the committee added a provision to Bill C-23 which states that any amendment to the convention shall be submitted to both houses of Parliament and be debated here in the House of Commons.

A number of enforcement provisions have also been updated and strengthened in Bill C-23. These include provisions relating to inspections, searches, seizures, forfeiture and disposal of property as well as others consistent with the Criminal Code, the charter of rights and other federal enactments respecting the environment and natural resources.

The Minister of the Environment may also designate any person or class of persons to act as game officers. If these persons are employed by the government of a province, the appointment must be approved by that provincial government.

[*English*]

I mentioned the enforcement provisions at the end of my summary of the more substantive changes to the act. The reason for this is that it brings up an issue extremely important to the conservation of wildlife. Neither the federal government nor a provincial government, or for that matter the governments of other countries, can hope to effectively conserve biodiversity in isolation. Co-operation and partnership are the keys to achieving this goal and other goals linked to sustainable development.

From a point of view of both practicality and effectiveness the issue of enforcement is one in which a co-ordinated federal-provincial approach makes the most sense. There are many other areas for which this approach generates benefits, where the objectives and concerns are shared and where building on each other's strengths through co-operative action improves environmental results.

An excellent example of such a partnership is the international North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The plan, originally signed in 1986 is an initiative to protect and enhance wetland and upland habitat on a continental basis so as to stem the decline of waterfowl. The NAWMP has evolved from a plan

focused on waterfowl conservation to one that incorporates benefits toward biodiversity conservation.

The plan exemplifies sustainable development in action by involving private land owners and resource sectors to integrate wildlife conservation practices with sustainable economic development, particularly through soil and water conservation initiatives.

Partners include the United States federal and state governments, NGOs and certainly all Canadian provinces. As well Mexico is now a full partner, making the North American Waterfowl Management Plan a truly continental conservation plan.

On June 9 of this year the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment signed the update to the plan extending Canada's commitment for another five years.

As the minister pointed out, the success of the plan in the last six years has been to arrest the destruction and the loss of wetland habitat for migratory birds. Our common goal for the next five years is to set aside more breeding grounds and to see our skies filled with an annual migration of 100 million birds.

[*Translation*]

This co-operative approach offers some advantages for several other facets of wildlife conservation, some of which will be dealt with on third reading of the Canada Wildlife Act.

Bill C-23 which amends the Migratory Birds Convention Act represents a major step forward in the protection and conservation of migratory birds and in the fulfilment of our commitments under the Biodiversity Convention.

(1630)

[*English*]

This year, 1994, another three species of birds were added to the endangered species list of Canada. In April 1994 the list was made public and we learned that the bobwhite, the king rail and the Acadian flycatcher were added to Canada's list of endangered species.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada stated:

Again this year, we are finding that we are designating species particularly from southern Ontario and the Okanagan area of British Columbia—

It stressed that the big problem for many species is that they were running out of places to live. The Acadian flycatcher, for example, is a songbird that needs large tracks of forest which are increasingly scarce.

I quote from one member of the committee:

You can immediately see that as we cut up the forest into smaller and smaller patches there have been smaller and smaller numbers of these birds, and now it's down to a critical level of just a few dozen pairs.

This is the story as we deplete habitats. I know some will say this act is not important in itself, that it only concerns birds, and what are birds at a time of economic downturn when people are out of work and Canada faces a tremendous economic crisis. At the same time I would suggest that birds are part of the whole.

We have to look at the broader context of our heritage as a country and as a people. There can be no heritage without nature and all its components. Can we imagine Canada without the snow geese? Can we imagine Canada without its wildlife, without all its birds? Our heritage has been bestowed on us; we are blessed that way. We have to make a special effort to conserve, to preserve or to maintain that heritage for future generations.

There are good signs. The peregrine falcon had almost disappeared, and due to the efforts of volunteers all across Canada and a tremendous dedication by our wildlife services, including the federal wildlife service, the peregrine falcon is thriving again.

We must resolve ourselves to take very seriously matters that touch environment, quality of life, our ecosystems and habitats that preserve our birds and our wildlife. They are essential parts of the fibre of our land, of the way we live and of our heritage. I urge all members to join with me in supporting the bill unani- mously and reinforcing that resolve among us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I take part in this debate on Bill C-23 this afternoon, immediately after the parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis, in Quebec. These past few weeks, we have examined Bill C-23 to implement a convention for the protection of migratory birds in Canada and the United States.

(1635)

A great many witnesses have appeared before the committee to help us better grasp the problem. These individuals and organizations spokespersons were all experts from whom we have learned a lot. It is now obvious to me that this legislation, which was passed in 1917, really needed to be updated.

Knowing how important it is to protect migratory birds from becoming an endangered species, we Bloc members have no major problem with this bill, including the amendments proposed by the committee. It is simply a matter of bringing an outdated act into line with the realities of the 21st century. As the saying goes where I come from, foresight is better than hindsight. So, as soon as the act comes into effect, all birds flying across Canada will be protected.

You can imagine what it would be like if only certain species were to be protected. You can picture as well as me hunters

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noticing from afar something flying, shooting and then pleading rightly or wrongly that they thought it was a bird from another species. More illogical yet would be to protect only endangered species, letting other species be fired on at will until they too become endangered.

Amendments to this act will also enable us to pull the rug from under potential dealers in sperm, embryo and tissue culture.

The Convention on Biodiversity ratified by Canada in December 1992 unveiled what trading in such things could represent. It would be possible to create hybrid species for experimentation, or even conduct experiments directly on tissue. The possession, purchase or sale of migratory birds are also strictly prohibited. Indeed, it is now stipulated in this bill that no person shall be in possession of a migratory bird or nest, or buy, sell, exchange or give a migratory bird or nest or make it the subject of a commercial transaction.

So, that will be it from now on in living rooms or summer cottages where hunting trophies are displayed. In my part of the country, it is not uncommon to see displayed in summer homes stuffed specimens of these birds which are now so rare. The time for this is now past.

As the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis noted earlier, the fines—the maximum fines, of course—are very high, so much so, in fact, that during our committee deliberations, I often wondered out loud and said to myself that “migratory birds will be better protected than our children”.

The new Act will also give the minister more power in the designation of game officers. And I quote:

6. (1) The Minister may designate any person or class of persons to act as game officers for the purposes of this Act and the regulations—

I was somewhat intrigued by this provision, Mr. Speaker.

(1640)

I questioned witnesses in committee to find out whether the minister could, for instance, designate all members of a hunting and fishing association to act as game officers.

I was told yes, but that such associations might have restricted powers. I find this provision a little scary. It would be difficult for an ordinary citizen to go to a farmer's land to tell him that he is breaking the law. He runs a great risk of simply being ejected from a private property.

My fear is that some members of these associations may have big arms and small heads. A member automatically designated to act as game officer with little training but big arms could decide to play policeman.

I will always remember a sentence I heard in my Grade 11 course on social, political and economic life: “In Canada, a free country, it is better to see 99 guilty persons go free than one innocent person unjustly punished”. That made a big

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impression on me. It is a minor concern, but we will still vote for Bill C-23.

It is, however, a well-known fact that there are not enough game officers to enforce the act. In that case, we should recognize the need to designate civilian game officers immediately but with really restricted powers, to ensure that our laws are respected.

We in the Bloc Québécois think it would be worthwhile to take certain measures to ensure that the people collectively designated as game officers have the skills required to maintain credibility. That is why we suggested two amendments in committee.

The purpose of the first amendment is to ensure that the people collectively designated by the minister have at least received the training appropriate to their functions. That of the second amendment is to make the designation of a class of persons conditional on the approval of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

As regularly happens when we vote here in the House of Commons, our two amendments were defeated, but I am still convinced that it would be important to exercise a little more control over this kind of appointment; otherwise these provisions could do more harm than good.

If you allow me, I would now like to draw your attention to a presentation given to us by Daniel Jauvin, president of the Quebec ornithologists' association. This Quebec association of more than 30 bird-watching clubs or societies has produced many briefs on the protection of birds and their habitats.

In particular, it does scientific research on birds and especially on endangered species. This organization supports the bill but has nevertheless carried out a very worthwhile exercise. Its members checked the translation in the schedule to Bill C-23, namely the Convention.

(1645)

According to these experts of the ornithological association, the French terminology used to name the birds is obsolete. They therefore suggested to the committee the terminology used by the international commission on bird names in French as published in *Noms français des oiseaux du monde*. This terminology is the one recognized throughout the world. The problems are of two kinds. First, an attempt was made to translate directly from English to French. As a result, names of genera were translated by names of species. Second, the association believes that the names of many species which should be there are still missing, unfortunately.

As an appendix to their brief, they presented to us a proper translation of articles I to IV of the above-mentioned Convention. This presentation showed that we should go further than simply reading the legal terminology. Such translation problems can seriously affect the enforcement of the law. Some species

might be in the English version but not the French one. This would cause interpretation problems that would slow down and complicate law enforcement.

The hon. member for Terrebonne and myself were also very interested in the comments made by another speaker, Mr. Daniel Lacombe, who is the secretary general for the Fédération québécoise de la faune. That organization supports, of course, the proposed legislative changes but deplores the fact that all the regulations are left to the free will of officials from the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada. Mr. Lacombe also pointed out that it is unfortunate to see organizations such as the one he represents not being really consulted when regulations are drafted. It appears that the Canadian Wildlife Service merely informs these groups of the new rules in effect. Since these organizations use legislation such as Bill C-23, they should at least be consulted on a regular, effective, honest, and serious basis.

Mr. Lacombe gave us an example which illustrates the inconsistencies of the current process. He told us that the hunting season—this is something I still have a lot of trouble understanding, but that is the way it is—opens one week earlier in Ontario than in Quebec. The reason why it is later in Quebec is to protect the various species of birds. The same birds are found in Ontario and in Quebec, but the season opens earlier in Ontario because there are sedentary species. In other words, there are birds which remain in Ontario because they must have figured out that there is an imaginary line between the two provinces and they do not come to Quebec. However, Quebec birds do visit their friends in Ontario, where they can get bombarded one week earlier. This is the official reason which was given to our committee.

According to Mr. Lacombe, migratory birds mingle with other birds and the end result is the same for both groups. Consequently, Mr. Lacombe deplores that, when meetings take place with officials from the Canadian Wildlife Service, it is not possible to solve such issues, since those meetings are designed to provide information and not to consult organizations such as the one represented by Mr. Lacombe.

(1650)

I want to make a comment regarding the Canadian Wildlife Service. I received documents from the president of the Association des sauvagiers du Québec, Mr. Gaétan Fillion, who is upset at the lack of communication between his organization and the Canadian Wildlife Service. Mr. Speaker, the Fédération québécoise de la faune is not the only one suffering from this problem. It may be that this is a chronic problem only in Quebec, but it does seem persistent.

In our review of Bill C-23, we should look at the issue of regulations with those testimonies in mind. In that regard, officials from the Department of the Environment should look at two major issues. There are of course migratory birds which are

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endangered, but there are many others which pollute our environment, including gulls.

At the Daishowa manufacturing plant, in Quebec City, it took almost two years to get permission, not to kill such birds, but to destroy their nests and their eggs. There were an estimated 170,000 pairs of adult gulls capable of reproducing on the site and this situation was causing serious problems. When stringent regulations exist and when we have problems, we resolve them. When I was mayor, if I had taken two years to make such a minor decision, I would not have remained in office very long. This is one example. The process needs to be smoothed out so that effective solutions can be adopted quickly.

Secondly, when we protect wildlife, we must protect their habitat. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if a flock of geese decided to descend on your home for three weeks and you were not allowed to frighten them away. Believe me, I have tried. They merely circle about and land on your property, as if they had decided that it was their home. Imagine the condition of your lawn after three weeks. Do you know who would be responsible for the cleanup costs? You would. The legislation makes no provision for any compensation. I raised this question and an official told me that the farmer could rely on his crop insurance. I checked this out and while it is true, what if the poor farmer does not have crop insurance that covers this kind of damage? Then he would have to pay for the damages out of his own pocket.

I am telling you this because I have received letters to the effect that the snow geese were chased—I am not sure how—out of the Montmagny region. The geese ended up in the Rimouski-Témiscouata area. Snow geese are lovely creatures, but when 40,000 or 50,000 of them descend all at once for a three-week to one-month stay, well it is nice to see them arrive, but it is equally nice to see them leave.

Mr. Rocheleau: Just like houseguests.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Just like houseguests, as the hon. member for Trois-Rivières pointed out. It can be quite a burden, and there is nothing in Bill C-23 to provide financial assistance for individuals who have to accommodate these animals for extended periods.

(1655)

I hope that our senior officials, under the instructions of the Minister of the Environment, will look at regulatory measures and other ways to reach agreements that will make this legislation very effective.

The legislator should take advantage of the experience of users to make these laws far more effective. It seems we will go ahead with Bill C-23, which I think is a step in the right direction towards protecting our migratory birds. However, as was pointed out earlier, the agreements are with the United States and Mexico. We should extend such agreements much further south, because we have birds that migrate very far south,

and we could protect them so they are not killed in the south. These agreements must be concluded with our neighbours on a nation-to-nation basis.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the Bloc Québécois will fully support the Liberal government on Bill C-23.

[English]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-23 is to replace the existing Migratory Birds Convention Act which was originally proclaimed in 1917. It has essentially remained the same ever since.

The original act regulated hunting in the use of migratory birds, prohibited traffic and commercialization, controlled the use of migratory birds through permits, and provided for the establishment of migratory bird sanctuaries in order to control and manage areas important for the protection of migratory birds.

The original act was designed to protect migratory birds from indiscriminate slaughter and to sustain their populations.

The proposed migratory bird act now before the House would modernize the language of the original Migratory Birds Convention Act and clarify the extent of its application, the prohibitions, the regulatory authorities, the administrative provisions and the offences and punishment sections.

The highlights of this bill are the broadening of the legislation to include all migratory birds, the broadening of the authority under the act given to wildlife enforcement officers, and the levels of fines to be increased.

The new act provides the legislative basis for managing the harvest and other uses of ducks, geese and other game birds, as well as for the protecting migratory birds, and provides for the creation of migratory bird sanctuaries.

In conjunction with the Canada Wildlife Act the new Migratory Birds Convention Act will provide a greater deterrent to illegal activities such as poaching by providing a maximum penalty of \$25,000 or six months in jail or both for serious offences.

The mandate of the federal environment department in Canada is to manage and conserve migratory birds and in co-operation with the provinces and territories other wildlife of national and international concern. Canada as a member of the international community has obligations to help preserve and protect our wildlife and wildlife areas, including bird populations and bird sanctuaries.

Protecting and conserving Canada's bird diverse populations are an important part of our ecosystem. As the planet's human population swells and spreads over once wild areas, some 70 per cent of the world's 9,600 bird species are responding with declines, and 1,000 species are threatened with extinction in the near future according to a report by Birdlife International, a

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conservation group based in England that charts the loss of habitats and species.

What is especially alarming beyond the direct losses that are taking place is that bird populations are a particularly good indicator of the health of the whole ecosystem. Canada must take a leadership role in the push for conservation and protection of bird species, and this leadership must begin with the changes made to the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

(1700)

Conserving and protecting our environment has become a major political and economic issue in our country. Opinion polls consistently show that over 90 per cent of Canadians are concerned about the state of our environment. These same polls also show that the Canadian people are split with regard to their satisfaction with the federal government's handling of difficult environmental issues.

