



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, September 27, 1994**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 27, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

### TOXIC SUBSTANCES

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Madam Speaker, this morning I am releasing for consultation a discussion paper outlining a proposed Canadian policy for the management of toxic substances.

The policy proposes that Canada introduce the most advanced toxic substances strategy in the world. It would be the leading approach taken by any nation. The document is based on the most up to date international scientific findings and is consistent with the conclusions recently reached by the world's leading scientific experts at a meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

[*Translation*]

Although the document I am tabling today contains some very complex information, the objectives of the policy document are quite straightforward. We want to eliminate from the environment, as completely as possible, all substances that are the result of human activity, take a long time to break down in the environment, accumulate in living organisms and are toxic.

[*English*]

The bottom line is that the Canadian government wants to see no measurable release of toxic substances into the environment. We want to clean up what is there now and we want our international partners to do the same.

[*Translation*]

In the case of all other substances that meet only one or more of these criteria, we propose to put in place a system for the integrated management of their life cycles.

[*English*]

We propose to take a leading edge approach to toxics, those that are currently being used in Canada and those that may be introduced in the future.

[*Translation*]

If we cannot find ways to prevent toxics from being released into the environment, we intend to take steps to prevent their manufacture and use.

[*English*]

The new policy involves a principle of reverse onus. It is a very simple principle, a principle that applies now when we deal with issues like medication. It basically means that the onus is on industry to satisfy Canadians that a substance is safe rather than vice versa.

When a substance is targeted for virtual elimination, the onus will be on industry to prove that it will achieve no measurable release into the environment.

[*Translation*]

According to our proposal, the most hazardous toxics should not be allowed in the environment at all, and management of any other substance that causes problems should be subject to the strictest possible controls.

(1005)

[*English*]

The policy would provide a clear framework for all federal laws, regulations, policies and programs dealing with toxics.

[*Translation*]

In the coming weeks, our government will consult all the provinces and territories, business sectors and environmental groups on the subject of the process and about any improvements they would like to see in the policy and the discussion paper. We want to find out what Canadians think by November 30, because time is of the essence where the health of Canadians is concerned.

I want to make it clear that our ultimate goal is to have a national policy on toxic substances that is the best in the world. We need a healthy environment, both for our economic well-being and our personal well-being. We must concentrate on preventing environmental damage instead of taking action once the damage is done. More efficient management of toxics means that the federal government must take a militant approach.

[*English*]

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In the red book we said:

Canada needs a new approach that focuses on preventing pollution at source. Timetables must be set for the phasing out all use of the most persistent toxic substances. Manufacturing innovations are needed to avoid the use or creation of pollutants in the first place; for example, through raw material substitution or closed-loop processes that recycle chemicals within the plant. There is no alternative if Canadians wish to stop long-term toxic pollutants from entering our air, soil, and water.

[*Translation*]

A new policy that will be the focus of Canada's position on toxic substances in our negotiations with the rest of the world. We want Canada to lead the way in a movement for international action.

[*English*]

The simple reality is that Canada is open to the world on the Arctic, the Pacific and the Atlantic. We cannot solve our toxic problem alone. We must encourage our American neighbours and indeed the whole world to clean up their act. Airborne toxics do not respect borders. The milk of nursing mothers in Inuit communities that have never been touched by industrialization is contaminated by toxins used literally thousands of kilometres away. Toxics dumped in the sea do not respect borders.

I had a meeting earlier this week with Canadian and U.S. members on the International Joint Commission who advised me that when we move to a policy of zero discharge in Lake Superior, which should be in the not too distant future, that lake will still suffer from levels of toxicity up to 25 per cent because of airborne toxins that come from countries around the world.

If we are to protect Canada and Canadians we need local action. We need global action. We need a global agreement. We will only be in a position to reach that agreement if Canada leads from a position of strength. If we have the best policy in the world, if we clean up our own toxic act, we will be able to encourage other countries to follow suit.

Canada must take the lead to establish its position to influence the international agenda on the reduction and virtual elimination of toxins. To that end we intend to host an international conference on airborne toxins in Vancouver. We hope, along with other countries, to pull together an international agenda for joint action on the reduction and virtual elimination of toxins. We need to seize that opportunity to present a model program to the world.

The proposed policy would control the entry of toxic substances into Canada from sources outside our country through commerce and long range transport. If we can move our country ahead in managing toxics we can be at the vanguard of

new environmental technologies, new green jobs and new opportunities. Sooner or later the world will move to control toxic substances, and we want Canadians to be in the best position to capture the new markets for green alternatives.

(1010)

[*Translation*]

Within the next few weeks, I will be announcing new environmental initiatives to be taken by the government.

I hope, whatever other disagreements we may have, that all members of Parliament will agree on the importance of moving forward on our country's environmental agenda.

[*English*]

All members of Parliament must agree on the importance of moving forward on the country's environmental agenda. I think we all agree that we need to take very serious action to deal with toxic substances that are potentially a poison to our children.

[*Translation*]

Some of the proposals in the discussion paper may seem harsh, but we really must stop poisoning ourselves, our children and our world.

[*English*]

I know the 60-day time frame is a tight one. I also know that the time to end toxic substances is rapidly running out. That is why I look forward to not only the discussion but the resolution of the toughest toxics policy in the world.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Madam Speaker, we are happy to hear from the Minister of the Environment that she intends to establish a new policy on toxic waste. You will understand, however, that we cannot give our support to this working paper without first having a chance to examine it. The minister's intentions seem good, but the federal regulations are often not implemented in due form.

The implementation of the primary Canadian legislation concerning toxic substances, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, presents a number of difficulties. For example, in the two years since the CEPA was first implemented, some 20,000 substances have been placed on the domestic substance list and 44 have been identified for assessment and added to the priority substance list.

In his 1991 report, the auditor general noted that, although the CEPA required that the 44 substances on this list be analyzed by 1994, only two had been investigated fully. In

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addition, Environment Canada and National Health and Welfare have assessed 20 of the 33 chemical products on the list. To date, only ten of these assessments have been made public.

The creation of the Office of Enforcement is an initiative that should help to solve these problems, but a number of concerns remain, particularly with respect to the regulation and control of toxic substances. Thus, according to the Auditor General, there is confusion within the federal administration regarding who is responsible for introducing environmental programs and the department has failed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing controls.

This example, just one among many, is a clear indication that the federal government is already having trouble enforcing the CEPA. The minister should show us what means she intends to use to ensure compliance with the policy she will be introducing and she should realize that this is necessary if she is ever going to make us think that it will have a definite impact on the use of toxic substances in Canada.

I would like to see the minister's policy ensure a healthier environment and an improved quality of life for us all.

The minister talks about regulating industry in order to prevent the proliferation of toxic substances. Industry should convince the government that a given substance should not be eliminated from the environment. However, the federal government is not itself snow white in this regard.

I would invite the minister to take a stroll in the Old Port of Montreal, a few hundred metres from the downtown core. I would invite her to wander over to hangar No. 3 by the Alexandra pier, at the corner of Callières and de la Commune. The federal government is storing 1.5 tonnes of PCBs here in downtown Montreal, for lack of another appropriate site.

(1015)

There is no cause for alarm. The building is inspected on a regular basis and well guarded at all times. But I can assure you that the Old Port of Montreal officials would be only too willing to get rid of it. Environment Canada should above all manage these toxic substances responsibly, by not taking any risk, however remote, of causing an environmental disaster in the heart of Montreal.

Last week-end, I had the opportunity of discussing with members of environmental groups from Quebec and Canada at the general assembly of the Canadian Environmental Network. These people strongly dedicated to environmental protection described to us the enormous difficulties they are faced with when working on issues involving dangerous substances.

What they are referring to is the powerful lobby of big industries that use harmful chemicals for the manufacturing or conversion of certain products. We must warn the hon. minister of the political and economic context of the discussions she is planning to have with the industry with respect to the burden

that shall rest on it of proving that a given chemical substance poses no immediate or long-term threat to the environment.

The minister also indicated that she intended to discuss with the provinces with a view to improving on the working paper she has tabled. This is the least she can do. In fact, toxic substances control does not fall under the jurisdiction of any level of government under the Canadian constitution. Both the federal and provincial governments can act in that area and it is of paramount importance that all levels of government be involved in developing a policy in that respect.