Last week all across Canada, Canada Environment Week activities were taking place and provided Canadians with a good opportunity to think about ways they can help improve our environment. Environmental citizenship, being informed and taking action was the focus of this year's Environment Week.

Canada's policymakers should sit up and take notice. Canadians are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the environment to our society. We as politicians hold the responsibility to act as prudently and effectively as possible in order to protect our environment and our wildlife areas for future generations.

Government legislation is just one aspect of this environmentally conscious trend, albeit an important one.

The Reform Party is deeply concerned with Canada's environment. In this regard one of the principles of the party is that we believe Canada's identity and vision for the future should be rooted in and inspired by a fresh appreciation of our land and the supreme importance to our well-being of exploring, developing, renewing and conserving our natural resources and physical environment.

In general, the Reform Party supports the changes made in this act after having had the opportunity to examine possible amendments in committee. Many groups made representations to the committee and some changes to the bill could be made.

One aspect of the bill with which my party is very pleased is the stronger enforcement and punishment section. Although this bill finally puts some teeth into the existing Migratory Birds Convention Act that up to this point it has lacked, we believe that the enforcement provisions for maximum penalties could

have been made even tougher by increasing the punishment provisions as proposed at the committee stage.

One part of the amendments that is of great concern to our party is the part that gives the minister more power to implement changes to the convention without Parliament's approval.

During the committee meetings it was felt that this concern was not adequately addressed. Under the existing act should Canada and the United States agree to amend the convention such amendments in order to come into force in Canada would require an amendment to the act. Specifically, the schedule to the act would have to be amended by legislation approved by Parliament.

However, under Bill C-23 a different implementation process would apply in which convention amendments would be implemented by ministerial order and the approval of Parliament would not be needed for such amendments to take effect.

Since Canada is seeking to renegotiate the convention to address aboriginal and treaty rights to harvest migratory birds during the closed season and to harvest eggs, if Bill C-23 is adopted any changes that were made under the convention in this regard would accordingly be implemented by ministerial order.

Parliament would have no role with respect to any changes that might be made from time to time under the convention. Although the implementation of convention amendments would be expedited under the process proposed by the bill, the fact is Parliament would not be involved in any way.

The Reform members believe that this is the wrong approach and that the bill should be amended so as to provide that amendments to the convention be laid before Parliament before being added to the order on the schedule.

We do believe in protecting and conserving Canada's environment and its wildlife. We believe that this legislation does begin to address some of the concerns that Canadians have in these areas.

There is one part of the amendments which I have some fairly close knowledge of and which I would like to draw to the attention of the House. I am hoping that there might be some Liberal members following my presentation who will address this question.

On May 6, I was approached, as the member responsible in my party for the shepherding of Bill C-23 through the House of Commons, by our House leader and was informed that there was a representative of the environment minister who wished to meet with me and wanted to push the bill through to third reading at that particular time.

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(1705)

I was only partially in favour of that. In other words, I felt as though I was under pressure because I had not had an opportunity to seriously consider it going through to third stage but there was a tremendous amount of arm twisting. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary to the environment minister may recall and the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on the Environment may recall.

We had meetings. There was this tremendous pressure to bring it through to third reading. I resisted as a result of the fact that there was advice that they wished to bring some small amendments to the act. Not being a lawyer, I was concerned about the fact that I would be letting something go over which I did not have any control or knowledge. As a consequence I said, no, I would not give unanimous consent to see the thing go through to third reading. That was on May 6.

On May 26 Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come on behalf of the Grand Council of the Crees appeared before our standing committee. He drew to our attention information about the James Bay and northern Quebec agreement and in part the statement that he read into the record at that time said: "The agreement which we signed obligates the Government of Canada and the province of Quebec in perpetuity to respect Cree rights and carry out certain obligations.

Our treaty, then, forms the basis for the protection of our way of life. Several principles were embodied in these regimes: co-operative co-management of resources with government; family based Cree hunting territories; the beaver preserve system; the Crees as guardians of the land and animals; recognition and training of Cree game wardens and finally the paramount guiding principle of conservation".

I am absolutely prepared to accept the representation by the representative of the Cree totally at face value. I accept what he said there completely without question. He goes on to say: "In light of this brief background on our treaty rights, you might be able to understand our consternation at the provisions contained in the legislation which has been tabled before the standing committee".

He adds: "This bill purports to address through its substantive and enabling provisions the management and harvesting of migratory birds. Indeed, it is entitled an act to implement a convention for the protection of migratory birds in Canada and the United States".

He underlines: "For legislation emanating from the Parliament of Canada in 1994 and in view of the solemn commitments made in the James Bay and northern Quebec agreement and in addressing issues so critical to the identity, livelihood and

culture of aboriginal people, how is it possible that this legislation does not make the least mention of aboriginal people, their dependence on the resource or their rights to the resource? We find this, to say the least, extraordinary".

He goes on to say: "We are not invoking simply a legal right or an apparently failed treaty provision. Neither are we arguing for the respect of our rights at any or all cost to the environment, but how did this legislation come this far without any consultation with us? How can the drafters of these acts be so oblivious of Canada's constitutional and statutory duties to protect aboriginal harvest rights? Bear in mind that the Crees have hunted in our territory since time immemorial".

He goes on to express a feeling of real distress about the fact that he had not been consulted. I asked the legal counsel for the Cree at that time to get back to me with the time at which it was informed or brought into the picture and I was informed by the legal counsel for the Cree that it was brought into the picture May 16, a full 10 days after a representative of the environment minister was trying to arm twist and get this through without any provision for aboriginal concerns.

I am very sensitive to the fact that last week in particular we had representations from a member of our party that raised a tremendous amount of consternation and concern in the way that he was speaking about aboriginal questions. I am very sensitive to that issue. I wish to raise the issue without emotion. I am hoping that there is someone in the House who will be prepared to answer this question.

(1710)

Section 5 of the proposed legislation reads:

Except as authorized by the regulations, no person shall, without lawful excuse,

(a) be in possession of a migratory bird or nest; or

(b) buy, sell, exchange or give a migratory bird or nest or make it the subject of a commercial transaction.

Further on in the legislation, section 12 reads:

The Governor in Council may make any regulations that the Governor in Council considers necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this Act and the Convention, including regulations.

One of the regulations is for granting permits to kill, capture, take, buy, sell, exchange, give or possess migratory birds or to make migratory birds the subject of a commercial transaction.

The act calls for penalties, for example, in section 13:

"Every person who contravenes section 5, subsection 6(5) or any regulation is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction of up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both; or is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable for \$100,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both".

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In my constituency last year we had someone who received the designation on a piece of plastic that said that he was now recognized as being—I apologize, I am not familiar with the terminology—an Indian or of Indian status. Upon receipt of that recognition he then drove 200 miles, went to a feeding station and blew away a world class ram and said that he had the right to do that.

Any members in this House who takes my comment to be a slam or a slur would be sadly mistaken. I am asking a very blunt, open, honest question here. I would like to know, with the inclusion in Bill C-23, if a person may be subject to up to \$100,000 fine because they are in possession of a migratory bird or nest or they attempt to buy, sell, exchange or give a migratory bird or nest or make it the subject of a commercial transaction. Basing that on one's parentage because of clause 2(3): "For greater certainty, nothing in this act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982".

I am having some difficulty and some confusion in my mind about that in terms of the long term picture. I believe that the statements made by Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come in his presentations to the standing committee have some merit. What he was basically stating there, as I understood it, was that this issue should be looked at as to how we are going to work it out.

He undoubtedly will be coming at it from a different perspective than I am. I am coming at it from the perspective of saying that if a person shoots a bird the bird is dead. If we assume that there might be one or two people of the Cree nation who are not prepared to obey the law under what law will they be prosecuted, and would I or the secretary be prosecuted to the extent of \$100,000?

I guess that is the one final question. Understand that the Reform Party supports the intent of Bill C-23. We wish to go ahead with the protection of the migratory birds. That is not the question. Also, we want to recognize that there are some long standing historic rights that the Cree and other aboriginal people have that have to be taken into account. What I am having difficulty with is the inclusion of that one amendment. I am having some difficulty understanding how we will be able to bring about regulations that are fair and equitable to all people in Canada.

With that, recognizing that the probability is that recognition of aboriginal rights would nonetheless supersede Bill C-23, the inclusion of it is simply a statement of what is a fact. I would like, if possible, if someone is going to be following me, particularly from the government side, if they could help me understand how we are going to address this issue.

(1715)

The Deputy Speaker: On the first round there is no right for questions or comments as members will know, but with unanimous consent since the member has posed obvious questions and comments to the parliamentary secretary, perhaps we could seek unanimous consent to allow the parliamentary secretary to respond to the questions.

Is there unanimous consent to have the parliamentary secretary reply to the comments made?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, there are two questions that I would like to answer.

The first one relates to the process. In fairness to the person the hon. member is referring to, the representative of the environment minister, who suggested that the law be passed on that day, I can, knowing this person well, confirm that there was no hidden agenda, no intention to steamroll the thing.

First of all, the person in charge of the legislative agenda for the minister had been advised that the timetable for legislation was getting much shorter and that it was very important to get these two bills through before the session recessed.

More than that, the fact is that under a review of the powers of regulation and the regulations of the Ministry of the Environment in 1993 which I referred to in my speech, an extensive consultation had been carried out on a very broad basis of all the stakeholders, including a review of the migratory birds convention, which included representatives from aboriginal peoples, from the various stakeholders involved and interested in this bill.

Further, amendments have been discussed for four years now with regard to the convention itself involving representatives of the aboriginal peoples. In complete objectivity it was felt by the people who advised the legislative assistant to the minister that we could proceed because consultation had been extensive all along.

Seeing we did not have a consent, we recognize because we found out there would be time that it was a better process to have gone to the committee. I can assure the House that the person concerned backs this up 100 per cent.

I can assure the member there was no hidden agenda there, no need to sort of steamroll the House or anything like this. It was a genuine attempt to complete the process, having taken into account that consultations had been extensive in the past.

With regard to the second question, the aboriginal treaties and rights under the Constitution, what we want to do in the act is really confirm the position that exists today, that the aboriginal people hunt and harvest during the closed season for other hunters. That does not mean to say that they are not subject to all the penalties of the law should they infringe any of the pro-

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visions of the act, except that the season is open as far as they are concerned.

That has been the tradition for thousands of years. It is a fact of life that we want to enshrine in the law. Even if it were not in the law they would still have this right. What we wanted to do as a very important symbolic gesture as required by Chief Coon-Come to sort of enshrine it in the law here. Certain legal advice obtained differed according to whether we did or did not recognize the rights of aboriginal peoples. They must be recognized anyway in actual practice. This is the position, whether we do or do not recognize their rights. We felt it was very important that we do.

(1720)

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to thank all the members of the environmental and sustainable development committee for their hard work and commitment to this important piece of legislation.

As a committee we listened to a number of witnesses representing conservation groups, hunters and anglers, and native groups who all have a stake in the outcome of what we have to do today regarding this legislation.

While the state of migratory birds in Canada may seem to some as less significant and less newsworthy than bills pertaining to economic matters or crime and justice issues, it is very significant.

As this legislation has remained relatively untouched since 1917 and if the future mirrors the past then it is possible that changes to this new legislation may not occur for another 50, 60, or 70 years.

More important, the health of our migratory birds, indeed the health of all of our wildlife reflects the quality of human health.

It is with these thoughts in mind that the committee members gave very serious consideration to Bill C-23 as drafted and the subsequent committee amendments. The Migratory Birds Convention Act implements the terms of the migratory birds convention signed in 1916 by Canada and the United States.

The migratory birds convention will be undergoing renegotiation in the fall of 1994 to better reflect realities of the 1990s. Bill C-23 will support these changes.

The original migratory birds convention signed in 1916 by Canada and the United States was intended to curb blatant overhunting practices which in some instances led to the extinction of species of birds and of near extinction with other species.

As one witness told us, we were able to create an incredible success story on the northern part of this continent through the migratory bird convention and other strategies to stem the slaughter and near annihilation of certain bird species.

Conditions have changed since the turn of this century and as we approach the next century we must design and implement legislation that acknowledges and better reflects current demands.

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development reviewed Bill C-23, heard witnesses, received briefs, and as a result decided Bill C-23 was supportable with a few additional changes.

While a separate process to address First Nations aboriginal or treaty rights is under way and will be included in negotiations to the Canada-U.S. migratory bird convention it was decided by the committee to include a non-derogation clause that clearly acknowledges aboriginal or treaty rights.

For greater certainty nothing in this act shall be construed as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal people of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

For First Nations people migratory birds play a key role in sustaining a way of life. Migratory birds and wildlife are central to the preservation of not only First Nations culture but in some communities their nutritional survival as well.

This is not to say that conservation and sustainability are at risk. Matthew Coon-Come, Chief of the Grand Cree Council, simply and eloquently stated: "Geese first then Cree and third sports hunting".

Until negotiations to the migratory bird convention that reflect aboriginal treaty rights are complete, special enforcement measures exist that allow for traditional harvesting in closed season of migratory birds and eggs.

Another amendment to Bill C-23 allows for game officers who carry out duties or functions under the act to be exempt from any of its provisions or regulations. This will greatly facilitate the enforcement aspects of the act, as game officers will be able to undertake undercover operations with suspected offenders without fear of being charged. This should improve their ability to gather clear and decisive evidence against offenders.

Canadians value wildlife and the natural resources of this country. While a great many Canadians hunt or fish over 75 per cent enjoy wildlife through non-consumptive participation. They spent \$2.4 billion on primary non-consumptive wildlife related trips and outings in 1991; \$1.2 billion was spent on hunting.

Preservation of migratory birds is very important to Canadians and contributes in very positive ways to the economy.

(1725)

Commercial poaching and smuggling of migratory birds pose grave risks. With this in mind, the committee spent a long time deliberating over the level of fines for offenders. After a great deal of thoughtful consideration, it was decided to increase the

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finer for summary offences for individuals to a maximum of \$50,000 and for a corporation to a maximum of \$100,000.

Maximum fines for indictable offences have been increased for individuals to \$100,000 and for corporations to \$250,000. In the case of subsequent offences, the subsequent fine may be doubled from the previous offence, notwithstanding the maximums already outlined.

Some may scoff that the value of a bird being \$100,000 or \$250,000 is far too exorbitant. I would suggest that if they do, they do so in ignorance. No monetary value can be placed on the killing of a bird or other wildlife where that killing contributed in a real way to the endangerment of the species.

This government is committed to strengthening the participation of committees in the work of governing the country. I applaud this initiative and see as a result of this new attitude toward governing the substantial contributions made by members of the environment and sustainable development committee in proposing amendments to Bill C-23.

The final amendment I would like to address today arises from suggestions made by witnesses appearing before the committee. I believe the inclusion of this amendment strengthens the democratic process by increasing participation in that process. This amendment proposes that any amendment to the migratory birds convention be tabled in both Houses and debated in the House of Commons.

As we proceeded with the witnesses, it became quite evident that a number of other issues beyond the scope of this legislation must also be addressed if we are to truly protect and enhance the health of migratory birds.

The committee examined both Bill C-23 and Bill C-24, a bill to amend the Canada Wildlife Act. A number of concerns articulated by witnesses pertain to the wider category of wildlife, not only migratory birds.

Issues related to enforcement and habitat protection were most often identified by witnesses. From my experience with the two pieces of legislation, Bill C-23 and Bill C-24, I have come to respect the dedication and commitment shown by officials of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

However, in terms of enforcement they are in dire need of support to increase the number of game officers. Witness after witness spoke of real problems that existed because required coverage was far too vast for the number of available game officers.

As a result, it may be difficult to implement even the best legislation. Habitat protection, another key concern of witnesses, has many dimensions. Many strategies need to be deployed in order to ensure sustainability and viability.

The migratory birds convention was originally intended to deal with the severe overhunting problems that threatened many species at that time. While commercial poaching and smuggling are still significant threats, habitat protection is the number one concern for the preservation of not only migratory birds but all Canadian wildlife.

The amendment to the Canada Wildlife Act to expand the scope of coverage of wildlife to include all living organisms is a much needed change and provides not only a valuable starting point but also a valuable rethinking of what species preservation really means.

If we are really serious about preserving and protecting wildlife in this country, we must first and foremost be very serious about habitat protection. Wildlife have been called the barometer of the landscape. The capacity of the land or habitat to support fish, birds and mammals is a good indicator of its capacity to meet human needs; wildlife habitat is human habitat.

As long as we have endangered spaces in this country we will continue to have endangered species. There are a number of strategies and programs designed to rehabilitate, preserve and protect habitats.

We have entered into agreements with the United States and now recently with the Mexican government through the North American waterfowl management plan to ensure that migratory waterfowl have safe and healthy areas for nesting and feeding.

As I stated earlier in my speech, even though we have achieved a truly unique and wonderful success story in reversing the trend toward endangerment and annihilation for some species, I fear we are falling behind. Our precious wetlands, the most biologically diverse ecosystems, are under attack. They are being drained for agricultural uses and development purposes.

(1730)

Toxic substances have entered our watersheds and contaminated the fish the birds eat resulting in deformities, soft eggshells that cannot withstand the pressure of parental incubation, crossed bills, jaw defects and malformed feet and joints. Forests that provided habitat protection for wildlife have been lost due to clear-cutting.

These are for the most part beyond the scope of the legislation before us. However, they are important considerations that we must not forget if we are to truly preserve the sustainability and health of migratory birds.

I urge the members of this House to support Bill C-23 and its proposed amendments fully without delay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, just like my colleague from Frontenac, I too am pleased, as a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, to speak on Bill C-23 today.

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This bill replaces the Migratory Birds Convention Act which dates back to 1917. Needless to say that many things have changed since 1917. That is why I consider essential that this act which has remained basically unchanged over all those years be reviewed.

To fully grasp the meaning of the federal legislation on the subject, some background information is required concerning the origins of this act. The act was passed in 1917 after an international convention was entered into by Canada and the United States in 1916. The purpose of the Migratory Bird Convention was to protect migratory birds from the slaughter they were facing at the time and save their population from often senseless human action.

The 1917 enactment regulated the hunting of migratory birds and prohibited trafficking and commercialization of them. The goals of the act remain relevant today, but over the years the means by which they were to be achieved have become outdated.

Lawmakers could certainly not be expected to foresee in 1917 the sharp scientific and technological expansion that lay ahead, over the course of the 20th century. As we know, phenomenal advances were made in science. Protection of embryos and tissue cultures as well as the protection of endangered species and prohibition of trafficking are the main considerations the new legislation must be based on.

This new legislation, that is to say Bill C-23, is indeed essential to protect migratory birds. Recent reports in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* and *La Presse* indicated that 1,000 out of 9,600 bird species, or 10 per cent of our bird population, threaten to become extinct in the short term. This is quite obviously a matter of urgency.

Also, one of the reasons stated by the American magazine *World Watch* for the decline in the number of birds world-wide and in Canada was as follows, and I quote: "Most bird species are in decline because the natural balance is upset by the global expansion of mankind. We are entirely to blame for the problem and must find ways to resolve it."

For example, the problems caused by deforestation due to urban spread or farmland expansion and exponential population growth contribute to the degradation of wildlife habitat. Industrial and domestic pollution are also among the new concerns that must guide us in drafting legislation respecting the protection of migratory birds and environmental protection in general.

Let us now take a closer look at the proposals contained in Bill C-23 to update the former act which dated back to 1917. Clause 2, the interpretation clause, was changed to broaden the scope of the act. For example, the definition of the word conveyance will now include any contrivance used to hunt birds.

(1735)

Moreover, the definition of "migratory bird" is amended so as to include the sperm, eggs, embryo and tissue cultures. As I said earlier, this change is essential for the survival of species in this era of technological revolution.

Another important change, which consists in distinguishing between "be in possession" and to "buy or sell", will allow the courts to treat the illegal marketing and trade of birds as a more serious offence than mere possession.

Several technical changes reaffirm the power of game officers to inspect and search. However, a provision is added to protect people against abusive searches, in compliance with the charter of rights and freedoms.

Moreover, regulations can be made under clause 12.(1)(f) to ensure better control over the issuance of permits. Indeed, problems can often be solved at the root. It is more than desirable that the government makes such regulations soon, as authorized by this legislation.

A major change which, in our opinion, will be welcome if it is used properly, is the considerable increase regarding fines imposed to offenders. Since the applicable provisions of the 1917 legislation have never been amended, the current act only provides for fines of \$10 to \$300. This will no way deter a modern-day offender.

The proposed amendments provide for fines of \$50,000 to \$250,000, depending on the type of offence. In the case of a repeat offender, the amounts can be doubled. This is a big improvement. I do hope that the legislator will not wait another 77 years to update these amounts, and that in the future parliamentarians will closely and regularly review this legislation.

I want to conclude by reminding you of the importance of protecting and preserving migratory birds in Canada. Think of the loon on our dollar. Think of the snowy owl and other birds which are symbols in our country. This is a good example of the international scope of environmental problems. Indeed, migratory birds, like pollution, cross borders, making it all the more important to conclude international agreements, instead of just passing national laws.

If Canada wants to ensure sustainable development, not only will it have to pass effective legislation, but it will also have to sign good international conventions, so as to adequately protect itself from transborder environmental problems.

It might also be wise to reflect on the opportunity of having a chart promoting the environment and sustainable development. This would be a comprehensive and practical document, such as the charter of rights and freedoms, which would ensure individuals that, like them, the environment is well protected.

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Our future and especially our children's future depends on what we do today to leave them with a country in which resources will still be available. We must play an active role and face current challenges.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

[English]

CANADA WILDLIFE ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-24, an act to amend the Canada Wildlife Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Hon. John Manley (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

(1740)

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

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in introducing the debate on third reading of Bill C-24, I would like to quote from *Life in the Balance* by David Rains Wallace: "Yet wildlife and wilderness are not the cause of poverty. Humans would hardly be better off were the last forest logged, grassland ploughed, mountain mined, desert irrigated, tundra drilled, river dammed, wetland drained, ocean depleted and islands stripped of native flora and fauna. Scientific evidence and simple logic suggest that civilization cannot deface the planet with impunity".

I think this is at the basis of the wildlife act that we are trying to pass today.

[Translation]

I am pleased to present the bill to amend the Canada Wildlife Act at third reading. At a time when the health of the economy is the number-one concern of many Canadians, some may ask why we are looking at the issue of wildlife protection. My answer is this: "Protecting wildlife and the Canadian environment is essential to our country's long-term prosperity in the broadest sense of the word".

For Canadians and for people around the world, our wildlife is part of our country's identity and uniqueness. Wildlife remains

at the centre of Native Canadians' traditional way of life. It can offer still undiscovered treasures; some species could be used in various ways in the interest of human beings. Wildlife is an essential environmental, social and cultural resource.

Wildlife-related recreational activities are important in Canada. They inject billions of dollars into the economy and create tens of thousands of jobs. In fact, a vast majority of Canadians want our wildlife to be protected so that future generations can enjoy the same abundance. According to a recent Statistics Canada survey, over 90 per cent of Canadians say they have a sustained interest in wildlife conservation. They are not motivated only by feelings but by a realistic understanding.

They heard and they support the sustainable environment message: that the health of the environment and economic development are interdependent, that no economy is possible without the environment and that we cannot have quality of life if the economy is not built around the environment. Canadians are willing to do their part for sustainable development and they are asking the government to do its part.

[English]

In 1990 the Wildlife Ministers Council of Canada comprised of federal and provincial ministers responsible for wildlife wrote a wildlife policy for Canada. The Canada Wildlife Act was enacted in 1973 to enable the federal government to carry out wildlife research and in co-operation with the provinces to undertake a wide range of wildlife conservation and interpretation activities for wildlife and its habitat, including the protection of endangered species. The act allows the minister to acquire any lands for the purposes of research, conservation, and interpretation in respect of migratory birds and if international interests and with the support of the provinces other species including endangered species.

(1745)

Areas of key significance to Canada's wildlife are protected through regulations under this act. There are currently 45 national wildlife areas in Canada comprising 287,000 hectares. Traditionally wildlife conservation has focused on particular species or species groups and has generally been limited to the higher orders of animals. It is now widely recognized that a broader approach to conservation is needed, an ecosystemic approach that considers all ecosystems, factions and values including all animal and plant species and the full range of their habitat requirements.

This is the approach recommended in the policy of the provincial and federal ministers in wildlife policy for Canada to which I just referred.

Conservation of wildlife often requires protection of habitat critical to the survival of a species. Traditional habitat protection has focused on terrestrial wildlife species and the habitats. The marine ecosystem and its biodiversity remain largely

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unprotected from the habitat perspective. At present application of the act is limited to the territorial 12-mile limit.

Critical wildlife habitat, including areas with significant concentration of seabirds and breeding and feeding grounds for whales exist or extend beyond the territorial sea. Such areas include polynyas, openings in the ice cover, and sea mounts, upwellings of nutrients in the ocean and other areas associated with Canada's continental shelf.

We therefore have a provision to allow for the establishment of protected areas within the area bounded by the territorial sea and the 200-nautical mile limit so that this would contribute to sustaining the biodiversity and associated benefits of the marine ecosystems.

In introducing this bill the federal government is meeting the demand of Canadian citizens, reflected in the red book, that we follow the path of sustainable development.

We appreciate the implications of that commitment. It means adopting an ecosystemic approach, tackling problems in their broad context. It means working in partnership with other governments, with other sectors of activity, with individual Canadians toward our common goals.

This is how we will make sustainable development happen and this is how the federal government is now addressing the issue of wildlife. Amending the Canada Wildlife Act is not an isolated gesture, it is part of a co-ordinated strategy to give our country effective wildlife legislation, reflecting the latest science and meeting the needs of our times.

Other components of that strategy are the bill to amend the Migratory Birds Convention Act which we just passed, Bill C-23, the drafting of regulations for the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of Interprovincial and International Trade Act, and the forthcoming negotiations with the United States in amending the binational migratory birds convention.

The Canada Wildlife Act is a vital piece of legislation. It provides a framework for the federal government's effort to promote wildlife and habitat conservation programs. It enables productive partnerships and implementation of wildlife programs and policies with provincial governments and with the private sector.

Since the act was passed in 1973 however we have come to recognize certain limitations in its legislation. Bill C-24 has been brought before Parliament to address these limitations. Following second reading, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development conducted a thorough review of Bill C-24, including public hearings and submission of briefs by a broad range of witnesses. This review has led to additional changes that reflect the concerns and views expressed in the committee.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-24 will replace the definition of wildlife found in the old act, which seems much too narrow. Instead of non-domestic animals, the amendments will include all wild animals and plants in the definition of "wildlife". This broader definition will allow us to adopt an ecosystemic approach to wildlife protection; in an endangered habitat, we can therefore work to help all of the different species which, together, support life, and not just the well-known birds and mammals.

(1750)

The new definition also brings the act into line with the federal-provincial policy on wildlife in Canada, adopted in 1990, and the Biodiversity Convention, which Canada signed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Another important change brought about by Bill C-24 is that Canada will now be able to protect wildlife habitats in marine areas. The bill presently before the House makes it possible to establish protected marine areas anywhere within the 200-nautical-mile zone, outside the previous 12 nautical miles. This zone includes vital breeding areas and feeding grounds used by whales, sea birds and other species. The extended coverage to these areas will make it possible to provide far more complete protection to many species.

Another change will make the act more effective by improving its administration and enforcement. The amendments will give more teeth to the act by raising the penalties faced by potential offenders, thus making the penalties real deterrents. The maximum fines for serious offences would be \$100,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a corporation, with provisions making it possible to increase fines for a second offence or for continuing offences. At the same time, the amended act will give enforcement officers and the courts more flexibility in respect of offences and punishment. They will now be able to choose the most appropriate punishment in response to an offence, even community service or payment of the cost of damages caused to a national wildlife area.

The amendments concerning provisions related to punishment, powers and enforcement procedures and a clause safeguarding ancestral and treaty rights are similar to those described in the third reading of Bill C-23.

[*English*]

Therefore I will take this opportunity to discuss some of the broad aspects of wildlife conservation which this legislation supports.

Bill C-24 will enable Canada to meet its commitments and international agreements. One such key agreement is the 1975 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance which Canada signed in 1981. This is one of the most widely adopted conservation treaties in the world and over 80 nations

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have agreed to promote the conservation and wise use of wetland habitat, particularly for waterfowl.

Wetlands are of special importance to Canada. They provide a large proportion of our fresh water supply. They filter out pollutants from the ecosystems. They protect against flooding. They enhance water quality and they are essential wildlife habitats. They also make a significant contribution to our economy, estimated at over \$10 billion a year. That figure covers a wide range of recreational activities, both commercial and non-commercial.

Canada's wetlands have a global importance as well. Within our borders lie roughly 24 per cent of the world's total wetland resource. This gives us a special responsibility for using our share of the resource properly. Unfortunately we have not always done so. Though we still have 127 million hectares of wetland we have allowed over one seventh of our original wetland area, most in southern Canada to be converted to other land uses.

Since signing the Ramsar convention we have been working to improve our record. Canada now has a total of 32 designated wetlands of international importance, a network spanning all our provinces and territories, and many of these are also national wildlife areas established under the Canada Wildlife Act.

Canada's Ramsar wetlands cover 13 million hectares which is over 30 per cent of all the wetland areas designated under the convention. In addition since 1992 we have had a federal policy on wetland conservation which fosters the conservation of Canada's wetlands to sustain the ecological and socioeconomic factions for both now and in the future. Many provinces have or are developing complementary wetland policies and the private sector and non-government organizations continue to play a significant role in wetland conservation.

(1755)

Today wetland conservation in Canada is a co-operative undertaking of different levels of government, different sectors and individuals, with the federal government playing a key role. The North American waterfowl management plan, which I described during the third reading of Bill C-23, is an excellent example of this co-operation. This is a sustainable way of managing our wetlands.

Better wetland conservation will lead to many direct benefits for Canadians, the most obvious, of course, improved wildlife habitat and the higher population levels for waterfowl.

There are other benefits as well. Among them, reduced soil erosion, improved ground water quality, less degradation of

farmland, less damage from flooding and storms, and extended protection against the effects of drought and climate change.