Having read the minister's paper over, if it is clear that Quebec's jurisdiction was respected and that the policy provisions were duly negotiated with the Quebec government, the Bloc Québécois will give its support to the minister's policy proposal. This means that the Bloc Québécois support depends for a large part on the consultation process the Minister of Environment will choose to use with the provinces.

Environment is one area where Quebec and Canada can set common goals. A sovereign Quebec will quite obviously negotiate environmental agreements with its neighbours. Where the interests of Quebec and Canada coincide, which is often the case with regard to environmental protection, the governments must agree to look for a mutually beneficial solution to the problems confronting us.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox-Alberni):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this paper.

We are all environmentalists. I believe the environment committee is an excellent example. It is one of the committees on which we all get along because we have the same aims. The difference is degree, and that is what we are talking about here.

Toxic substances can be brought into the scene, for example in eastern Europe, in particular Romania where there were huge quantities of waste going into the air. The other end of the spectrum is something like Wood Buffalo National Park. We are in the middle. We clearly want to manage our affairs in the best way possible.

There are naturally occurring substances such as mercury, lead and asbestos but then there are the man made toxics which are the ones we are talking about today. Clearly something that is toxic, persistent and bioaccumulative should not be on our

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shopping list. Those should not be there and I believe that is where we are going.

My concern, however, is that we take too hard a line. In some areas of B.C. we have done that. I would hope that there are good scientific data so that we are acting from a good broad base rather than a good feel, for example. As the onus is going to be on industry, it needs to be involved.

I would like to go back into my other life, when I first got to Port Alberni in 1970. This is not a criticism of the pulp mill industry; in fact it is the reverse. The first time I got to Port Alberni I parked in a hotel lot. The next morning I got up and I could not see out my windshield because of the fly ash from the pulp mill. That was 24 years ago.

(1020)

It was the same for scuba divers I talked to who had gone out into the canal. The bottom of the canal 25 years ago was like a wasteland. Today Alberni is much different. One has to take a second look at the mill on a day during which there is low humidity so there will be no steam to actually see if that mill is running. There is just heat going out of the stacks. There is no fly ash.

When I talk to scuba divers now they say the marine life in the harbour has all come back. That is where we have come in 24 years.

The minister is to be complimented on the consultation process. I have concerns about the time frame because it is clearly pretty tight. I would hope that in the process the minister will listen to what comes out of that process. I hope it is not set down in stone now so that in the process it can evolve.

I am pleased to see all the groups, environmental groups, the industry, all levels, so they can have input into this process. There are some concerns with international agreements and the Great Lakes. How does it tie into CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?

In short, I look forward to working with this document. I thank the minister for getting it to us so quickly.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

[English]

## GRANDPARENTS' DAY ACT

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-274, an act respecting a national grandparents' day.

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of the bill is to recognize and celebrate grandparents in Canada. We have over four million grandparents living in North America. They take care of more than six million children.

It is extremely important that we celebrate this day by designating the second Sunday in September every year as national grandparents' day, as we do in many provinces and cities in the country.

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

\* \* \*

(1025)

## PETITIONS

### ASSISTED SUICIDE

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface):** Madam Speaker, the petitioners from my riding oppose any further legislation that might be brought forward concerning doctor assisted suicide.

They believe the provisions of section 241 of the Criminal Code should be enforced. It is their opinion that this by itself would go a long way toward prohibiting this type of activity. They also would like expansion of palliative care.

I should mention in passing that hearings have been undertaken by the government, by the special Senate committee on euthanasia and assisted suicide. There will be hearings in Winnipeg from September 29 to October 1 of this year.

Anyone from the city of Winnipeg or the province of Manitoba who wants their points of view to be known could do so through this vehicle.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby-Kingsway):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by hundreds of residents of provinces across Canada who draw to the attention of the House the fact that the current Criminal Code denies people who are suffering from terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to choose freely and voluntarily to end their lives with the assistance of a physician.

Therefore they call upon Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating

illness the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice subject to strict safeguards.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition signed by 42 constituents of Ontario riding.

The petitioners call upon Parliament not to amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

They also call upon Parliament not to amend the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

### GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo-Chilcotin):** Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by over 500 constituents from several communities in my riding including Williams Lake, Forest Grove, McLeese Lake, Quesnel and 150 Mile House. The petition is also signed by people who live outside my constituency.

The petitioners call upon the government not to pass any new legislation that results in additional gun control laws. The petitioners also call upon the government under existing gun laws to increase penalties for the illegal possession or criminal use of any firearm.

I concur with the petitioners.

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan-Similkameen-Merritt):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today, both on the same subject matter of gun control.

The petitioners from Okanagan-Similkameen-Merritt are outraged at the prospect of additional gun control legislation. They oppose further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and urge the government to provide strict and mandatory sentences for the use or possession of a firearm in the commission of a crime.

I agree with the petitioners.

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30 and 51.

[Text]

Question No. 27—**Mr. Althouse:**

How many Canadian grain hopper cars have been dispatched with: (a) CWS cargo; (b) open-market WGTA cargo; (c) specialty cargo into the United States in each of the past three months and what is their turnaround time?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** (a), (b) and (c). Transport Canada and the Grain Transportation Agency do not have access to the necessary data to answer this question.

Question No. 28—**Mr. Althouse:**

In this crop year, how many loaded hopper cars taken into the United States by CP and CN were diverted to United States owned lines for transport of cargo to final destinations?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** Transport Canada and the Grain Transportation Agency do not have the necessary data-information with which to comment on this issue.

Question No. 29—**Mr. Althouse:**

Have any grain or specialty crops shipped into the United States been destined for final destination outside the United States?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** Transport Canada and the Grain Transportation Agency do not have the necessary data-information with which to comment on this issue.

Question No. 30—**Mr. Althouse:**

How many additional hopper cars have each of the railways leased for use in the grain trade this year compared to each of the previous three years?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** The Grain Transportation Agency advises as follows.

The following table indicates the car fleet supplied by the railways. The table includes both owned and leased cars, as the agency does not have the necessary data to provide a breakdown for leased cars alone.

NUMBER OF HOPPER CARS PROVIDED BY THE RAILROAD COMPANIES FOR THE TRANSPORT OF GRAIN

WEEK	CANADIAN NATIONAL			CP RAIL		
	1991-1992	1992	1993-1994	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994
1	4 948	4 121	2 518	1 645	2 652	1 910
2	4 686	3 887	2 421	1 599	2 594	1 898
3	4 354	3 899	2 348	1 315	2 569	1 644
4	4 245	3 819	2 322	1 178	2 329	1 507
5	4 103	3 766	2 238	1 090	1 190	1 387
6	3 977	3 672	2 194	1 276	1 183	1 295
7	3 685	3 034	1 912	1 142	1 129	1 203

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## NUMBER OF HOPPER CARS PROVIDED BY THE RAILROAD COMPANIES FOR THE TRANSPORT OF GRAIN

WEEK	CANADIAN NATIONAL			CP RAIL		
8	3 669	2 625	1 900	1 332	1 230	1 161
9	3 648	2 581	1 906	1 016	1 196	983
10	3 774	2 590	1 919	1 162	1 174	943
11	3 818	2 627	1 927	1 198	1 185	906
13	4 118	2 573	1 931	1 172	1 179	841
14	4 308	2 736	1 927	1 611	1 070	906
15	4 411	2 861	2 214	1 901	938	1 083
16	4 542	3 004	2 226	2 270	904	1 544
17	4 512	3 081	2 321	2 667	992	1 709
18	4 528	3 096	2 431	2 985	1 079	1 786
19	4 646	3 088	2 523	3 142	1 030	1 682
20	4 666	3 100	2 747	2 813	1 116	1 835
21	4 646	3 004	2 949	2 369	943	1 881
22	4 596	2 987	3 193	2 064	929	1 855
23	4 596	2 868	3 525	1 812	951	1 843
24	4 688	2 813	3 719	1 672	924	1 886
25	4 643	2 785	3 812	1 683	911	1 793
26	4 758	2 732	3 977	1 660	888	1 745
27	4 971	2 702	3 977	1 708	841	1 668
28	5 251	2 852	4 107	2 065	815	1 668
29	5 626	3 040	4 111	2 259	767	1 660
30	5 708	3 377	4 289	2 457	747	1 788
31	5 692	3 373	4 523	2 582	729	1 841
32	5 698	3 540	4 743	2 577	699	1 889
33	5 829	9 285	4 817	2 439	716	1 828
34	5 910	3 520	5 037	2 400	760	2 019
35	5 923	3 567	4 985	2 448	780	2 338
36	5 766	3 459	5 015	2 332	796	2 742
37	5 748	3 421	5 030	2 206	687	2 908
38	5 644	3 224	5 052	2 215	623	2 900

NOTE : WEEK 38 OF THE 1993-1994 CROP YEAR REFERS TO THE WEEK OF APRIL 17 TO APRIL 23.