[*Translation*]

The Biodiversity Convention is by far the most important international wildlife agreement to come along in many years. It is one of the major achievements of the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil. It was not an easy task to get such a large number of parties to find an acceptable common ground and Canadians should be proud of their efforts to obtain widespread approval for the Convention.

We have also demonstrated our commitment to the Convention by moving quickly to sign and ratify it. Furthermore, the federal government has begun working with the provinces and territories to formulate a Canadian biodiversity strategy which will enable us to meet our commitments under the convention.

Under the terms of the convention, countries are required to regulate or manage biological resources in such a way as to ensure their conservation and sustainable use and to establish a system of refuges to preserve biodiversity. Moreover, as part of the conservation process, all species of an ecosystem must be taken into consideration and countries must draft legislative provisions to protect species threatened with extinction.

Bill C-24 will help Canada fulfil the requirements of the convention. The Biodiversity Convention and the other international agreements I mentioned are important not for what Canada brings to them, but for what they bring to Canada. They establish a framework for our actions. They set global objectives. They recognize the importance of fragile habitats in Canada and in at least one case, that of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, they channel funds for habitat protection. But above all, these agreements advance concepts on which our actions aimed at protecting Canada's wildlife should be based.

[*English*]

It is in this context that the federal government is proposing amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act and to the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

Times have changed since this legislation was enacted and we must move with them. We must conform to higher environmental standards domestically and globally. We must integrate the latest scientific understanding into our programs. We must deal with changing environmental priorities. Most of all, we must respond to the demand and expectations of Canadians, young and old.

Across the country Canadians have recognized the need for sustainable wildlife policies and practices and they are calling

on government, especially the federal government, to take the lead on this issue. That is why we have brought forward the amendments to the Canada Wildlife Act.

Today there was an article in the *Gazette* about the St. Lawrence National Institute of Ecotoxicology. Dr. Pierre Béland, who started the institute 11 years ago is somebody I know well. For many years he has been recovering the belugas in the St. Lawrence that die on our shores. He has carried out autopsies on these belugas, 69 of them since 1983.

(1800)

The *Gazette* article described the plight of the belugas. The St. Lawrence institute scientifically dissected 69 belugas which were found to have 100 parts per million of PCBs in them. The industrial norm is 50 parts per million of PCBs. The norm is two parts per million of PCBs for edible fish. Yet 69 of these belugas were found to have 100 parts per million of PCBs in their bodies. Dr. Pierre Béland joked, and I am sure it was a very bitter joke, that the belugas in the St. Lawrence should have permits to swim there because they are so toxified.

Among those 69 whales they have dissected since 1983 they found: 28 had tumours, including malignant tumours; 37 had very bad lesions in their digestive systems; and 31 of the females had lesions on their mammary glands. This is a terrible indictment on all of us for having neglected our heritage to the point that we have allowed toxins to fester our lakes, our rivers, our land and our air. It is to the point that today the animals, the innocent residents of the ecosystem, suffer the ills of our guilt and our fault.

We should reflect on what is happening to the belugas of the St. Lawrence. What would Canada be without the polar bear in the Arctic? What would Canada be without the black bear or the grizzly in the Rockies? What would Canada be without the belugas in the St. Lawrence or the northern seas? What would Canada be without the snow geese and other birds? Would it be a heritage of nature or would it be a dead heritage, a silent heritage?

That is why we are so intent on seeing that Bill C-24, the Canada Wildlife Act, as well as Bill C-23 which we just passed, become essential legislation. It fortifies our resolve to preserve habitats, the ecosystem and the environment which is at the base of the quality of life and living for all of us.

[Translation]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I rise again today on an environmental bill, C-24. This bill amends the 1973 Canada Wildlife Act. According to the minister, the purpose of this act is to permit the government to conduct wildlife research and, in co-operation with the provinces, to undertake various activities related to wildlife conservation and interpretation. The provinces are responsible for managing wildlife, except for most species of migratory birds, fish and mammals.

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Like C-23, the bill updates an existing law. Basically, it modernizes the law and includes some new features. It is essential to watch out for environmental problems and to have the tools required to avoid them, especially those affecting biodiversity.

(1805)

Chapter 6 of the Brundtland report says: "Conservation of living natural resources—plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the non-living elements of the environment on which they depend—is crucial for development. Today, the conservation of wild living resources is on the agenda of governments; nearly 4 per cent of the Earth's land area is managed explicitly to conserve species and ecosystems, and all but a small handful of countries have national parks. The challenge facing nations today is no longer deciding whether conservation is a good idea, but rather how it can be implemented in the national interest and within the means available in each country".

Like the leaders of other countries that signed the Brundtland report, we in this House are all convinced, I am sure, of the importance of protecting endangered species. The issue is finding ways to achieve our goals. The old law essentially protected wild animals, plants and other organisms. Replacing the French word "faune" by "espèces sauvages" considerably broadens the scope of the new law. We think that it is essential to extend the law in this way in order to protect the natural habitats of the wildlife that we want to protect. This amendment to the law fills a gaping legal hole in the 1973 act.

Furthermore, the amendments to be made to the Act will create protected marine areas within any fishing zone prescribed in the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act. It will be possible to conduct research on marine wildlife and to undertake various activities related to wildlife conservation and interpretation. This very useful addition to the act will enhance the protection of a larger number of marine wildlife species.

From now on, wildlife officers will have the powers of peace officers. This means they will be able to apply the provisions of the Criminal Code. In an emergency, they will also be authorized to carry out inspections and searches without a warrant. These special powers will make it easier for wildlife officers to operate in an isolated forest areas, for instance.

Although, we in the Bloc Québécois would have liked to see some guarantee of federal co-operation with the provinces, but it would have been difficult to obtain such guarantees in committee. In the act, it says that provincial government employees appointed by the minister require the agreement and consent of the province to perform their duties in the province. The act also says that the Minister of the Environment may, in exceptional circumstances, give these officers special powers. We said yes, the minister may give them special powers, but since they were appointed with the agreement of the province,

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we felt that this was an amendment that would be hard to sell, although it would reinforce the legislation.

Officers will be able to inspect any premises or vehicle for the presence of wildlife. Everyone agrees that without this provision, effective application of the act would be in jeopardy. However, the bill observes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with a provision to protect the public against inspection without just cause. That is a very important point.

As in Bill C-23, the legislation includes a provision to recover any costs arising from the offence from the violators. It is very important that such costs not be borne by the taxpayers. Finally, a substantial increase in fines for violations of the act will surely enhance the deterrent effect of this legislation. I hope that the maximum fine of \$250,000 will have that effect and that the government will not hesitate to revise this amount if it appears insufficient to achieve the aims of this legislation.

(1810)

Furthermore, the bill allows the court to order offenders to remedy any harm they may have caused to the environment. The inclusion of this provision surely increases the legislation's desired deterrent effect.

In conclusion, the efforts made to achieve the goals of environmental protection and sustainable development must be followed up by the stringent enforcement of the act. Concrete, ongoing action must be taken in the environmental field to achieve sustainable development, the mark of a healthy economy and a healthy, flourishing society.

Quebecers and Canadians have given us a clear mandate to deal with environmental issues and we must do everything in our power to fulfil the terms of our mandate. We must atone for past mistakes and see that we do not repeat them. We can never say it enough: the environment knows no borders or party affiliation.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-24 is to amend and strengthen the existing Canada Wildlife Act which was originally proclaimed in 1973 and has essentially remained the same for the last 20 years.

Reform members in the House strongly believe that the current wildlife protection legislation is inadequate. We believe that it must be changed and updated to properly address the environmental concerns Canadians have in the 1990s.

The Reform Party is a party that is deeply concerned with Canada's environment. One of the principles of the party is that we believe Canada's identity and vision for the future should be rooted in and inspired by a fresh appreciation of our land and the supreme importance to our well-being of exploring, developing, renewing and conserving our natural resources and physical

environment. This forms part of our party's commitment to a clean healthy environment for all Canadians.

The proposed changes to the Canada Wildlife Act will expand the definition of wildlife to include all wild organisms, including plants, fungi, insects. It will thereby make it consistent with the convention on biodiversity which was ratified by Canada in 1993.

Some of the other amendments to the act will allow for national wildlife areas to be established in marine ecosystems in Canada's coastal waters out to the 200-mile limit to protect the beluga whales in Isabella Bay, west coast salmon and seabirds. The legislation will also enable the federal government to carry out its responsibility for wildlife research and a wide range of conservation and interpretation activities for wildlife and its habitat.

The act will also provide a greater deterrent to illegal activities such as poaching, by providing a maximum penalty of \$100,000 or five years in jail, or both for serious offences.

The mandate of the federal government environment department in Canada is to manage and conserve migratory birds and, in co-operation with the provinces and territories, other wildlife of national and international concern. Canada as a member of the international community has obligations to help preserve and protect our wildlife and wildlife areas. However, sustaining healthy, thriving populations of wild species contributes to the economic, social and cultural well-being of our nation as well.

The Canada Wildlife Act recognizes the benefits that wildlife has and is a recognition that legislation and regulation should be the essential tools in helping to preserve them for future generations. It must be remembered that other things must also be done to improve the current situation.

Canadians must educate themselves on the serious threat that illegal activity such as poaching poses for our wildlife. This information is currently available from a number of different sources, including government organizations, non-governmental organizations and hunting and angling clubs. If you want to meet a group of dedicated environmentalists, then turn up at your neighbourhood rod and gun club.

In economic terms the federal environment department has estimated that expenditures associated with all types of fish and wildlife related recreational activities have contributed approximately \$11.5 billion to our gross domestic product, \$4.4 billion in tax revenue, and more than one-quarter million jobs for Canadians. Clearly Canada's living natural resources are a valued part of our social and economic well-being. I state again that real environmentalists, those who value our wildlife most highly, are the responsible hunters who pour their time and money into the enhancement and maintenance of this resource.

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(1815)

It is very doubtful that anyone in the House needs to be convinced that conserving and protecting our environment has become a major political and economic issue in our country. Opinion polls show that over 90 per cent of Canadians are concerned about the state of our environment. The polls also show that the people of Canada are split with regard to their satisfaction with the ability of the federal government to handle difficult environmental issues.

Responsible hunters work with game wardens and law enforcement officers to protect wildlife from illegal harvesting or killing; in other words poaching. Every year poaching, which is the illegal taking of wildlife, results in millions of animals being killed for personal use or profit. They are sold on the black market in Canada and in other countries. It has often been estimated that the illegal kill in Canada is approximately double the legal kill. Poachers know that there is little risk involved in their activities including the risk of being caught. As little as 1 per cent of poaching crimes are investigated. Even if they are caught the fines are considered a cost of doing business.

The illegal trade in wildlife in Canada is a multi-million dollar business. The combination of high profits, low risk and the thrill of illegal activity makes poaching a very attractive business enterprise.

Responsible hunters, the ones we see in hunting vehicles carrying and wearing their hunting equipment in the fall, in unison say that Canada's wildlife protection and conservation legislation must be enforced to stop illegal activities such as poaching.

However we must ask ourselves if the provisions of the bill are tough enough. What about the enforcement of and punishment for these crimes? Any new or improved existing laws must also be strictly enforced if they are to protect Canada's wildlife. There must also be recognition on behalf of Canada's court system including prosecutors and judges that wildlife offences are serious and should be treated in a serious manner.

In general the Reform Party supports the changes made in the act after having had an opportunity to examine possible amendments in committee. Many groups made representations to the committee and some changes to the bill could be made.

One aspect of the bill which my party is very pleased to see receive almost total agreement is the stronger and improved enforcement and punishment section. Although the bill finally puts some teeth into the existing Canada Wildlife Act that up until this point it has lacked, we believe the enforcement provisions for maximum penalties could have been made even tougher.

Also the section on the recovery of administration costs in the act is to be improved. This is a development that the Reform Party, as a party built on the premise that government should be as fiscally prudent as possible and in light of Canada's current fiscal financial situation, can easily agree to.

We believe it is the proper approach to recover costs related to the management of public lands and protected marine areas. It will mean reduced expenditures on government's behalf, a more self-sufficient regulatory system, and will allow for greater financial sustainability over the long term.

However, as I raised in the debate on Bill C-23, again I raise the issue of aboriginal exclusion from the act and the problems that generates. I cite four examples. First, there is a domestic herd in northern Saskatchewan that from time to time is bothered or pestered by a wild herd. The answer on the part of the owner of the herd is to hire an aboriginal hunter who can shoot the elk out of season.

Second, in northern British Columbia a non-aboriginal group put together the start of a full buffalo herd. They were going to be setting it up as a venture wherein they could bring in hunters from around the world. However they were thwarted in that some people from the aboriginal population in northern B.C. went in and wiped out the herd.

(1820)

Third, there are deer around Princeton, British Columbia, about a three-hour drive east of Vancouver. It is well known and documented that aboriginal hunters from the Cariboo, a five-hour drive away, drive there and harvest out of season.

Fourth, in my constituency a person, upon receipt of designation as a status Indian, drove two hours past a sheep herd, went to a feeding station and shot a world class ram because of the curl of his horns.

These are examples of what happens when a particular group of people are taken out and given exclusion from bills like Bill C-23. They are not by any means a constant example; they are not by any means suggesting that all people of aboriginal descent would involve themselves in this. As a matter of fact those people would be a very rare exception. Nonetheless by having them outside the act makes this a possibility. It creates a serious concern and a lot of hostility on the part of people who cannot take advantage of the exclusion.

Canadians have been telling us that they want governments at all levels to protect and conserve our nation's wildlife. I believe as part of that we must get together to somehow address the aboriginal issue. We as policy makers and regulators must take this responsibility very seriously and deliver on this commitment for a healthier environment. If we are successful it will be to the benefit of all Canadians.

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Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of supporting Bill C-24 during third reading in the House today. While the legal text of the legislation defines the scope of the act, the regulatory authorities, penalties, enforcement powers and administrative procedures, it is the overall intent of the act and its amendments that makes it truly significant.

Sustainable development is a phrase commonly used today to describe how we should approach decision making in matters of the environment and the economy. Although there are many interpretations of how this approach should be applied, it is generally accepted that it involves adopting a forward looking and broadly based approach which considers both the long term economic and environmental consequences of any decision or action.

Implicit in this is the understanding that sustaining or enhancing the health of our economy intimately depends on the health of our environment and the sustainability of its resources. We have many situations where tough decisions have been made to ensure sustainable use of our renewable resources. Atlantic cod in the Pacific salmon fisheries is a recent example in which drastic action is necessary.

Conservation has become a priority. To avoid these situations we must ensure that we understand and anticipate problems and that all sectors are able to work together and build on each other's strengths to find the best means of managing and integrating our economy and our environment.

Solutions must be based on good science, consultation, co-operation and agreement. That is why I consider Bill C-24 so significant. We cannot hope to achieve sustainable development unless we have the tools. The Canada Wildlife Act is a tool for sustainable development and the amendments will make it an even more effective tool.

The act does not position the Government of Canada to act alone. Some may criticize it for that very reason, but by now we must have learned it is not possible to impose solutions for the kinds of problems we are talking about here: problems of loss of species and habitat conversion, problems of lack of information or informed decision making and so on.

(1825)

We must ensure that we come to an informed consensus of a need to take action and we must in fact act together. That is why the act is set up as enabling legislation. That is why it demands that the government establish partnerships with the relevant provincial and territorial agencies and with other non-governmental partners.

The programs that have been and will be established under the authority of the act are models for the way we need to co-operate in Canada to deal with issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. We need to recognize the strengths that various partners bring to the table and use those strengths, not argue

who should get credit for what, in support of our commonly held objectives of habitat conservation, conservation of threatened endangered species and making sure that citizens know and appreciate the importance of wildlife to their economic and social well-being; in short in support of sustainable development.

Many examples of conservation programs, co-operative research efforts and bilateral and multilateral conservation agreements have resulted from the act's implementation. For example, RENEW, an acronym for the recovery of nationally endangered wildlife, is a co-operative program of the federal and provincial governments and national conservation organizations to develop and implement recovery plans for Canada's endangered species.

The protection of habitat under the act also depends on co-operation and partnership. There are currently 45 protected areas, as we have already been told, covering 287,000 hectares of Canada. If we include the areas protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act, the total area protected is more than twice the size of Nova Scotia. These protected areas are established in full consultation with local communities and the provinces or territory involved. Once the conservation objectives have been determined, agreement on the type of protective measures that would be appropriate are decided. A distinct management regime thus evolves reflecting the concerns of all stakeholders.

An example of this process is the current work with the Inuit of Clyde River to establish a marine national wildlife area at Isabella Bay, Baffin Island. The Inuit originated the proposal because of concerns for the endangered population of bowhead whales which use this area as summer feeding grounds. The national wildlife area will form the core of an international biosphere reserve. Co-management of the area will focus on protecting critical habitat, ensuring continued traditional sustenance practices and promoting ecotourism and research on whales.

Two provisions in Bill C-24 will significantly enhance the potential scope for establishing protected areas. The first is the expanded definition of wildlife which includes all wild species of animals, plants and other organisms. Traditionally wildlife conservation has focused on particular species or species groups and has been limited to the higher orders of animals.

It is now widely recognized that a broader approach to conservation is needed, an ecosystem approach that considers all ecosystem functions and values including all animal and plant species and a full range of their habitat requirements. Expanding the definition of wildlife is consistent with the recommendation of the wildlife policy for Canada which was endorsed by the Federal-Provincial Wildlife Ministers Council of Canada in 1990. It will allow for research and establishment of protected areas based on an ecosystem approach and will

respond to the recommendations of the convention on biological diversity dealing with habit and ecosystem conservation.

The second change introduced in Bill C-24 which affects a scope of protected areas is a provision allowing for the establishment of protected areas beyond the territorial sea to the 200 nautical mile limit. Critical wildlife habitat, including areas with significant concentrations of sea birds and breeding and feeding grounds for whales, exists or extends beyond the territorial sea. Such areas include seasonal or permanent openings in the sea ice where birds, whales, polar bears and other wildlife concentrate; underwater mountains, upwellings of nutrients in the ocean and other areas associated with Canada's continental shelf.

(1830)

Protecting these key areas contributes to sustaining the biodiversity and associated economic benefits of marine ecosystems, benefits such as improved recreational opportunities.

As I have stated, the value of the Canada Wildlife Act is that it provides a basis for research, partnership and co-operation. The amendments included in Bill C-24 which I have just described present a new challenge to Canadians to be successful in understanding and protecting ecosystems and their biodiversity, including moving into the area of marine protected areas, which will require new and innovative partnerships involving a wider range of interest groups and stakeholders than has been the case in the past. Broad based strategies of a co-operative nature must be developed to ensure both environmental and economic objectives can be met.

I am convinced that Bill C-24 will help in achieving these ends. I strongly encourage my fellow members in the House to support it.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Debate!

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that I am delighted to speak on Bill C-24 immediately after my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan because both of us have been sitting on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for several weeks now and he is one of the members of the committee who have made a very significant contribution to the committee by his attendance and his comments.

In the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, we reviewed at the same time as Bill C-23, Bill C-24 to amend the Canada Wildlife Act. This act was passed in 1973. The purpose of this act was to enable the government to conduct wildlife research and in conjunction with the provinces,

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undertake various activities related to wildlife conservation and interpretation as well as the protection of wildlife habitat and endangered species.

Apparently, only minor changes have been made to this act since its coming into force. As in the case of Bill C-23, we are simply proposing amendments to ensure the act keeps up with the times. That is why we, from the Bloc Québécois, are jumping on the government band wagon and supporting these measures to protect our wildlife more effectively.

One of the most important changes in my view is that, as soon as it comes into effect, the act will protect—and that is the important part—not only any animal other than a domestic animal, but also all living organisms, and that covers a lot.

Living organisms include not only animals, birds and fish, but also those tiny unicellular microorganisms, you know, the kind that you cannot see with the naked eye but play a major role in the food chain.

(1835)

It covers plants like hay or clover, large trees like century-old oak trees as well as the tiny, delicate flower which lives but a short season. Bill C-24 will ensure that not only animals are protected but plants as well, so that all living organisms will be protected from now on.

Twenty years ago, people probably did not see the need to protect animals and their habitats. But it is now crystal clear that it would be illogical to protect the white-headed eagle, for example, while destroying its environment. This new provision will allow us to promote sustainable development, as my colleague explained earlier.

I would now like to explain the life cycle in very simple terms. Earth, the blue planet, is made up of two kinds of elements: living and non-living. Living elements include the sun, which is Earth's main source of energy. We find in the air non-living gases including CO₂ or carbonic gas. The soil and the minerals it contains are other non-living elements. Finally, water is another non-living natural resource which is very abundant in Quebec and Canada.

The sun, water, carbonic gas and the mineral salts found in the soil are four non-living elements which cost absolutely nothing. These four elements sustain living organisms, which grow, reproduce and die. These plants are called producers because they produce their own food. These producers are eaten by herbivores, which are in turn eaten by carnivores or omnivores. These carnivores and omnivores are in turn eaten by more powerful carnivores or omnivores. My colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, you and I are at the top of the food chain. We, of course, are at the top of the pyramid.

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From now on, Bill C-24 will protect all living organisms. Water, earth, light and air are set aside. Let us hope that these non-living elements will not be lacking in the future. It is all profit since plants, including the clover that grows, cost absolutely nothing.

I would like to take a few seconds to give you an example of a food chain. Carbonic gas, water, minerals salts in the soil and the sun make clover grow. The clover is eaten by grasshoppers; the grasshoppers are eaten by a frog; the frog is eaten by a grass snake; the grass snake is eaten by a racoon. Now what animal could be eating the racoon? Perhaps a coyote or a wolf, and so on and so forth.

(1840)

You see, the higher you go up the food chain, the bigger and more powerful the animals are, but there are fewer of them, fortunately. Mr. Speaker, imagine if there were more coyotes or wolves than hares in a given territory or ecosystem. There would be a short-term imbalance, that is for sure.

So I continue. Bill C-24 will also allow us to create national wildlife reserves by regulation in the area going beyond the territorial sea. At present, it is limited to the territorial sea, which only extends 12 nautical miles from our shores. With this bill, the limit would be extended to 200 nautical miles.

This extends the area in which we can act, since the marine ecosystem and its biodiversity are now almost totally neglected, as far as protecting their habitat is concerned. According to Environment Canada experts, the potential of this area is huge. Just take the areas with high concentrations of marine birds and the places where whales reproduce and feed.

Just as in the bill that we adopted a few minutes ago, Bill C-23, the minister could designate classes of persons as wildlife officers with this bill that we will probably pass, since the Bloc Quebecois will give its consent, of course. So I quote part of the bill:

The Minister may designate any person or class of persons to act as wildlife officers for the purposes of this Act and the regulations.

I am pleased to note that in this bill, just as in Bill C-23, the designation of provincial officers is subject to the agreement of the provincial government concerned. Since this provision whereby the minister can designate wildlife officers is the counterpart of the one in Bill C-23, with respect to game officers, the answer obtained in committee as to whether the minister could appoint a hunting or fishing association, for example, as wildlife officers is still valid.

I was told then that it could be done, but that such associations could have limited powers. Still rather sceptical about the benefits of this provision, I contacted the Quebec wildlife conservation officers' union. The president of the union, Paul Legault, told us about the situation in Quebec, since similar

powers have already been given by the Government of Quebec under the Wildlife Conservation Act.

In 1978, when private clubs in Quebec were abolished, a decision was made to appoint wildlife conservation assistants to perform the duties of the wardens of the now defunct private clubs. Originally, these assistants were supposed to be the eyes and ears of the wildlife officers and had no title or function as such. Over the years, expectations increased, but nothing was done about improving the training and supervision of these people.

The results are not encouraging. It seems these individuals were not very productive and often had a conflict of interest, since they had to enforce the regulations but were also earning a living as hunting and fishing guides.

(1845)

Imagine, an outfitter who is your guide and at the same time acts as a wildlife officer. If you give him \$200 or \$300 a day and have nothing to show for it, I imagine you would fire him right away so he has to deliver or else he will lose his customers. This creates a very ambiguous situation.

Incidentally, less than one violation report is filed per assistant annually. At this rate, some assistants do not file any reports at all. Some file one or two, and if some assistants file ten reports, there must be quite a few who do not file any at all. So the Government of Quebec is reviewing this system.

There are also a number of shortcomings in the system itself, and I will name three: the selection process suffers as a result of criteria that are not strict enough; the training program is too short and is not adapted to the needs of the assistants; finally, there is no mechanism to follow up the work being done by the assistants.

However, as in the case of game wardens, there are not enough wildlife officers to enforce the legislation. That being said, we might as well admit we have to appoint more staff to ensure compliance.

According to the Bloc Quebecois, it would be useful to take certain steps to avoid a situation where wildlife officers do not have the required qualifications and thus lose their credibility. That is why we suggested the same amendments to the Standing Committee. As I explained earlier, and this happens regularly, our amendments were defeated. We will not vote against Bill C-24, but I think accepting our two amendments would have benefited the legislation.

I will repeat them quickly. The purpose of the first amendment was to ensure that individuals designated by the minister have received appropriate training. This amendment is particularly relevant since the Quebec experience has shown this is an important part of the problem. The purpose of our second amendment was to make the designation of this category con-

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ditional on approval by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Both amendments were defeated, but I remain firmly convinced of the importance of taking a closer look at this kind of appointments. According to Mr. Legault, the rather careless approach to appointing assistants has caused quite some friction with the public, because some individuals "play the enforcer". As I mentioned earlier, and I will repeat this for the benefit of hon. members opposite, when you appoint a whole hunting association as wildlife officers, there may be a couple of people in the group with more brawn than brains, who use their brawn in a way that may discredit all wildlife officers. That is what I meant by playing the enforcer.

(1850)

The request to get new partners involved is more and more pressing, but there must not be a shifting of responsibility onto citizens' shoulders. Nevertheless, it is essential to do something about the inadequate protection of wildlife, and I believe that Bill C-24 does meet that objective. Good will and good laws are not sufficient to adequately protect our environment. Those two elements alone are like having good tools but no carpenter to use them.

In conclusion, education is the best solution and the best tool to protect wildlife, flora, habitats and ecosystems. The government must understand that, instead of 2,000 or 3,000 wildlife officers, we need 27 million such officers in Canada. Indeed, every one of us should be a wildlife officer, and when we witness things which are damaging to our environment, we should have the courage to confront those who are responsible for such action.

Of course, we run the risk of being insulted, but this is the price to pay if we want to do our share. In the long term, this would be a welcome investment in publicity, particularly when you think that every day the government and the Minister of Finance must make new cuts to lower our national deficit. Let us start in school by telling our young ones that they, and their children, will inherit what is there now. Let us educate them and, in two or three generations, the mentality will have completely changed. It will be centred on sustainable development and biodiversity.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

[English]

EXCISE ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-11, an act to amend the Excise Act, the Customs Act and the Tobacco Sales to Young Persons Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are two motions in amendment on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-11, an act to amend the Excise Act, the Customs Act and the Tobacco Sales to Young Persons Act.

[Translation]

Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted on separately. Motion No. 2 will be debated and voted on separately.

[English]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville) moved:

That Bill C-11, in Clause 11, be amended:

(a) by replacing lines 24 and 25, on page 5, with the following:

"way furnish

(a) cigarettes except in packages containing at least 20 cigarettes per package; or

(b) tobacco, other than cigarettes, in quantities of at least 20 grams."

(b) by replacing lines 3 and 4, on page 6, with the following:

"package

(a) cigarettes in a package containing fewer than 20 cigarettes; or

(b) tobacco, other than cigarettes, in quantities of at less than 20 grams."

(1855)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to request support from the government and the Official Opposition for our proposed amendment to Bill C-11.

We have received representation from both the Canadian Cancer Society and the Action Committee on Smoking and Health. They have expressed concerns about the increase in the use of smokeless tobacco among young people.

Twenty-one per cent of grade seven students in Red Deer, Alberta, had tried smokeless tobacco and up to 11 per cent indicated they were currently using smokeless tobacco. It was also reported that the use of smokeless tobacco has more than doubled among males between the ages of 12 and 17 since 1987, more than doubled.

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The main concern was again the smaller packaging targeted to younger persons. Our amendment would amend clause 11 to restrict the sale and packaging of tobacco other than cigarettes in quantities of at least 20 grams. This would make small packages of smokeless tobacco illegal, just like kiddie packs.

Smokeless tobacco includes oral moist snuff and chewing tobacco. Nicotine is released from the product and absorbed across the membranes of the mouth into the body. Long term use of spitting tobacco leads to significant damage to soft and hard tissues of the oral cavity. It causes leukopakia, white patches in the mouth, some of which are premalignant. Between 3 per cent and 6 per cent develop into cancer.

Oral snuff has high levels of cancer causing nitrosamines with levels 10,000 times greater than allowed in regulated products such as beer, 10,000 times greater. Other cancer-causing agents are also present. Long term snuff users have a fifty-fold increase in cancer of the gums and mouth. Spitting tobacco is implicated in cancer of the larynx, esophagus, nasal cavity, pancreas, kidney and bladder. Gum disease occurs in 60 per cent of the users.

According to a health and welfare report the more immediate effect of chewing tobacco and snuff is probably on the dental health of youth as smokeless tobacco may contain sweeteners such as sugar, honey, molasses, syrups and licorice.

In addition to the statistics I have provided for Red Deer, Alberta, a 1991 Arkansas study found that 21 per cent of male kindergarten students were regular users. Among male school-age children in Ontario grades 7 to 13, 13 per cent reported using smokeless tobacco and cigarettes.

The most disturbing finding was that many students felt the use of smokeless tobacco was not as addictive as cigarettes, that is what the students thought, and that using it was a good alternative to help quit smoking.

In 1988 the World Health Organization issued an urgent call on the part of all governments with no history of smokeless tobacco use to ban the product before its use became widespread. It is not manufactured in Canada. We have to import these small little packs. I hope that the government and the opposition will support us on this.

All the Reform Party is asking is that we take this one small step to ensure that we do not make smokeless tobacco products any easier for young people to obtain than a package of cigarettes. I sincerely hope the members and the government will support us in this amendment.

I believe it is common sense to include this amendment in our legislation. That is why I propose it.

(1900)

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, everything that the hon. member just said is true. In fact, smokeless tobacco is extremely dangerous, and I applaud his amendment.