**Question No. 51—Mr. Harper (Calgary West):**

With regard to grain cars purchased or leased using federal public funds, (a) who is responsible for allocating their use, (b) what is their present geographic distribution, and (c) how is the revenue resulting from their time-mileage use accounted for?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport):** The Grain Transportation Agency advises as follows: (a), (b) and (c).

The Grain Transportation Agency assumed responsibility from the Canadian Wheat Board for administering the car fleet in 1987. This responsibility includes dividing the fleet between the railways and negotiating new operating agreements with the railways. The operating agreement establishes the terms and

conditions for operation of the federally owned hopper cars. The federal hopper car fleet consists of 12,902 cars which the government has provided for railway use to transport grain free of charge. The first operating agreement between the government and CP Rail and CN Rail was established in 1972. Prior to 1972 the railways supplied their own cars to meet western grain movement. As grain became an increasingly non-compensatory movement, the railways found it uneconomical to invest in rolling stock and the governments, federal and provincial, began supplying cars to meet export demand. Since

*Points of Order*

the passage of the Western Grain Transportation Act, the WGTA, the railways are responsible for augmenting the fleet to meet all demands. The railcars are used to transport eligible commodities listed in the WGTA.

The bulk of the federal fleet would be moving grain in western Canada to domestic and export positions. If the federal cars are used outside the western division, basically western Canada, the railways pay funds to the federal government under the alternate use agreement.

The Grain Transportation Agency also administers the alternate use agreements. Government cars can be used in alternate service in order to improve customer service, to reduce railcar switching and improve system efficiency as long as the railways are able to meet WGTA movement requirements. The agreements restrict the number of cars in alternative service. Alternative service includes non-WGTA movements outside western Canada. The railways are charged a commercial per diem rate. The money earned through alternate use agreements is paid to the federal government through the consolidated revenue fund. Funds totalling \$3.4 million were earned during the 1992-93 crop year.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Mahu):** The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

**Mr. Milliken:** Madam Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Mahu):** Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

\* \* \*

## POINTS OF ORDER

### MEMBER FOR CENTRAL NOVA

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby-Kingsway):** Madam Speaker, I have given the Chair notice of a point of order arising from comments made in the House during a debate on Bill C-41 on Tuesday of last week.

I will state my point of order briefly. It arises pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 18 of the House. That standing order lists a number of groups and states:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of nor use offensive words against either House or against any Member thereof.

It goes on from there.

(1030)

On Tuesday of last week the following words were spoken in the House: "The reference to sexual orientation in the code and its proposed inclusion in the human rights legislation gives recognition to a faction in our society which is undermining and

destroying our Canadian values and Christian morality". It goes on to state: "Homosexuality is not natural. It is immoral and it is undermining the inherent rights and values of our Canadian families and it must not and should not be condoned".

Those words, spoken by the member for Central Nova, clearly in my view give rise to a point of order pursuant to Standing Order 18. As a gay man, indeed as the only openly gay member of the House, I want to point out that certainly I am not the only homosexual in the House. Indeed there are gay people on both sides of the House and in the other place. I dare say there always have been, just as gays and lesbians are found in all other walks of life.

Pursuant to Standing Order 18, I want to ask what could be more offensive, to use the words of Standing Order 18, than to suggest that my very existence is immoral, unnatural, destroying Canadian values and must not be condoned. If similar hateful words had been directed toward another minority, be they Jews, Blacks, Chinese Canadians, people with disabilities or aboriginal people, all of whom are represented in the House, it is inconceivable the Chair would not have intervened and called the offending speaker to order. Therefore I want to ask why the standard should be any lower in the case of hatred directed at gays and lesbians in the House.

Finally, just to conclude, it is not good enough to suggest that just because these words are not directed at a specific individual therefore they can be spoken with impunity. If the words are unparliamentary if spoken with reference to one individual member, why should they lose that character if spoken of an unnamed general group of members?

**Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova):** Madam Speaker, I feel I have a right and an obligation to respond to the point of order. I point out to the Chair this is not a point of order that the member for Burnaby-Kingsway raises.

If any member has the right to rise on a point of order arising from our debates on the floor of the House on Tuesday, September 20, 1994, it would be me. I have a right as a parliamentarian to express unequivocally what I feel is appropriate on debate when scrutinizing legislation.

If anyone has any concerns it should be this member because of the comments made by the member for Burnaby-Kingsway. In *Hansard* the Speaker will see where he refers to me making statements on the floor of the House that I did not in fact make on the floor of the House. He specifically makes reference to select words and uses the words out of context, words arising from a debate on May 15, 1994 on the CBC prime time news program "On the Line". The issue discussed and debated was what rights should gays be entitled to and questions were posed by both the commentator and the public at large.

The member for Burnaby-Kingsway stood on the floor of the House and used select words and put to other members of the House his opinion of what I said. I will quote specifically from *Hansard* at page 5913. He states: "Will she now stand in her



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place and retract those hateful comments?" He makes reference to words that I used on the floor of the House as being hateful.

Second, he indicates that I have no place in the Liberal Party. He then refers to me at page 5912 as "the hon. member, and I use those words advisedly". That is not proper parliamentary language.

(1035)

At page 5916, speaking to another member when I was not present in the House, on four occasions in the same commentary he referred to me as "she". Not once did he refer to me as the member for Central Nova. I object to that. That is improper. He is a senior parliamentarian and I expect respect on the floor of the House, particularly when I am not present.

At page 5919 the hon. member for Burnaby-Kingsway in a commentary to the hon. member for Yellowknife said: "The hon. member was present in the House", referring to the member for Yellowknife, "when the Liberal member of Parliament for Central Nova made comments, among other things, suggesting that homosexuality is immoral and unnatural when she suggested that AIDS was a scourge to mankind which had been inflicted upon the country by homosexuals".

Nowhere in *Hansard* will it be seen that I made those comments on the floor of the House. I demand a public apology.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few brief comments which may assist the Chair.

I think it is obvious that two members of Parliament have made statements in the House on which they obviously have strong views and have disagreed with each other. One member said that another member had suggested that AIDS was a scourge and so on. I do not know whether those comments were made anywhere but they were not made on the floor of the House. To repeat them here in the House certainly is not helpful to any hon. member nor to the debate nor even to decorum.

On the other hand it is quite true that from time to time members of the House do make statements with which others disagree. I think the issue before us this morning is whether or not Standing Order 18 has been breached, notwithstanding all other considerations.

Standing Order 18 reads:

No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any member of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any Member thereof. No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House—

I think those words in our rules have traditionally been interpreted by you, Madam Speaker, and by other occupants of the chair as meaning that a member of Parliament cannot accuse another member of having done a particular thing which is offensive. I cannot accuse another member of Parliament personally of having committed a criminal act, for instance. I cannot accuse another member of other types of wrongdoing in the House and get away with it.

The reason that standing order is there is obviously so that the occupant of the chair can remind members that anyone in the House who makes an accusation personally against another member is forced to withdraw in order to have proper decorum and order in the House.

We have before us today a case of strong disagreement between two people. I am not judging the disagreement. I am suggesting that Standing Order 18 has not been breached in this particular case.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I would urge you to rule that this is not a point of order that is before us but a matter of debate where two members of the House of Commons have put a point of view forward and it is part of debate.

When I look at the circumstances here in referencing Standing Order 18, the member as I recall from what I heard was not referencing a specific member but was talking to a general circumstance. I think that must be taken into consideration when you make your ruling, Madam Speaker.

I believe that as members of the House of Commons we are given the privilege of speaking about a variety of subjects, of giving our opinion personally or on behalf of other individuals or on behalf of our constituents. When we do that we take the responsibility for those opinions and those words as we set them before the House. Those are items of debate in the House and do not come under what we are referencing today or considering a point of order. We have that privilege. Sometimes we are going to say things in the House that are not deemed to be politically correct. That may not be acceptable to some people but in general in referencing freedom of speech they are acceptable and can be said as a member of the House of Commons.

(1040)

**Ms. Skoke:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. It has been brought to my attention that I made reference to the hon. member for Yellowknife and I wish to apologize if there were problems arising from that. It is the hon. member for Yellowhead. I apologize if there was any confusion there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The Chair realizes the seriousness of the matter before it. We will take it under advisement and come back to the House very shortly.

*Government Orders*

I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food)** moved that Bill C-50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, last October the government was elected based on a comprehensive plan for Canada known as the red book, which was our platform. In that red book we made a number of commitments to the people of Canada. I am very pleased that within our first 11 months in office we have made considerable headway on a number of fronts.

As Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food it is my great pleasure to speak today about one of these initiatives, namely the government's commitment to research and development specifically in the context of Bill C-50.

I recall attending my very first meeting with producers as a new minister. It was a meeting of the Manitoba pool elevators last November in Winnipeg. There were a number of issues on the minds of delegates at that meeting. They wanted to talk about GATT and about trade issues. They wanted to discuss transportation and safety nets. All of these issues have been moving forward at a very rapid pace and some of them with much public fanfare and media interest.

I also recall at that meeting another important issue that was raised by one of the delegates, one which received less fanfare and less public attention. The question was about research. I told the delegates at the Manitoba pool convention what I have been telling farmers and farm organizations across the country throughout the course of this past year. I believe agricultural research is an extremely important issue, one where we must continue to focus our resources.

My department already has a very good track record in selecting research and development projects with a high return for Canada. We are continually reviewing our research priorities and programs to ensure that we are getting the best possible value for every research dollar. We are also nurturing our partnership approach to industry responsive research by inviting our industry, academic and producer partners to take responsibility with us.

We are placing a strong emphasis on matching funding and joint projects with stakeholders in all facets of our operations. This allows us to use the market for direction.

Some might say this approach reduces the federal commitment to research or that my department may use the check-off proposed in Bill C-50 as an excuse to reduce expenditures in wheat and barley research. While it is likely that overall government spending will decline as we battle against the deficit, as we must, I want to emphasize that innovation and a strong research program are essential to Canadian agriculture and will be a priority for my department.

(1045)

I make no apologies for sharing the responsibility of the future of agriculture with our industry and producer partners. Some members may have heard me talk about the matching investment initiative which we have launched this past year. Under this program we will spend some of our existing R and D dollars in a new way. Where industry identifies research projects that are of commercial interest we will match industry's investment dollar for dollar. This is not new money but money we have redirected from lower priority activities.

This approach makes sense and allows us to move forward on research while maintaining fiscal responsibility to Canadians. Producers have told me they want to play an important role in research since the results of research directly affect their operations and ultimately their livelihoods. This shared approach gives us the best of both worlds.

Good research is not a frill or an ivory tower pursuit to be thrown aside in tough times. Dedicated and focused research is a necessity for survival particularly in tough times. Dedicated and focused research supplies the technology that creates opportunities for market development and new exports which are so vital to the sustainability of our industry.

One of the most important initiatives with significant long term implications for the future of agriculture generally and the grains industry in particular is in plant breeding. Today we are considering Bill C-50 which is legislation that will lead to an additional \$4.7 million in annual investments in plant breeding research.

This investment has the potential in about 10 years to translate into a \$400 million increase in gross returns to prairie farmers annually. It is an investment which will cost wheat producers about half a cent a bushel or about 20 cents a tonne. I think any investor would be more than just a little interested about such an attractive rate of return.

What I am talking about today is a research partnership, the result of a proposal put forward by producers through the Western Grains Research Foundation. The proposal calls for a voluntary producer levy or a check-off program to support plant breeding research programs for wheat and barley. The federal government is acting on this recommendation from the foundation.

*Government Orders*

For the past several months my department has been working very closely with the Western Grains Research Foundation to develop a check-off program which will enable grain producers themselves to supplement existing research budgets. To make this happen we require some legislative amendments. That is why I am recommending that the act which governs the Canadian Wheat Board be amended to allow voluntary levies to be deducted for the explicit purpose of supporting plant breeding research. Such deductions are simply not possible under the existing Canadian Wheat Board Act.

I bring this legislation to the House today and I am asking members to support it based on the knowledge that this program is a joint effort among government, industry and the research community. This check-off plan has been developed in close consultation with producer groups as well as with scientists from universities and from my department.

As I stated earlier I am a firm believer that the best way we can accomplish our research objectives is for both industry and government to invest in research in a partnership approach. This effort before you, this specific check-off plan, is supported by the Canadian Wheat Board and has already received strong support from a majority of farm organizations. And well it should since the concept has been a producer initiative from day one, an initiative which we have been working on with producers to make it a reality.

This program will generate additional research funds through the voluntary levies on wheat and barley sales. The levies will be deducted from Canadian Wheat Board final payments to producers. They will apply to board sales of most wheat in the four western provinces and the sales of barley in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C. Alberta sales of soft white wheat and barley would not be subject to this levy as producers of those commodities already have check-offs in place provincially.

(1050)

Some people might point to reduced wheat acreages and suggest that producers will not want to support a so-called declining crop. To these people I would say that despite ongoing diversification of crops, wheat is still a major crop for many producers on the prairies. Last year it contributed \$2.7 billion to the Canadian economy.

Despite the recent and dramatic surge in the importance of canola as a crop in Canada, with better world prices in the last number of weeks wheat may have regained its rank as our most valuable crop. It is important to remember also that wheat is not one crop but actually is seven. Some varieties such as durum, extra strong, and white prairie spring are gaining acreage and gaining market share.

I would like to provide the House with a bit of background about why research levies are needed and what we hope to achieve with them. I would like to explain how the grain producers on the prairies in partnership with government came to the decision that such levies are a necessary and important key to the future of prairie agriculture and the grains industry in Canada.

The Western Grains Research Foundation is a federally chartered public organization with a proven track record in supporting effective pure research. It was established just over 10 years ago to allocate research funds. Its economic base came from the interest earned on \$9 million left over from the prairie farm assistance act when it was repealed.

Currently the foundation distributes about \$900,000 a year in interest funds. It has done some very good work with that money. It has focused on vital issues such as the problem with fusarium head blight in Manitoba. The foundation is quick in its reaction time and it is targeted on vital issues.

The foundation is run by a board of directors representing its member producer organizations and includes a representative from the research branch of my department. What this means is that the research decisions of the Western Grains Research Foundation are made by producers and the foundation is accountable for those decisions to all of its producers as well as the federal government.

To carry out its new research objectives the foundation will establish two research advisory committees, one for wheat breeding and one for barley breeding. These committees will be responsible for developing operational plans and co-ordinating research programs designed to achieve our plant breeding objectives. They will decide which research projects to fund in western research centres and the emphasis will be on funding work that will meet a future market need.

Western plant breeding centres receiving funding will report on their progress annually to the Western Grains Research Foundation. This progress will be reviewed by the advisory committees who will make decisions about continued support. Furthermore the foundation will report annually to all prairie permit book holders giving an accounting of the money received and how it has been used to accomplish the research goals.

The role of the Canadian Wheat Board in all of this is purely administrative. All major decisions will be the responsibility of the Western Grains Research Foundation which is ultimately accountable to its producers and to the Government of Canada. I feel very comfortable with the accountability process which the Western Grains Research Foundation has established for itself under this proposed program.

In supporting these amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act hon. members of the House will be in very good company. They will in fact be joining a team of supporters from

12 prairie farm organizations which make up the Western Grains Research Foundation.

*Government Orders**(1055)*

Those member organizations are: United Grain Growers; Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association; Manitoba Pool Elevators; Prairie Canola Growers Council; Flax Growers of Western Canada; Saskatchewan Wheat Pool; Keystone Agricultural Producers; Western Barley Growers Association; Oat Producers of Alberta; Alberta Wheat Pool; Canadian Seed Growers Association; and the Unifarm organization of Alberta. There are recent indications that other groups and organizations wish to join this team of research oriented and progressive farm organizations.

These organizations are key players in the Canadian grains industry. All of them have backed the voluntary check-off proposal and they have consulted with their producer members. It was the decision of these organizations that dedicated research funds be collected and applied explicitly to plant breeding research.