However, it is inappropriate at this time for a few reasons. Eighty-five per cent of the tobacco sold is in the form of cigarettes in this country at the moment and, as he said, we do import all of our smokeless tobacco. Of the smokeless tobacco that we import, even of that small amount, only a very minuscule amount is in fact imported in sizes under 20 grams. What we have here is not a real marketplace problem. The act deals with banning the sale of tobacco to anyone under 18 anyway, so no one should be selling any packages of anything to people under 18.

However, we think it is inappropriate at this moment because there are some trade implications because all of our smokeless tobacco is imported and we need to analyze that. I would like us not to stall what is in fact an extraordinarily important bill right now in order to wait for that amendment to come through. You can always amend this at another time and it is quite acceptable to bring in an amendment later on. At this point while I applaud the amendment, I think it is inappropriate to do so.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health responded a minute ago and said that this could be amended at any time, am I to assume that the government would support such an amendment at a future date?

Ms. Fry: Mr. speaker, yes, I think we would like to look at some of the trade implications because of the fact that much of the smokeless tobacco is an import. We think it is an excellent amendment but inappropriate at this time.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

(Motion negatived)

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[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot) moved:

That Bill C-11, in Clause 11, be amended by adding after line 30, on page 6, the following:

“(3) Sections 7.1 and 7.2 shall come into force six months after the day this Act is assented to.”

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the next few minutes to explain the thrust of the Bloc Québécois' proposed amendment to Bill C-11.

Let me begin by saying that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill which is aimed, among other things, at amending the Tobacco Sales to Young Persons Act to prohibit tobacco manufacturers from packaging cigarettes in packages containing fewer than 20 cigarettes.

The provisions of Bill C-11 make it illegal to sell the packages containing 15 or 5 cigarettes which are currently on the market, or to sell single cigarettes. We support this bill because we care about people's health and in particular about the health of young people who are encouraged to smoke because of the availability of kiddie packs and single cigarettes.

(1905)

Once again, my party believes that it is not enough to prevent young people from taking up smoking. A broad-based awareness campaign is needed to discourage young people from consuming products which are harmful to their health.

Despite the best legislation or the most stringent regulations, we will always have to contend with unscrupulous retailers, just as I did in my youth, who encourage young people to start smoking by selling them single cigarettes. I started smoking when I was just 11 or 12 years old because of an unscrupulous store owner in the neighbourhood. He would hand out free cigarettes to young people to get them hooked, and after that he would charge them 10 cents, 15 cents and then 20 cents. There is a profiteer, there is an unscrupulous store owner. You all know cases like that. I have known a few myself in my time.

We have nothing against the bill per se, but rather against the demand put on businesses, retailers, wholesalers and distributors to adapt quickly to the new provisions contained in Bill C-11 that provide that they take off the market almost overnight small size packs of cigarettes or tobacco. They stand to suffer substantial losses because of this, based on the representations made by The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, among others, which has testified before the finance committee to point out this deficiency while supporting government efforts to discourage smoking or tobacco use from an early age among young people. The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers asked whether it would not be possible to defer the coming into force of that part of the regulations for a while.

The intent of the motion the Bloc is tabling this evening is to give distributors, retailers, anyone who is holding stocks of packages containing fewer than 20 cigarettes time to clear their stocks without incurring excessive losses.

As you know, since 1990, retailers as well as wholesalers and distributors have sustained substantial losses because of the recession. And say what we may, we are still experiencing a slack in the economy although some level of growth can be expected in a near future.

I would call upon the leniency of the government and the Reform Party to pass such an amendment. Without adulterating or weakening in any way this bill, which we support, to discourage young people from starting to smoke early, our amendment nonetheless gives businesses a chance to adjust to the new context. Let us bear in mind also that we have been asking a lot from the tobacco industry and allied industries over the past seven or eight years in terms of adjustment.

So, six short months to turn around would be welcome and that is the motion I am putting to you on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

[English]

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that we can accept this amendment. Tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the world today. There are 40,000 Canadians a year who die as a result of tobacco smoking.

It is a cost of \$3 billion a year to the health care industry in this country and directly to the Canadian government. When this announcement was made that we would be banning kiddie packs, it was made by the Prime Minister in this House on February 8. That was a little over four months ago.

That has been enough notice, we believe, for the manufacturers and for everyone who sells kiddie packs to take notice that we were going to do this. Second, kiddie packs are very accessible to young people. They like to buy them because they are attractive, because they cost less money and because they are easy to hide from parents and teachers.

(1910)

It is very important that we take steps now to prevent this very preventable cause of smoking among young people or this very preventable adjunct to smoking in young people.

This is an addictive drug and I do not know how long we can continue to keep saying it is worthwhile keeping it up and allowing us to continue to propagate what in reality is a lethal and addictive drug. I think we have given enough time to the manufacturers and retailers to take this drug off the market.

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Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to concur with what the hon. member has just said and also to add a few remarks with regard to kiddie packs. The ban will be implemented.

The Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council denies that kiddie packs or 15s, as they are called, were designed for sale to young people. It said this recently in a written communication to the Minister of Health and again in its brief to the Standing Committee on Finance on June 7.

It is very clear. The statistics provided to us show the largest percentage of sales of kiddie packs were to young people. While the tobacco manufacturers may not have designed the 15 packs for kids, the end result is that the kids end up using them.

If the tobacco industry continues to make these kinds of claims that they are not designed for kids I think it brings into question its credibility and raises the whole issue of whether we can believe it on other issues as well.

It claims that \$2 million of existing packaging supplies for kiddie packs will be wasted, resulting in a \$2 million write-off that will cost taxpayers about \$1 million. It also believes that selling existing stock effective September 12 is quite unfair and will lead to further write-offs. I am sure this has already been addressed and so I will not continue on that.

We have to balance the claims and the interests of the tobacco manufacturers, distributors and retailers with the interest of health of young people purchasing and smoking these kiddie packs. The Reform Party finds no difficulty in siding with the health of our young people.

Rather than support the Bloc motion which supports the claims of the tobacco industry we would rather support the claims of the Canadian Cancer Society and the committee for action on smoking and health and move to stop the sale of kiddie packs to young people as soon as possible.

If the tobacco industry claims that kiddie packs are designed to be sold to adults, we have an alternative proposal. Bundle them up in packs of two, put some cellophane or whatever around them, and sell them only to adults, which I think the law requires anyway, and we would no longer have kiddie packs. I think the solution is so simple the industry does not have to take this tremendous loss. We are saying simply sell them in packs of two and your problem is solved. I think it is very simple and only common sense.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion negatived.)

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (for the Minister of National Revenue) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

(1915)

[English]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wonder if the Chair could ask when the bill will be read the third time.

The Deputy Speaker: I am obliged to the hon. deputy government whip. When shall the bill be read the third time? At the next sitting of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

YUKON FIRST NATIONS LAND CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

The House resumed from June 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-33, an act to approve, give effect to and declare valid land claims agreements entered into between Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada, the Government of the Yukon Territory and certain First Nations in the Yukon Territory, to provide for approving, giving effect to and declaring valid other land claims agreements entered into after this act comes into force, and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Crowfoot, to whom I might indicate he has five minutes left in debate.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I will be as brief as possible. I would like to cover three points in the time I have left.

The intent of this bill is going in the right direction and we support the intent of this bill. There is not anyone in Canada who does not want to see the aboriginal people self-reliant and self-governing, but we believe this bill fails to bring us closer to that goal.

The first item I will deal with is the power this bill will grant the new aboriginal communities to create citizenship. A question that has not been answered in the bill or during the debate is, if they have the power to create citizenship do they not have the power to extinguish citizenship? How will that work? If they have the power to determine who will be a citizen of their new country or nation, then do they not also have the right to

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extinguish citizenship? If it comes to that, how will that work? What kinds of problems will that create?

We have to look at their system of government that will be set up. What will that system of government be? Nothing in the bill indicates whether there will be an appeal process within their government. For people who believe they need to question a decision of their leaders, will there be an opportunity for them to do so through an appeal system? That question ought to be clarified in this bill so that members in this House and people across this country who support this bill will be satisfied that we are going to grant rights to these people equal to what we enjoy as Canadian citizens.

My second point has been touched upon a number of times. If this bill is going to be successful and acceptable, it must have the answer to the extinguishment of the dependency the aboriginal people have upon the taxpayers and the Government of Canada. There is no indication that there is any light at the end of the tunnel within this agreement. Contrary to that, it is very clear these new aboriginal nations will be able to continue to look to the federal government for funding. There is no indication this dependency will stop.

My last point is the one of equality of citizenship. Certainly the members of these new nations, the aboriginal people, will continue to remain citizens of Canada. This bill has created special rights and privileges in law based upon race and ethnic origin. While the rest of the world, including South Africa, is bringing barriers down between races and ethnic groups, we are in the process of erecting them. We saw this same kind of problem emerge within the Meech Lake accord and the Charlottetown accord and we are seeing it again in this umbrella agreement.

(1920)

People are being granted special rights and privileges based upon race and ethnic origin. These rights and privileges are being paid for by the Canadian taxpayers, even though they do not know it, thanks to the speed at which this bill has emerged, been debated and, I venture to guess, will pass all stages of reading.

This formula of special rights cannot succeed in a multicultural society such as Canada. We must ensure that all Canadians stand equal before the law, regardless of race, language, culture or religion. This bill violates that principle. This may be the greatest failing of the Yukon First Nations agreement. It grants special rights based upon race and ethnic origin and destroys the principle of equality of citizenship in Canada.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to speak to Bill C-33 without some reference at least to Bill C-34, since both bills have been tabled simultaneously and will be dealt with simultaneously in committee.

Generally my concerns with the land claim settlement portion of the two bills are the same as my concerns were with Bill C-16, the Mackenzie Valley land claim agreement. The very process the government has chosen to deal with these land claim settlements is most objectionable, to put it simply.

Considering the importance of these bills, their unprecedented nature, their open endedness, their implications for the fundamental constitutional rights of all Canadians, and the breakneck speed with which these bills are being rushed through is nothing less than an abuse of the parliamentary process. It is a reckless invitation for legal and social disaster.

Much of the confusion I feel and express is testimony to the inadequate time we have been given to deal with this immensely difficult and huge legislative package. There is much in this package that we could agree with. The fact that we can only deal with the bill itself and not the agreement as was the case with Bill C-16 makes it difficult to impossible for our party as well as other interest groups and individuals to discharge their responsibility and rights to comment on, criticize or improve the bill.

In view of these concerns, I have to ask why these bills are being pushed through with such haste. The process thus far has taken 23 years. Why does the government want to pass them through Parliament without proper scrutiny? Could it be that given time to analyze and examine these bills, an effective public opposition to the content of these bills might come forward? Could it be that there really is not the overwhelming support for these bills, so we must rush them through without public awareness or examination?

I must also ask, after negotiating for 23 years, why now, when only four final agreements exist, are we being asked to abrogate our responsibilities as an opposition party to examine the other 10 final agreements? Why did the government not finish the negotiating process, instead of asking us to approve and pass these agreements that do not now exist? That is the same process which led to the failure of the Charlottetown accord.

The provision of the compensation package also raises some concerns for me. When I enquired of the departmental officials during our briefing what we were compensating for, I was told that it really was not compensation and perhaps compensation was a poor choice of words. That was the same answer to the same question I received on Bill C-16.

There seems to me to be a very fundamental disagreement between the aboriginal people and the Government of Canada over where we are starting from and where we are going to. Are we beginning a process to now buy or rent Canadian territory from the aboriginal people, or does the crown in fact, hold title to the Canadian land and we are only providing an amount of money to help with economic development? The answer to this question is vital to the future land claim settlements south of 60.

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(1925)

The entrenchment of these agreements as modern day treaties in the constitution should also be of concern to all Canadians. There appears to be some difference of legal opinion as to what this means, but it could mean that these rights gained through these agreements are not amendable except by constitutional amendments.

This would mean that these rights are beyond the reach of future parliamentary amendments. This would give precedence to the obligation of Canadian taxpayers to these agreements over the obligation to provide to all Canadians health care, old age security, or other social security which are provided by simple acts of Parliament. I believe therefore these provisions to be an arrogant and tragic mistake to lock in forever the government policy regardless of what fiscal conditions might exist in this country in the future.

The creation of 16 separate governments with 15 separate territories each with separate laws, regulations, and bureaucratic boards will create a bureaucratic nightmare for anyone wanting to do business in Yukon, not to mention the cost of all the new bureaucracies and government institutions.

In conclusion, my feeling about this land claim agreement is the same as I stated in debate on Bill C-16. I believe and I am supported by Supreme Court precedents that the crown holds title to all Canadian territory outside privately held titled land.

I do support the provision of deeded land, the provision for economic self-sufficiency in the form of a cash payment and resource sharing. I also support the right of aboriginal peoples to use the resources of their traditional territory for subsistence.

I do not support the never ending dependence of these aboriginal people on the taxpayers of Canada. I believe having been provided the above-mentioned benefits the financial responsibility of the taxpayers must end. These people can once again become proud self-sufficient Canadians with the same economic and social benefits as all other Canadians, not disillusioned, discouraged, dependent people trapped in a segregated ethnic homeland dictated to by a dominating paternalistic federal government.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the deputy government whip to defer the division until tomorrow at 6.30 p.m.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) a division on the question now before the House stands deferred until tomorrow at 6.30 p.m., at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

(1930)

SAHTU DENE AND METIS LAND CLAIM SETTLEMENT ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-16, an act to approve, give effect to and declare valid an agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada and the Dene of Colville Lake, Déline, Fort Good Hope and Fort Norman and the Metis of Fort Good Hope, Fort Norman and Norman Wells, as represented by the Sahtu Tribal Council, and to make related amendments to another act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

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

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed feelings that I rise today to speak to Bill C-16. Certainly there are some positive developments in the bill. Negotiations toward aboriginal self-government for instance have been a long time in coming. Although the Reform Party does not adhere to the concept of inherent self-government we support self-government negotiations on a voluntary basis where neither party is coerced to come to the table. To my knowledge this is a voluntary agreement and that part of it is good.

Our caucus is also pleased that the agreement has been put before Parliament in the form of a bill so at least we get a chance to discuss this particular agreement before Canadians and in public.

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The presentation of this bill sets a precedent. Members on this side of the House fully expect that every negotiated settlement in the future will also come under the scrutiny of Parliament. We only regret that the last bill, the one approving the Nunavut agreement, received such a cursory examination by the House.

My remarks therefore will be confined to the understanding that when agreements move aboriginals toward more self-reliance they are positive agreements. In concept the land claims settlement we are talking about tonight, a historic reconciliation between the Sahtu Dene and Metis people and the federal government could be and has the framework of a good deal.

The Reform Party has long been on the record as wanting to settle outstanding land claims issues. However, since this is the first such agreement to come before this current Parliament and the Reform Party of Canada, it must come under more careful scrutiny than might otherwise be the case because it sets yet another precedent that other groups will surely point to in the future.

Reformers must do their utmost to lay down principles that will guide lawmakers in this and future agreements because for all its good points there are many deficiencies both in the process of negotiation and in the bill itself that must be corrected before it can become law.