What we have here is a program that producers want. It is one we will be supporting through the legislative amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act now before the House in the form of Bill C-50. Simply put, the program will enable producers to do what they have asked for: to invest a portion of their own money into the future of their crops, their industry and their very livelihoods.

Canada's grains industry is highly dependent on exports. Today's grain customers are demanding both a stable supply and a high quality product that meets their end use requirements. I have consistently maintained that we must be able to respond quickly to changing market conditions if we are to remain competitive in those vital global markets.

The proposal before the House will help us to improve our competitive advantage while also improving farm incomes. New varieties of wheat and barley will be developed. New varieties will lead to improved field performance, higher yield potentials, increased resistance to disease and insect pests, earlier maturity and reduced harvest losses, all improvements which will reduce per tonne production costs for farmers.

The development of new varieties with specific qualities required by the marketplace will improve sales through the development of new market opportunities. This will keep Canada on the fast track in meeting marketplace demands.

For example, Canada must be able to respond rapidly to new demands for varieties of wheat suitable for specific uses such as frozen bread dough, Asian type noodles, or new varieties of malting barley that are needed in markets like Korea and China. In fact we do have a variety of wheat that is suitable for the frozen bread dough requirement, but so far it is not grown in large enough quantities.

Meeting the demands of these changing trends in food consumption preferences could mean significant new market potential and increased profits for western producers. Sound investments in crop research will pay off in better market returns to farmers in the future.

Will Canada be ready when opportunity knocks in terms of these new markets? With the benefit of research initiatives such as this voluntary check-off proposal contained in Bill C-50, I firmly believe Canadian farmers will be in a better position to compete in that very tough and demanding international marketplace.

As I said earlier, the program has the potential to bring plant breeding research almost \$5 million in additional funding each year. The House will note that I used the word additional. This is important. I know concern has been expressed in some quarters that governments might take advantage of the contributions made by producers under this program to reduce the government spending on wheat and barley breeding programs.

We all know that cuts have occurred throughout government and that overall spending reductions are likely to be a fact of life in government for the foreseeable future. My department will not target wheat and barley research for special reductions just because of the contributions made by farmers under the program. Funding levels for wheat and barley research will be held in proper proportion to the amount being spent on research for other grain crops within the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

*(1100)*

Here is how this voluntary check-off will be implemented. It will work in the simplest form possible through deductions from Canadian Wheat Board final payments before that money is distributed to farmers. When I say "as simple as possible" I mean just that.

There are no huge administrative costs or red tape. I would suggest that the administrative costs proposed in Bill C-50 will be lower than the costs of other similar types of programs already in place in some provinces.

Annual operating costs are estimated to be in the order of \$106,000 a year or about 2 per cent of revenues. That amount will be deducted from the total amount of levies collected. Western producers of wheat and barley would pay levies of 20 cents per tonne on wheat and 40 cents per tonne on barley. The barley levy is higher to partially offset the lower volume of barley deliveries.

*Government Orders*

The amount to be levied will be fixed by order in council. The levies will be deducted from Canadian Wheat Board final payments beginning with those for the 1993-94 crop year and those final payments in the ordinary course of events for 1993-94 would be made in January 1995.

The funds collected, beginning in the coming year and in subsequent years, will be automatically transferred by the Canadian Wheat Board to special accounts set up and administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation.

This program is not intended to duplicate or replace current check-off programs already in place in some provinces. Producers who choose not to participate may opt out if that is their preference. Any farmer wishing to opt out of the levy on an annual basis can do so by a simple notice in writing.

However early indications are that we can anticipate a participation rate in this check-off program in the order of 90 per cent. We have confidence in that participation rate because this program has been initiated by producers and producer organizations. It has had their keen support throughout its developmental stages to the point now where legislation is ready in the House of Commons.

Research and development spending cannot be simply turned on and turned off like a tap. Such an attitude toward research only results in inadequate and inconsistent support and missed opportunities. Inaction on the research front would negate the day to day efforts of hardworking farmers across the prairies and Canada would risk losing its competitive edge in wheat and barley markets. We absolutely cannot run the risk of our wheat and barley breeding programs falling behind those of our competitors. For years now our major competitors like Australia, the United States and the European Union have been taking a direct role in renewing public plant breeding programs in wheat and barley. Incidentally, much of their research has been implemented as a result of producer funded programs. A check-off or a producer levy in Canada is required to keep up with that international competition.

I am pleased to bring forward this producer initiative to increase funding for plant breeding research in Canada. The proposed wheat and barley check-off is a very good example of how producers and government can work constructively together to achieve something that will benefit the industry as whole and will translate into benefits for future Canadians.

I recommend that the House approve Bill C-50 amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act to allow voluntary levies to be deducted in support of this important research program. I am anxious to hear the comments and remarks of members of the House who I hope will indicate their support for this particular direction.

(1105)

I would draw to the attention of the House, this being Tuesday morning, that I have a commitment in cabinet to which I must attend. I regret not being able to stay to listen to the remarks that will be offered by other members in the course of the debate.

I am very pleased that the secretary of state for agriculture and agri-food and my parliamentary secretary will both be here and listening to the remarks of hon. members. I suspect they will be participating in the debate. I very much look forward to the reaction of members to this important bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Madam Speaker, as the new agriculture critic for the Bloc Québécois, the Official Opposition, I am happy this morning to speak to Bill C-50 on the Canadian Wheat Board.

According to the information we received at our meeting this week with Agriculture Canada officials, this bill results from a Western grain producers' initiative. What they want is simple: they are willing to cut back on their profits in order to invest in research aimed at improving the genetic quality of wheat and barley. This bill will allow the Canadian Wheat Board to make deductions from wheat and barley producers' final payment cheques for the purpose of increasing private research funding.

As the single marketing agent for Canadian wheat and barley, the Canadian Wheat Board buys almost all grain produced. Deductions of 20 cents per tonne of wheat and 40 cents per tonne of barley will be made from payments on delivery. These figures were calculated by estimating research needs in millions of dollars and dividing the total by the number of tonnes bought.

As a Quebec farmer, I know much more about beef, pork and milk production than about grain production. So I was surprised to learn that although the bill only refers to wheat, the officials who explained Bill C-50 to us assured us that amendments affecting wheat would automatically apply to barley under the regulations. It also appears that two separate funds will be established, one for wheat and the other one for barley.

The deduction rates I mentioned will be set by order-in-council and not by legislation. This provision could exempt some classes of grain or some provinces. Alberta, for instance, will not participate in the barley deductions since the Alberta Barley Commission already makes such deductions.

Again, as a Quebec farmer, I was also surprised by the fact that deductions are optional. Officials said they were very confident that grain producers would participate based on the current rate of participation in the Alberta Barley Commission deductions program. We, in Quebec, have a similar process for marketing and advertising milk, but participation is compulsory.

(1110)

A method like the one proposed here would not work in Quebec. As you see, we are really distinct in every way. With this 90 per cent participation rate, the commission intends to collect \$4.7 million, of which \$3.8 million is for wheat and \$900,000 for barley, according to the estimates.

*Government Orders*

This money will then be used to subsidize research on improving the genetic quality of wheat and barley. Also, increasing the yield per acre makes the varieties more resistant to diseases and parasites and helps find new varieties to better meet new market requirements.

The first question that comes to our mind is of course the funding that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada allocates to research on wheat and barley. We are told that the budget for it now is \$18.7 million. If so, why must producers fund parallel or complementary research out of their own pocket? Do not misunderstand me. I think it is quite laudable to encourage farmers to take charge and proceed with the solutions that they know are best for them.

Nevertheless, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada should not shift its responsibilities to the private sector nor should it be dependent on the private sector. Last week, the Department of Agriculture tabled a bill that, among other things, clarifies its mandate by specifying the department's involvement in research and development. Despite this restructuring, western grain growers conclude that they have to pay twice to benefit from research that meets their needs.

All taxpayers, which of course includes farmers, already pay \$18.7 million for research and development on wheat and barley. Nevertheless, farmers will have to invest \$4.7 million more to orient the research to their priorities. The department explains that funding for research and development is going down and that the private sector must take over. In the future, will the Liberal government lower its share to increase the contribution from the private sector, namely farmers?

Certainly, research and development is the key to remaining competitive on foreign markets. Initiatives such as this must be encouraged and the participation of the private sector, producers and industrialists, must be increased so that more research and development is carried out. But I think it is fundamental for the government to play its role and to finance agricultural research and development equitably. Earlier, I asked the hon. member for Matapédia-Matane if maple syrup producers in his riding had problems disposing of their production.

(1115)

In my riding, and more specifically in Plessisville, the world capital of maple syrup, we have a surplus. I urge the federal Department of Agriculture to promote research on maple syrup and sugar in order to find new markets. Surpluses are enormous. Our producers must sell their maple syrup for roughly the same

price as they did nine or ten years ago. Production costs are constantly increasing, while the selling price remains the same or is even lower than before.

In any case, what we are looking at this morning is the financing of a private research group, namely the Western Grains Research Foundation, which has already looked at the issue. Private financing of research offers some benefits to that sector. It meets specific needs identified by those who finance that research. On the other hand, the information gathered may remain confidential. Regardless of what we may think, the reality is that those two factors may influence grain producers.

The budget allocated by the department is insufficient. That department is all in favour of finding new markets, but it does not provide the necessary tools to that end. The money spent by the department on research and development for wheat and barley is not in line with priorities in that sector. This second finding shows a certain lack of understanding of the industry's needs.

I will conclude by emphasizing the importance of avoiding—and the minister alluded to that issue earlier—any duplication or overlapping between the department's research projects and those of the private sector. As the member representing the Quebec riding of Frontenac, I know what I am talking about when it comes to duplication and overlapping.

The most recent example is the referendum held in 1992. Quebecers are very familiar with the issue of duplication. We pay double and we keep our mouth shut. Last week, at a briefing on this bill by Agriculture officials, we were told that research initiatives will be discussed with the stakeholders in that sector, precisely to avoid any duplication or overlapping. It seems that the projects to be financed will complement each other but, unfortunately, the legislation is totally silent on that aspect.

Right now, we support Bill C-50, except for a few minor details. When the time comes to review this bill section by section for the benefit of western farmers, we will try to coax the Liberal government, the minister, as well as the new parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Beauséjour.

(1120)

Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Champlain will also discuss Bill C-50 in a few moments.

[English]

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville):** Madam Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to be here today to speak to Bill C-50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act to allow a refundable check-off from wheat and barley which will be taken from the producers' final payment for the explicit purpose of plant breeding research.

*Government Orders*

I would like to start by summarizing provisions of the bill. The bill would allow deductions from the farmer's final payment checks for each pool period unless the farmer files with the Canadian Wheat Board to be exempted from the deduction. It places revenue into a special account set up and administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation.

The Canadian Wheat Board must estimate how much money it will take from farmers to put into the account and then estimate the share for the research agency. The Canadian Wheat Board will then give the money to the research funding agency after paying the administration costs to the board for administering the fund.

The research funding agency would then distribute the money received to persons or plant breeding centres engaged in the research into new varieties of wheat and barley. An additional reserve account will also be set up into which a portion of the money collected will be put. This reserve account is there to cover the costs of research contracts if there are insufficient deductions in a particular pool period.

An annual report must be submitted to the agriculture minister on its operations and affairs no later than the end of June, three months after the end of the previous fiscal year.

The deductions would start immediately and would be retroactive to August 1, 1993, with farmers having to file notice before February 25, 1995 if they decide that they want to have their contributions deducted or refunded.

The governor in council may make exemptions to the program on the basis of the class of wheat sold or on the province or region in which the wheat was produced.

The rationale behind the bill and the assumed benefits are to give producers a role in supporting and directing agriculture research. It will give farmers control to more closely link agriculture research to farmers' priorities and to marketing priorities and needs, and to develop new wheat and barley varieties which will assist the competitiveness of Canadian farmers by providing \$4.7 million in additional research money which certainly seems to give a good payback to farmers.

Another rationale behind the bill is to develop new market opportunities and to improve farm income to reduce unit production costs. This is a rationale behind the bill.

I do have some concerns about the bill. The first is a concern about the possible overlap in deductions. There are some farmer groups such as the barley commission in Alberta which have check-offs in place now. Will there be an overlap with the wheat board check-off? It is a concern. There is no fixed levy and the

rate of the levy may be increased in the future. That is a concern as well.

(1125)

The plan focuses on producing new crop varieties. However, for reasons of efficiency, farmers should probably be moving to completely different crops in some cases. I think it is important that this be considered. If the money is simply not in the agriculture department's budget for this type of research then I have a concern that the department should do some prioritizing regarding research projects under its existing budget and not merely download this expense on to farmers.

Another concern is that in the last Auditor General's report it was revealed that research efforts within the department of agriculture were very poorly co-ordinated. It is important that is worked on and not just allowing a separate fund to deal with the targeting of research money.

There would certainly be an increase in the cost of administering the program. There would be new administration costs taken from research funding. This is always a concern and I think it has to be carefully monitored.

The Reform Party and I do support the bill, however. The reasons for our support are that the contributions to the research fund are automatic, although they may be refunded on an annual basis upon a written application by the farmer. We propose that the application for refund be made easier by having a box on the Canadian Wheat Board permit application form which gives farmers a choice of whether they want to take part and want to have the deduction refunded.

Another reason for support is that farmers and industry representatives seem to support the program. There seems to be widespread support among farm organizations certainly, and there is some support among farmers.

Another reason for support is that the program will bring an additional \$4.7 million of research to be targeted for wheat and barley, which has already I believe taken a bit of a hit in terms of research funding due to research money going into research on other crops such as peas, lentils and canola.

The research funds I believe will be in the hands of farmers and farm organizations; they will direct the funding. It is certainly a positive step any time we can get farmers, the people who are going to benefit from the research directly, involved in allocating the funding. That is a possible move.

Again the Reform Party supports the bill. We will be proposing some amendments in committee. We will do that when this matter is discussed in committee.

I am extremely disappointed that any bill which opens the Canadian Wheat Board up to discussion was not far more broad and substantial. If there is any doubt at all that there is a need for major reforms of the Canadian Wheat Board then I would like to demonstrate with the scenario I am going to present now.

*Government Orders*

Last Thursday on a farm in southern Manitoba a group of seven RCMP officers, special officers and customs officials arrived at a farmer's door, knocked on the door and seized a wide variety of documents from a farmer. In a neighbouring town the same morning at the same time another group of RCMP officers, special officers and customs officials arrived at a door of another farmer and seized documents.

What heinous crime had these farmers committed to have this large group of RCMP officers, special investigators, customs officials seizing their documents? Was it a drug bust? Were they suspected of some kind of embezzlement? Was it a crime like that? No. The crime they were accused of was shipping grain to the United States without a Canadian Wheat Board permit.

(1130)

Canada signed a free trade agreement with the United States which allows for free movement of wheat and barley across the United States-Canadian border. We signed the free trade agreement but the crime those farmers were accused of was shipping wheat or barley across the border without a Canadian Wheat Board permit. Now that is a heinous crime.

The government, the minister of agriculture and the revenue minister are using these heavy handed tactics on farmers who are only trying to make their business profitable and in one case to save the farm which is close to being foreclosed by the Farm Credit Corporation. Instead, why does the government not change the law that applies to the Canadian Wheat Board which prohibits farmers from taking advantage of the free trade agreement? I think the crime is that the government refuses to act in spite of a groundswell of support among farmers for these changes.

I believe that we do need major reforms to the Canadian Wheat Board. These reforms must centre around giving farmers direct control over their organization which they fund. Farmers pay the complete operating costs for the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Canadian Wheat Board was set up for farmers. It was much needed when it was set up and it probably still has an important function to serve but farmers must be given control. No longer is it good enough to put the control of the Canadian Wheat Board in the hands of government appointed commissioners.

The change must start by having farmers elect a board of directors so they gain control of their Canadian Wheat Board. Beyond that I am not sure the direction in which the board would go. Farmers have told me some of the things they would like to see, but it is up to them to determine the change once they do get control.

I propose that shortly after the board of directors is elected a mechanism should be put in place with different options for how the Canadian Wheat Board would look. These options can be

put forward to farmers and they can decide what the make-up of their organization will be and what it will look like.

Some of the things I have heard from farmers is that they want competition to be allowed with the Canadian Wheat Board. They want the freedom to take advantage of the free trade agreement by shipping their wheat and barley into the United States and other markets. That is what farmers have told me. Farmers have said that once competition is allowed to the Canadian Wheat Board but certainly not before, they would be open to the idea of the Canadian Wheat Board handling other grains and oilseeds and specialty crops besides wheat and barley but only after they have the right to compete.