Unfortunately the media and our intellectual establishment have done the country a disservice by pressuring the government to make sweeping agreements without regard to such minor details as cost, political process, definition of self-government or the wishes of non-aboriginal Canadians. It has been left to the Reform Party of Canada to ask searching questions on this subject and we are prepared to do just that.

Reformers feel that barriers to free thought on a number of issues like this have been erected in the country. The political forces that have run government for the last 15 or 20 years have consistently confused reason and reasonable criticism with radical thought.

For the media and our academics to do so much as question some topics is to reveal some sort of subversive, dangerous tendency. This is a sad commentary on the state of intellectual life in this country. The one who questions First Nations' policy in the minds of the media is quickly hounded to the wall as a racist and a bigot.

This notion of the politically correct can occur in any country and it becomes an oppressive straitjacket that is truly dangerous to public policy.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn tells an interesting story in his great work *The Gulag Archipelago* in which a large number of people gathered to hear a government official make a speech. In those

days it was customary to applaud a political speech after it was done by clapping your hands over your head.

(1935)

After the speech the crowd began thunderous applause but no one dared stop or even slow down because secret agents were watching and the one who stopped clapping first might be seen as disloyal. The room was crowded and hot. Everyone was standing. There were no chairs and the clapping went on and on and on.

Finally, after a few minutes, an old man fainted in the crowd and then a brave fellow standing on the platform, tired of all the foolishness, abruptly stopped clapping and sat down. Of course the rest of the room immediately fell silent as well.

This somewhat comical example is sobered by the fact that the man on the platform who stopped clapping was later done away with by the communists.

In a very small way this situation finds a parallel in our country today. The leaders of our country, the academics and special interest groups, have all made the same speech. That speech has been reiterated over and over again by them and then taken up in turn by the media. Then the politicians, willing to do just about anything to gain political victory, begin to include these thoughts in their speeches until all of them are clapping in unison.

The fact that a particular policy may not really be in the best long term interest of the country is no longer addressed. Everyone is clapping. It would be a sign of disloyalty for the speech to somehow quit. The first one to do so much as stop this enthusiastic clapping might lose his career or his money or his power or prestige or face or tenure or something.

What does it take to correct this situation? It takes someone on the platform with a little bit of spine and backbone to get tired of this foolishness and stop clapping.

I am relieved to say that there is someone on Canada's national platform today and that is the Reform Party of Canada. It has the spine and the backbone it takes to stop this foolish applause so that Canadians can hear finally the public interest.

Just like the Solzhenitsyn story where the room fell immediately silent when one leader stopped clapping, perhaps now for the first time intelligent, rational discussion can take place on these so-called delicate issues.

Although everyone was afraid to question government policy on these politically correct issues, as soon as someone stood up tall and proud and said in front of the whole nation: "I'm no longer willing to agree to a policy that is not in the public interest, a policy that people don't really want", finally we are getting down to the crux of some of these important issues that have never been discussed in Parliament before. What we have

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done already to break this stranglehold of intellectual faddism is a credit to our party and a great service to our country.

The first question with regard to Bill C-16 that must be asked and answered is the question of fairness. The seeds for this question were planted by our forefathers who negotiated treaties with different Indian bands in the last century. They did it piecemeal and so different bands negotiated different agreements. Today the government is doing exactly the same thing, sowing new seeds that may produce the fruits of division and jealousy in the future.

This problem was recently addressed by the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, when he said:

Each First Nation in Canada that has a treaty must benefit equally from the Liberal promises. There cannot be a selective approach by government as to what region or what First Nation will be able to move ahead on treaties or self-government or education.

Just a few weeks ago the *Star-Phoenix* quoted Mr. Mercredi as saying:

The inherent right of our people is not a pilot project. It cannot be implemented as a model in one province or one region for all First Nations to copy—he said chiefs throughout the country must accept self-government as a national policy.

Non-natives want to be fair to all aboriginals in Canada, but if the government cannot be as generous to the Sto:lo Nation in my riding as it is to the Sahtu under this agreement, what will stop groups from returning to the table in 20 years and saying: “We still have an historic grievance. We were shortchanged in the negotiations. Look what the Sahtu received in 1994. Now we want a fair deal”.

How do we know that Bill C-16 is a fair settlement? Is this a national standard, a benchmark by which we judge all other agreements?

When we bring all these agreements together, and a couple of the others have been discussed in Parliament tonight, and we find out their total cost, we must ask the Canadian people somewhere along the line if they are willing to pay this much to establish this land claim settlement and self-government.

As the hon. member for Athabasca mentioned earlier, this bill should be put on hold until national negotiations have been completed and Canadians properly consulted. There is no rush. It is a mistake to rush ahead with this. Otherwise we will be renegotiating many of these deals well into the next century. By that time standards will have changed completely. This type of negotiation is irresponsible and the government is setting the stage for continuing conflict over land claims and self-government for decades to come.

(1940)

The next problem with the bill flows logically from the first and that is the huge cost of this agreement. One thousand, seven

hundred and fifty-five people will benefit from this agreement. Each adult will receive 285 square kilometres of land. Over 42 square kilometres of land will be given in fee simple to each member. I should probably repeat that, 42 square kilometres for each person.

For instance the land that is in the province of Ontario belongs to all Canadians, but under the Sahtu agreement 74,000 square kilometres of land will be owned by individual natives and they will control four times that much.

Do Canadians realize how big this settlement is? Two hundred and eighty thousand square kilometres of Canadian land, that is one-third the size of my province, British Columbia, will be removed permanently from the public domain. Together with the last three agreements, including the ones I mentioned earlier, soon there will be very little public land north of the 60th parallel.

No legal precedent equates aboriginal title with land ownership. The courts have always categorically rejected that idea. Where does it come from then? It stems from the Liberal Party of Canada, the party that has for the last 20 years nurtured interest groups and catered to their every whim. The Liberal government always gives first place to its political children and second place, I believe, to the people of Canada. This latest massive giveaway is a political present wrapped up in the backrooms of the Liberal Party.

There is more. There is also a cash component of this agreement. One hundred and thirty million dollars will be paid out to just 1,700 people over 15 years which works out to \$100,000 each, plus a percentage of resource royalties, plus fishing and hunting rights, plus a new complicated bureaucracy paid for by the taxpayers, plus the benefit of programs already available to natives elsewhere in Canada.

You or I might think this would be satisfactory, Mr. Speaker, but not at all. Canadians who hope that this agreement at last defines what self-government really means will be bitterly disappointed. This agreement is not a self-government agreement. It is simply a land claims agreement. Self-government has yet to be negotiated. No doubt it will confer many more benefits on the Sahtu, Dene and Metis. This is not the end of the process. It is just the beginning.

I want to address another problem with this agreement. Many of the aboriginal people in Canada are concerned about this headlong rush into self-government and land claim settlements. During the Charlottetown accord debate aboriginal women's groups urged the rejection of that agreement on the grounds that they had not been included in the negotiations and that they were not secure in approving an agreement that could take away the protection, privileges and freedoms they now enjoy.

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In my own constituency of Fraser Valley East many of the grassroots aboriginals who try to live with these agreements negotiated behind closed doors, things like the aboriginal fishing strategy or the make-up of local government structures, find themselves frustrated by decisions and a process that leaves the power in the hands of a very powerful few in these government structures.

Obviously the demands for honest leadership, fiscal accountability and democratic principles transcend cultural boundaries. Canadians of all backgrounds want an open government and an open process.

I have been approached by two different aboriginal leaders from my home town about this matter. There are 20 some bands in my constituency. Some of them doubt whether the concept for self-government is something whose time has come. Allow me to quote from a letter I received from a native official who is currently active in leadership. He says: "The bands in my area cannot agree on the manner in which lands should be held or how control should be structured. The Chilliwack Area Indian Council and Sto:Lo Nation Group do not seem to be able to agree on the simplest matters. As far as funding is concerned everything is chaotic. There are many instances of funding abuses".

He goes on to cite instances of mismanagement of government funds, including federal money designated to create new positions used instead by the bands to increase existing salaries. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has been notified of this problem.

If the bands demonstrate this type of behaviour now, it is no wonder that they are questioning whether this behind closed doors process is the proper process that will give them the type of leadership and the type of control that they are hoping for in the future. We need to take a close look at current band management before we entrust these sorts of things to legislative power equal to that of the provinces. Will the majority of aboriginals benefit at the hands of their own governments?

(1945)

Let me cite one more example that has been brought before me, a personal experience. The aboriginal fishing strategy is an agreement granting unprecedented authority to natives to catch and sell salmon from B.C.'s Fraser River. The management regime over this resource is controlled by natives but native officials have approached me with allegations of surprising proportions, the latest one being that a proper audit has not been submitted on time, at the end of May as required in the original agreement, causing further doubt as to whether these funds have been used and allocated properly.

The department again is aware of all these problems and doing nothing about it. One native leader wrote to me and said: "It is disappointing to realize our Indian government prefers to impose authority on its membership rather than to be guided by it".

The same man told me personally that in their case, in their band, they are not ready for self-government.

A century and a half ago Canadians ruled by the British were champing at the bit to have a little more say over their own lives. Responsible government was finally granted by Britain but it was a long time in coming. It was only given after Canadian political leaders had demonstrated through action that they were ready for it. Budget by budget, decision by decision, crisis by crisis, the leadership of the colony built up a store of experience and dedication that showed they could be trusted to act in the public interest.

Should there not be a companion requirement for aboriginal leaders? Is it not wise to require many small demonstrations of responsibility, sound management, compassion and trustworthiness so that we can ensure natives will act in the interest of other natives in all of Canada? Power and money alone cannot solve the problems of our aboriginal people. In fact they may only make them worse.

Many aboriginal people want and need assurances that any new agreements move them toward a better, more responsive and responsible form of government. No one has the inherent right to govern; the privilege of governance must be earned.

I want to draw on for a moment the process of this agreement. The Meech Lake fiasco provoked a general outcry about constitutional processes in Canada. No more were there to be negotiations behind closed doors. Canadians from all walks of life, except those in the old line parties, were quick to issue their angry denunciations. The group which felt the most betrayed, the ones who uttered the most embittered and angry denunciations, was none other than aboriginal people themselves. They condemned the deal and the deal makers alike.

Have the Liberals learned from the Meech Lake and Charlottetown agreements? Not at all. Now that the Sahtu have a 125-page agreement, every word of which will be entrenched in our own Constitution, what do we hear? A deafening silence. When 200 Canadian municipalities want input into the process they have to write a letter. Listen to a quote from their brief: "Municipalities have felt excluded from a process that has so far involved only aboriginal leaders and federal and provincial governments".

Even the provinces are in the dark. Even though negotiations for instance with the Manitoba chiefs are ongoing right now to dismantle Indian affairs in that province, the Toronto *Star* quoted the premier of Manitoba as "having absolutely no information on which to build a provincial government policy". Where is the openness of the process? Where are the promises of

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the Liberals about candour and public trust? Let me quote from page 91 of the vaunted Liberal red book:

The people are irritated with governments that do not consult them, or that disregard their views, or that try to conduct key parts of public business behind closed doors.

The Liberals criticized the Conservatives about their lack of openness but it is all just politics. They are the pot calling the kettle black. Mr. Speaker, could you or I listen to the dismantling negotiations in Manitoba? Will they be public? Could you appear before the negotiators to make a presentation? Not on your life.

I asked the minister a number of important questions about the Manitoba process. I wrote to him on April 5 asking how I might have input. I received a statement in return that ignored the questions I asked, although it did reveal that the government had given \$400,000 to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to help them make their case against the Canadian people.

This process is worse than Meech Lake. It is shut tight. Ordinary Canadians are totally excluded. Not even the media has access to them. The Sahtu package is presented before Parliament today as a *fait accompli* without the benefit of public discussion beforehand. The Liberal government will use its majority to ram it through the House, putting its trust in the continuing silence of the silent majority.

(1950)

While aboriginals, the media and the academic community exploded in anger over Meech Lake, they are all curiously silent today. Who speaks for ordinary Canadians who have to pay for this deal? They are the ones excluded from the process established over a decade of constitutional struggle, a process promised in the red book, a process ignored by the Liberals today.

It makes a travesty of red book promises. It makes a mockery of the constitutional process. It treats the people of Canada and members of Parliament like children who cannot eat at the table with the big folks. They have to sit at the card table in Parliament and eat the leftovers thrown to them by the negotiators. This is unacceptable.

There are principles of fairness and equality that every agreement should contain, principles that should be acceptable to the Canadian people. They would be. Let me enumerate them. The first is an open, national negotiating process.

The second is definitive reasonable costs acceptable to non-aboriginal people throughout the country.

The third is to ensure the supremacy of Parliament by agreeing that the charter will apply to every person in Canada. It disturbs me greatly to read in the May 12 edition of the *Gazette* that Canada's criminal law and the charter will not necessarily apply to aboriginal people. "That is something that remains to

be determined", the Minister of Justice says. All Canadians, native and non-native, must be equal under the law.

The fourth principle is that the text of these agreements must not be entrenched in the Constitution. Its complex details are too difficult to change and the process for changing them is not specified in the Constitution. Details need to be legitimized by practice over a long period of time before, if ever, they are entrenched.

Fifth, every agreement must contain the extinguishment of aboriginal title. We want to know if the demands on Canada will be finished by signing any one agreement. I want to add that the Sahtu agreement does contain this necessary element. I am pleased about that one part of it. Every agreement should require aboriginals to be subject to some form of federal taxation. Every agreement should reduce native dependency on government, and finally no agreement should create parallel bureaucracies. The creation of one bureaucracy must be accompanied by the dissolution of another.

To sum up, I am worried today that our government is recklessly making revolutionary changes in public land, public authority and public institutions without public input. It is doing so in the interests of a very few.

So that I am not misunderstood, allow me to repeat my conviction once again. I do not oppose self-government. I do not oppose an agreement with the Sahtu Dene and Metis people, but I strenuously oppose the deal making process. On behalf of all Canadians I oppose the overly generous terms of the agreement.

The minister needs to take the process back to the people and his legislation back to the drawingboard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, after listening carefully to my colleague, particularly to his introduction and the early portion of his remarks, I must admit that I would like to say something on the subject of loyalty. It is my impression that I am being disloyal strictly to the Reform Party this evening because, in fact, I think that the government agrees with Bill C-16. We have already made it known that we support the bill as it now stands.

I also tend to want to react to this type of argument; although I respect it, I do not agree with it at all. I do not think the Bloc Quebecois has been termed left-wing intellectuals in Canada or in Quebec. Nor do I believe that we are disloyal to anyone in saying that we share the views expressed in Bill C-16.

I will go over some of the points I raised previously during the second reading of the bill—fairly quickly, because we are in the final stage before passage. During second reading, I said that one of the premises for this type of agreement, land claims, is the importance of having confidence in both parties.

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Concerning the Dene, the Metis and the Sahtu Tribal Council, we fully agree that these people were representative, and they can rest assured that we have complete confidence in their negotiations and the outcome of those negotiations.

(1955)

With respect to the agreement per se, Sahtu means "great bear" and naturally, reference is made to Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories. This vast territory is steeped in history, much of which has to do with oil. As you will see, the financial agreement which has been finalized is based on the price of oil, particularly at Norman Wells.