Farmers have told me they want the wheat board to continue to guarantee loans on wheat sold abroad only as long as other countries continue to do the same.

Those are some of the things farmers have told me. Once again, I cannot understand why this government seems so opposed to giving farmers control over their organization. Why is it so determined not to have this happen? I do believe that farmers absolutely will not put up with it much longer. The movement is there. There are more and more groups and more and more farmers all the time who are supporting this change in the Canadian Wheat Board.

(1135)

I am not talking about getting rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. I am talking about improving it so it truly works for farmers and not just for the sake of the organization itself. Make it democratic.

When talking about the wheat board the argument has been raised from time to time that one of the advantages of the Canadian Wheat Board is that because it is a monopoly, because it totally controls the export sales of wheat and barley, it should give farmers a better price. It has that bargaining power.

First, whenever there is a monopoly involved in a market the market does not function well. Second, when it comes to buying for export the Canadian Wheat Board does have a monopoly, but when it comes to selling it is competing against all the other sellers in the world. The monopoly argument just does not work. The wheat board is one in an oligopoly, many sellers all of which do have some influence on the market.

The argument along that line has changed since the wheat board was put into place. When the wheat board was originally put into place wheat was not nearly as diverse a commodity as it is today. Back then there were far fewer different grades and types of wheat and markets. Customers did not demand a very specific product. In the market today however there are dozens and dozens of different types of wheat. No longer is wheat just wheat. Customers are looking for a very specific commodity. This of course changes the influence of the Canadian Wheat Board.



*Government Orders*

Instead of looking at huge markets we are often looking at the smaller, harder to find markets which want a very specific commodity. I believe as do many farmers that the wheat board just does not do a good job in finding and taking advantage of those smaller markets. Farmers and their agent grain companies do a good job of that and they must be allowed to do that job. They must not be interfered with by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Let us realize that times have changed. Customers are very demanding in terms of the products. We are looking at smaller more lucrative markets. Let us change the board and allow farmers involvement to accommodate that.

Some have suggested that the first step in changing the board might be to put a continental barley market into place. This may well be a place to start but it does not go nearly far enough. It is interesting to note that both the minister of agriculture and the Prime Minister during the election campaign promised to hold a plebiscite on a continental barley market very shortly after the election. It was a promise. They thought it was a good idea.

I would like to know why they are not honouring their promise. Farmers also want to know and they want them to honour their promise now and that is only reasonable. Farmers expect the government to keep its commitment and honour its promise. I expect that, as do the farmers.

The government continually takes pride in talking about how it consults with people before it makes a decision. I am not going to talk about the general consultations in other areas, but I do want to talk about consultation in agriculture. The government's consultation in the area of agriculture has been almost exclusively with government organizations and with farm organization leaders.

Farm organizations are extremely useful bodies. They do a lot of good in promoting their particular commodity or their area of interest, but it is time for government to talk to farmers about what they want in terms of their future in agriculture.

There are plans for the committee to travel to study agriculture. The unfortunate thing is this plan does not allow for focused and organized consultation with farmers. Reform has put forth in committee over the past several months a very specific plan as to how this consultation program could be improved immensely.

(1140)

We have proposed focus groups with properly trained conciliators running them to determine what issues are important to farmers, what issues they want to talk about. These focus groups would lead to a public consultation process, public meetings where everyone would be welcome but the discussion would be focused based on the results of the focus groups.

It would be a travesty and a misuse of taxpayers' dollars if this committee did not allow some type of process similar to what Reform has proposed. I am not saying necessarily we have the only process, but it will work and it will work much better than what the plans are now. I strongly encourage this minister to go ahead with that.

I will conclude by saying that we do support Bill C-50. Being as the Canadian Wheat Board Act has been opened up, it is a real shame there were not far more broad and sweeping changes. I compare this change to adjusting a rearview mirror on an old beat up car that really needs to be replaced with a brand new model. I encourage this government to go out and let farmers tell them what brand new model they want.

**Mr. Gagliano:** Madam Speaker, I would like to give notice that the members on the government side from now on in this debate will share their time, 10 minutes and 5 minutes questions and comments, until further notice.

**Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon-Humboldt):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the bill today, the amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, particularly so in view of the comments I just heard from my colleague in the Reform Party. I shall be splitting my time with my colleague from Dauphin-Swan River.

As the minister said earlier the amendment will allow a check-off to Canadian Wheat Board sales of wheat in the four western provinces and of barley sales in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

There are two very good reasons the bill deserves the support of all in the House. The amendments will pave the way for an additional \$4.7 million annually in research funding, specifically in the area of plant breeding. I raise for the consideration of the House why the Reform Party would favour a long consultation process with the farm groups that are already supporting these amendments which would delay that kind of valuable research. It makes no sense to me because we already have grassroots support for the initiative.

Second and more important, and it ties into the point I was just making, Bill C-50 is a result of a specific request by the grain industry. The speedy response of our government to the request recognizes the importance of such research initiatives as well as the fact that no longer can government solely be relied on for research. Results can be achieved only through strategic alliances with industry.

My riding of Saskatoon-Humboldt includes a portion of the city of Saskatoon and a large rural area. It is an urban rural split of about 60:40 respectively. In fact this time last year I spent many hours on the road driving around the farm area of my riding during the election campaign. I remember stopping along the road north of Domremy to talk to a couple of farmers. I guess the Reform Party would call that consulting with the farmers on their views. Lawrence and André Georget took a moment to tell me some of their concerns.

*Government Orders*

Just last week I had almost enjoyable and informative half-hour meeting with one of the Canadian Wheat Board representatives from my province of Saskatchewan. We discussed many things, including the check-off provisions which are under discussion today. That fellow made the point, and I think it is a good one, that the additional research that will be carried out as a result of these amendments will benefit not just the producers but all Canadians. All Canadians will have the benefit of better credit as a result of increased research funding.

(1145)

How did this check-off scheme come about? It should be noted that the Western Grains Research Foundation, made up of 12 prairie farm organizations, asked the government to enact legislation that would enable producers to invest a portion of their own profits into plant breeding research.

The Western Grains Research Foundation is accountable directly to the producers as well as the federal government for the way in which research funds are spent. Producers believe that plant breeding research will help find new varieties and, in turn, enable the industry to maintain and increase its market share. All of this, for a farmer's investment of about half a cent a bushel or 20 cents a tonne.

Another interesting point is that studies have shown the return on investment in agricultural research can be more than 50 per cent. In the case of the legislation before the House this could translate into an extra \$400 million to prairie farmers annually. That is because research and plant breeding has a potential to lead the development of varieties that are 15 per cent higher yielding and equal in protein content to existing varieties.

This brings me to another point. As I noted in my opening remarks, my riding of Saskatoon-Humboldt includes a large rural area as well as approximately one-third of the city of Saskatoon. That one-third of the city of Saskatoon includes the University of Saskatchewan and our College of Agriculture, which was one of the founding colleges in 1907 and enjoys a stellar reputation in the area of agricultural research.

Just north of the university in the lovely area along the South Saskatchewan River bank we have Innovation Place, a business research cluster whose focus is biotechnological research,

development and commercialization. Hence my particular delight in having an opportunity to speak to the bill before the House today.

Producers know that research is vital to our agricultural industry. They know that their future livelihood depends on their ability to grow crops which will meet the shifting demands of the marketplace. Producers know as well that unless they start investing in research they risk lagging behind their competitors.

Farmers in Australia, United States and the European Union have been taking a direct role in renewing plant breeding programs in wheat and barley for years. In the United States over 15 states have check-offs on wheat. These are made at the state level and are deducted at first point of sale. The check-offs are generally voluntary and enjoy a high level of participation as we anticipate this will be. The Australian wheat board has had a non-voluntary levy in place for the past five years.

I mentioned partnerships between government and industry in my opening remarks. The industry strongly supports Bill C-50. This producer initiative has enjoyed broad industry support in its development and it will continue to do so, supporting a form of 12 prairie farm organizations that make up the Western Grains Research Foundation.

Perhaps not everyone is aware of who the members of this organization are: the United Grain Growers, Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Manitoba Pool Elevators, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Alberta Wheat Pool, Prairie Canola Growers Council, the Flax Growers of Western Canada, Keystone Agricultural Producers, Western Barley Growers Association, the Oat Producers Association of Alberta, Canadian Seed Growers Association, and Unifarm.