There are five major communities within the territory covered by the agreement. Colville Lake is home to a tribe of Slavey Dene. The community was founded in 1962 on ancestral lands. Colville Lake is the only community in the Northwest Territories where all buildings are constructed entirely of logs. I believe this is worth mentioning because these are features of the landscape and communities covered by the agreement. Colville Lake is a very rustic and very beautiful village, and I felt that this was important to mention.

Déline was formerly known as Fort Franklin. In 1825, Sir John Franklin made this community his winter headquarters. When oil was discovered in Norman Wells during the 1920s, Fort Franklin became a major trading post owing to its close proximity to transportation routes.

Fort Norman has long been important to the Dene because of the excellent sites for placing traps. Trapping is a seasonal activity which is an important part of the traditional Dene economy.

Fort Good Hope is the oldest trading post in the lower Mackenzie Valley; although it is within the territory of the northern Slave Dene, the Vuntut Gwich'in, as they are called, the mountain people and Inuit of the Mackenzie Delta used to go there regularly. But in Norman Wells, I think it is known—besides, we will soon have Bill C-25, which will allow more wells to be dug in Norman Wells and extracting oil from existing wells using a new method such as water under pressure, so that a well can produce in a much more healthy environment.

Norman Wells is important in the discussion and I will come back to it soon. We shall see that the financial agreement is based on the oil resources at Norman Wells, among other things.

The agreement before us was signed in 1993 at Fort Norman and the Act will simply implement that agreement. It also has constitutional protection. Some people think that is awful but we do not think so. It is simply one of the new treaties covered by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

My colleague raised a very important point about how representative the process leading to the signing of that agreement was. I think that the figures I will give will reassure us on that point. More than 90 per cent of eligible voters participated

because that agreement was put to a vote and 90 per cent of the people on a territory of 28,000 square kilometres went out and voted.

This goes to show how important this agreement is to them and, in my view, we cannot doubt the representativeness of the people who have signed the agreement, not only because of this 90 per cent participation rate but also because 85 per cent of the Dene and 99 per cent of the Metis are in favour of this agreement. It think it is important to point out that in terms of representativeness, a 90 per cent participation rate leaves no doubt about the representativeness of the signatories; they were backed by a democratic vote of the people they represented.

Turning to the development of this agreement at the political level, it arises from land claims but does not put self-government in issue. In fact, these are two entirely different matters. A list of agreed subjects negotiators will have to look into again, self-government being one of them, has been appended to the agreement.

For now, it must be understood that this is simply a bill which approves a land claim agreement.

I will move along quickly because I mentioned many of these facts at second reading. The Dene and the Metis receive title to 41,437 square kilometres of land, 1,813 square kilometres of which include mining and mineral rights. This is entirely consistent with the European economic tradition of the day: the subsoil teeming with precious metals and black gold, representing a considerable amount of wealth in the territory as such.

(2000)

Now about the settlement. The agreement does call for compensation of \$75 million over 15 years.

This settlement is based on the value of oil taken out of the ground at Norman Wells. Statistics indicated that approximately \$75 million was extracted from the ground each year and shared by Esso and the Government of Canada, which are partners in the Norman Wells venture.

This agreement is based on this \$75 million. It simply acknowledges that it costs \$75 million annually, that they incurred a loss of income of \$75 million annually, and it is being conceded to them for a period of 15 years. The famous issue of economic development is also considered. Economic development is vital, in my opinion, for the aboriginal nations of this country and, in particular, the Dene and the Metis; the economic development that this \$75 million will bring is certainly not negligible.

It will be up to them to combine economic development and development of their traditional resources. Based on what I have seen in the agreement, they will surely succeed. This is a successful example of economic development, and I think congratulations are in order. I also want to draw an analogy with the Cree and Naskapi in Quebec. As you know, the James Bay

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agreement also provided certain amounts of money to be administered by a company headed by the Cree. I want to say that what is happening with the Dene and the Metis is not a precedent and that a precedent was definitely set in Quebec in the eighties with the Cree and the Naskapi.

The agreement contains provisions on wildlife. As you know, wildlife management is part of their tradition. They have an inborn respect for the environment, so to them it is important to preserve, both in the agreement and in this bill, this particular aspect of their tradition, which includes hunting, trapping and fishing rights. These are all included in the agreement and reflect the traditional culture and the traditional hunting grounds of the Dene and the Metis.

I would like to add that a number of interest groups were consulted, not only the Dene and the Metis. These included the Northwest Territories Chamber of Mines, which approved this bill, the Mining Association of Canada, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the Northwest Territories Wildlife Federation, the Mount Mackenzie Outfitters and the Lynn Graham Trail Association.

As far as outfitters are concerned, this is an interesting aspect of the agreement. There are people already involved in trapping and hunting activities in the territory who are not necessarily Dene or Metis. What is interesting in the agreement is that these people will be able to continue those activities. This is further evidence of the philosophy of aboriginal people when the Europeans arrived. To them, the land was something to be shared. The Dene and the Metis, like all other aboriginal peoples, have always agreed to share their land. What happened is that the Europeans got a lot of money out of their land and restricted them to reserves and certain territories.

(2005)

This agreement enables them to throw off at least partially the yoke of the Indian Act because this will be in fact the first step we will allow them to take toward financial autonomy and it is something we should consider for a few minutes.

This financial autonomy is important to them because we know that, in fact, the Indian Act maintains all Native nations under trusteeship, where all decisions are made for them. The statement that we are witnessing the birth of a new bureaucracy must be toned down a bit.

I think that the time has come for us, the people of Quebec and Canada, to end this trusteeship and allow these people to take control of their own destiny. Given the financial agreement before us and their eventual right to design and prepare special programs for the regions and, at the end of the day, to administer themselves, I do not think we are witnessing the birth of a new bureaucracy.

We are simply giving them the power to take control of their own future. Ottawa will no longer decide what programs are good for them. They will decide for themselves what programs they want. I think that, in this regard, the negotiators' efforts were commendable. I see that, according to the agreement provisions that are, of course, linked to the bill, this bureaucracy or pseudo-bureaucracy will enable them to really administer their lands with their own programs while respecting their culture and promoting a new economic development.

Finally, I must salute them. These people venerate their elders and often think in terms of the next seven generations. I am sure that seven generations ago, native people were in possession of their territory, but the situation changed drastically with the arrival of Europeans. These people have always wanted to regain control of what had been theirs as first occupants, and I think that, in these negotiations, they had future generations in mind.

In fact, negotiators and representatives from the territory in question came to my office and told me that their elders had always persevered, and that they were very pleased to have the support of the Bloc Québécois. Consequently, I am pleased to say once again that our party will fully support Bill C-16 in third reading.

[English]

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, it is again a pleasure to rise in debate on Bill C-16, the Sahtu Dene and Metis land claim agreement, this time in third reading.

The terms, provisions and conditions have been well canvassed on this side of the House and unfortunately our concerns with Bill C-16 still apply. Our pleas, both in the House and in committee, have fallen on deaf ears.

I want today only to make a few points beginning with a point which is general in nature but strikes at the very heart of my party's concern with federal land claims policy. The government's policy is based on a false assumption. In March 1993 a document was published by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development entitled "Federal Policy for the Settlement of Native Land Claims". Within that publication there is a glowing observation which states the evolution and development of the federal government's land claim policy has been closely linked to court decisions.

The first claims policy statement in 1973 was initiated by a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1973 Calder decision which acknowledges the existence of aboriginal title in Canadian law.

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(2010)

Further in the document: “The common law concept of aboriginal rights was addressed in the 1973 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Calder case. Six of the seven Supreme Court justices who heard the case acknowledge the existence of aboriginal title in Canadian law”.

With respect to those departmental drafters, I do not accept these statements as properly reflecting historical fact. How can you base your federal land claims policy on these misinterpretations?

The Calder case was a claim by the Nishga people to aboriginal title over the Nass Valley in B.C. It was a claim to aboriginal title without precisely delineating what those words meant. When the claim was brought to the Supreme Court of British Columbia it was dismissed. It was then brought before the Court of Appeal of B.C. in which a three man court again dismissed the claim for aboriginal title.

Finally it was appealed before the Supreme Court of Canada where it was once again dismissed, with three judges finding that aboriginal title may have existed prior to colonial contact but that it was extinguished at the time of colonial contact. Three other judges ruminated and the seventh dismissed the appeal on technical grounds.

In the final analysis the Calder case did not decide that aboriginal title exists in Canada.

Even if the Calder had been ruled as aboriginal title it would have been title that was far less than a fee simple title. It was not ever proposed or put forward in the case that the aboriginal title amounted to fee simple ownership, unlike the transfer that Bill C-16 provides. Bill C-16 conveys 41,000 square kilometres in fee simple ownership, about three quarters the size of Nova Scotia, based on no court substantiation.

In the four agreements thus far, north of 60 degrees latitude, in other words in what Canadians have collectively known as the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory, the total fee simple lands amount to 505,000 square kilometres or about half the size of the province of Ontario. We should be very concerned over land claim agreements that remove from the public domain vast areas of public lands.

My party's other major concern with Bill C-16 is the constitutional entrenchment provision. The bill states that the agreement is constitutionalized. If our interpretation is correct this means that it cannot be amended other than by virtue of the amending formula to the Constitution which was agreed to in 1982. When we look at the 1982 amending formula it does not fit very well to these kinds of land claim agreements. There are, as the House knows, six amending formulae and none of them seems to apply to situations created by bills such as Bill C-16.

I question the validity of section 3.1.26 of the act which says amendments can be made because if the agreement can be so readily amended by order in council of the federal government and approval of the Sahtu Tribal Council, if it can be so easily amended in that way then how can we say this agreement is constitutionally entrenched? Those points fell on deaf ears in committee but again I make them.

In this same vein we again state our concerns with locking in such detailed and untried provisions as are in this document. Hundreds of pages of clauses and provisions are locked in and only time will tell if they are workable.

(2015)

I would hope that in future these types of agreements that are to be constitutionalized be kept to land claim rights only. These are the ones that section 35 of the Constitution is really talking about. Maybe a 10 year clause should accompany these locking in provisions to allow for a shakedown of the agreement.

Bill C-16 allows for law making power and thus raises the issue of the charter of rights. The question is will those laws be subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I know the minister has said yes to the above, but with the greatest of respect that cannot be achieved by degree or by fiat.

My understanding is that the only way this legislation that is passed under self-government agreements can be subject to the charter of rights is for the charter itself to be amended to make certain that legislation passed by aboriginal governments is subject to the charter. That is what was proposed in the Charlottetown accord and that was and can be the only rationale.

In the absence of a specific provision in the charter of rights itself it is most unlikely that the charter applies to legislation passed by native self-government.

Finally, I am amazed by the layers of bureaucracy that this bill creates from renewable resource boards to administration panels, to planning and water boards, to an environmental planning board. We have it all. I submit that these functions are currently being performed by the department of Indian affairs or by the territorial governments.

Our final litmus is does it provide for the self-sufficiency of the Sahtu and the independence they seek? I fear as I do for the Yukon agreement that this litmus test will fail in the long term and even perhaps in the medium term. The intentions of both parties to the agreement, the Sahtu and the federal government, have been hijacked by bureaucratic solutions albeit with the best intentions.

There are built in disincentives to business, once again designed by bureaucrats. We have a precedent in the Indian Act

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with all the built in disincentives to business within the Indian Act. Surely we could come up with a simpler design than this.

I have found my relationships with the Sahtu first class. I hope that they feel the same way and I wish them the very best with their challenge and their adventure. Much adversity can be overcome with the correct spirit and attitude. I know how important Norman Wells is to the area. I have talked to many of the players. This enterprise will continue. It is new industry that is the challenge. I certainly hope that I am proven wrong in my major assumptions.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I spoke at some length on this bill during second reading debate and during committee. I have a few brief points that I want to make in closing the debate.

This being another step into the process of the huge giveaway of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon territory of Canada and removing it from the ownership of the crown for the use and enjoyment of all Canadians is a dangerous precedent to be setting. Not only is that precedent a giveaway of that amount of territory with no legal obligation to do so, there is another precedent that I spoke of earlier, and I continue to go back to on this particular agreement, the precedent that there is a valid treaty in force covering this territory which provided for the extinguishment of land claims and rights of aboriginal peoples in that area.

(2020)

We are now in the process of renegotiating, reopening that agreement to again negotiate a broader package, a more generous package and much more territory. I think that is a real dangerous precedent to be setting and bodes poorly for the future when we will again be negotiating treaties one through eleven under the same circumstances that we are now renegotiating this one.

The richness of this agreement I can only object to on the grounds that it does not end the responsibility of the Canadian taxpayer for these aboriginal people. Surely the \$100,000 per individual payout in the share of resource revenue from the Norman Wells oil field and other resources is enough to provide for self-sufficiency and for self-determination for this group of people to allow them economic development to participate in all the things that all Canadians enjoy and take for granted in this country.

Having given that opportunity we should then end the responsibility of the Canadian taxpayer to continue to support these aboriginal people. The Bloc spoke on this bill, both in second reading and now in third reading, in support of the bill. It is quite easy to understand the Bloc's position on this particular bill.

It goes a long way to reinforcing the proposal of the recognition of sovereignty for a particular ethnic group and plays to its own cause. It certainly does not have to be concerned with the financial cost or the financial responsibility for ongoing genera-

tions of Canadians because clearly it does not want to be part of Canada and part of that obligation to future generations.

When we talk about the large amount of oil and the large amount of money that was taken out of the Norman Wells oil field, certainly there have been great amounts of oil and wealth taken out, but I have worked in the Norman Wells oil field and it is a hugely expensive part of Canada to develop that resource in and to extract that resource.

When we talk about those kinds of things, we have to consider the cost of developing not only the oil field but the technology that goes with it. Let us talk about the net value of the resource that was taken out.

Let us, at the same time, consider the huge amounts of tax dollars that have been returned to the area in social spending to cover all kinds of things from housing to economic development, to schools, to all those other things. I think a good share of that resource is being returned and continues to be returned to that area.

The other thing that I would like to speak briefly on is the process of this legislation as it went through the House and the fact that we, as an opposition party, were not allowed any provision to make our views heard or make our views known in the final report on the bill when it was returned to the House in report stage simply because we were not allowed to recommend or to discuss changes in the agreement. We were only allowed to discuss the bill itself, which was very small and did not really address the terms of the agreement.

In spite of the fact that in committee we heard a number of witnesses from the region, the aboriginal people from the area, and some of them clearly neither understood nor desired the terms of this settlement, their views were not taken into consideration.

There has been no discussion on report stage of those people who opposed this. I want to make sure that I and my party go on record opposing this process and this agreement simply because I think it is a huge mistake to be moving Canada toward a system that South Africa is celebrating leaving behind.

We are imposing ethnic homelands on these people and trapping them in these agreements. That is a terrible precedent to be setting. We should be moving at some point to the equal treatment of all Canadians no matter where they live or what their ethnic or racial background is.

In closing, when the record is written the Reform Party opposed the agreement and the Liberals pushed it through in spite of the objections of our party and a number of the people involved.

[*Translation*]

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

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Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the assistant government whip has asked me to defer the division until later.

[English]

Accordingly pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) a division on the question now before the House stands deferred until tomorrow at 6.30 p.m., at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, given the progress today perhaps I could ask for unanimous consent to see it ten o'clock.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to see it as ten o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It being ten o'clock the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 8.27 p.m.)

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