Five of these organizations are also members of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and, most important, all these organizations have taken this issue to their membership and have received a strong vote of confidence. Again I would suggest this indicates some form of consultation. I doubt very much if the membership of those organizations would thank the government for going through yet another consultation period, at the taxpayers' expense, to find out the answer to the question that producers are in favour of this kind of research check-off.

What contribution does government currently make to agricultural research? Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada spent over \$2.5 million on wheat research in the last crop year and a further \$8 million on barley research. The department will continue its commitment to research but this check-off proposed by producers will help us catch up to our competitors by providing additional research funding. These additional funds will allow us to double our wheat and barley breeding research programs. Government cannot do it alone and that is why we are so pleased to enter this research partnership with Canadian producers.

I would like to take a moment to review the minister's explanation of how the system will work. Western wheat and barley producers will pay voluntary levies of 20 cents a tonne on wheat and 40 cents a tonne on barley.

*Government Orders*

(1150)

I should point out for some of our urban listeners that this constant reference to check-off has nothing to do with Russian literature. These levies or check-offs from the Canadian Wheat Board payments will be put into the research fund.

The amendments before us today are necessary to permit the use of the moneys collected by the Canadian Wheat Board for this cause. The Canadian Wheat Board will not be distributing the moneys collected. The funds from the check-offs will be distributed under the direction of the producer driven Western Grains Research Foundation.

The foundation will establish two research committees, one for barley and one for wheat. These committees will ensure research moneys are spent on research projects in western research centres that focus on the development of improved wheat and barley varieties.

Participation in this check-off is voluntary. Producers who want to opt out need only to submit a written request. As I said earlier, this check-off will garner additional research funds. It does not replace existing funding for agricultural research.

Supporting the legislation will mean that the levies collected will assist in providing the Canadian agricultural industry with the means to develop and use new technologies, technologies that will boost our competitive edge.

The ultimate objective of the legislation is to improve farm income through two main mechanisms; first, by improving the field performance of barley and wheat through new varieties that mature earlier, have higher yields and offer increased resistance to disease and insect pests; and, second, by maintaining and improving sales of wheat and barley by developing varieties with specific qualities required by the marketplace.

The government is committed to strategic partnerships to secure our research goals. We have invited the industry to share the responsibility for the future with us as equal partners and it has accepted.

I recommend the legislation be enacted to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act for the purpose of initiating voluntary producer levies in the interest of plant breeding research. We will be financially supporting the legislation because it is directly accountable to the producers of western Canada and because at its heart the legislation is motivated by producers who want to work with government in partnership to increase their competitive edge.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the comments of the member for Saskatoon-Humboldt. I recognize that she represents an agricultural riding. I want to follow up by getting her thoughts on the idea of consultation with farm groups.

I understand that in the hon. member's comments she suggested that farm groups are supporting this check-off bill. As a result of what my colleague from Vegreville said I suggest that it might be important to broaden the base of the consultations in these ongoing hearings that agriculture is putting forward to meet with individual farmers.

Although there is support from farm organizations, these organizations may not speak for the majority of individual farmers. If the hon. member checks the membership she might find that out. Would she agree it would be important to consult agriculture producers in large numbers, and not just the farm organizations, to build support for this check-off?

Also would she agree it might be important for the Canadian Wheat Board to have elected directors as opposed to those appointed by the federal government? Would that not also boost the kind of support that we need in order to build a strong agricultural industry?

**Mrs. Sheridan:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. The point I would like make on consultation, and where I had some concern with the remarks made by the member for Vegreville, has to do with what appears to be a mixing of strategies.

The amendments before the House today deal specifically with amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act that will permit an additional \$4.7 million to go into research funding. There seems to be broad grassroots support as represented by the 12 members in the foundation, who, I would expect, speak in a large part for their membership, for the producers themselves.

My comment to my colleague earlier had to do with the wastefulness of delaying the accumulation of these research dollars that can be immediately put into plant breeding research for the benefit of the producers, the industry and, as I said in my comments, all Canadians.

(1155)

Perhaps I misunderstood the member for Vegreville, but it seems to me what he was suggesting was a giant overview of the Canadian Wheat Board and how it functions. That would be time consuming. It would involve delay and it would impede the very valuable contribution that this research initiative as proposed in Bill C-50 would have. Those were my comments and that was my intention.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville):** Madam Speaker, just to clarify matters for the member who just spoke, I did say very clearly that Reform supports the bill. I also said that the bill is a very small change to the Canadian Wheat Board compared to what we need. We need substantial, wide sweeping, major changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. I was just pushing for these changes to happen, some time in my lifetime I would prefer, and the sooner the better.

*Government Orders*

I just got a call from my assistant who said she had taken a call from a constituent who was wondering who this Bill Checkoff is and what team he plays for. Does he play for the Edmonton Oilers? He did not really know. She explained that no, it is a check-off bill we are talking about, not Bill Checkoff, a hockey player. I just wanted to clarify that.

The hon. member mentioned a figure for the number of dollars spent in research in agriculture. What benefit is derived from those dollars spent? I would prefer her to talk about the benefit derived and not so much the number of dollars spent, as though we are bragging about the number of dollars spent. I would like to ask the member to respond to that. What was the benefit?

**Mrs. Sheridan:** Madam Speaker, I am happy to respond to anyone in the Reform Party at any time. I thank him for his support of the bill and our colleagues in the Bloc who have endorsed the broad picture that is before us today.

Admittedly it is a small change. I do not think we get anywhere in this life by saying that if we cannot do the whole thing today we will not do it at all.

I also would like to question the member for Vegreville on his support of the new politics we are supposed to be seeing from the Reform Party, in particular having the decency to come forward from time to time and say: "Yes, this is a good initiative. We give it our support. Let's get this done today and if there is another aspect that we need to worry about, yes, we will continue with that".

The minister has indicated his willingness to constantly be improving and helping the effectiveness of the Canadian Wheat Board. Perhaps that is a matter for another day. We welcome the member's input to that process and consultation can take place in that regard.

For the moment we have before us a bill that will permit increased research funding right away. We should just get down to it and keep our minds focused on what we are talking about.

**Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin-Swan River):** Madam Speaker, as the member for Dauphin-Swan River, I would like to share with you and my hon. colleagues a brief but fascinating snapshot taken from the pages of Canadian history.

I do this in support of the legislation that has been introduced to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act. The amendments are required to make way for a voluntary wheat and barley check-off that would help fund plant breeding research in western Canada. This initiative is producer driven and is expected to generate an additional \$4.7 million a year to research funding. These funds will be administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation, a federally chartered public organization comprised of 12 prairie farm organizations.

Wheat was first introduced into western Canada in 1812 by the Selkirk settlers in Manitoba's Red River valley. The names of the wheat they brought with them were not recorded. In 1842 Mr. David Fife received a sample of red fife from a friend. It was a contaminant in a winter wheat sample obtained from a shipment in Poland. When this seed was grown a few heads appeared to be more vigorous than the rest. These were carefully selected and increased to become red fife, which was first introduced in Manitoba in 1870. Red fife quickly became the main variety of spring wheat grown in the area and went on to become the international standard of high milling and baking quality typical of Canadian hard red spring wheat.

(1200)

As the wheat growing area of western Canada gradually progressed north and west, it soon became apparent that the relatively short summer would eventually limit the wheat area. Plant breeders began to focus their attention on the development of early maturing varieties of wheat.

That is when Dr. Charles Saunders entered the picture. Dr. Saunders was a plant breeder at Agriculture Canada's Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. He was the son of William Saunders who founded the farm in 1885. It was the young Dr. Saunders who in the summer of 1892 began experimenting with a cross between the famous red fife and an early ripening variety of hard red spring wheat from India.

Following 10 years of plant breeding experiments, Dr. Saunders led the way in the development of a wheat cross called marquis. Marquis became a world renowned wheat variety and is said to be the single most important factor in establishing Canada's reputation as a producer of high quality wheat. Its performance was so remarkable that all inferior varieties were practically eliminated from production and marquis was to remain the varietal standard for Canadian bread wheat for most of this century.

Since the days of Dr. Saunders more sophisticated breeding techniques have evolved but the original challenge of human versus nature remains. Plant breeders have continued their efforts, developing subsequent varieties for qualities such as plant vigour, early maturing, resistance to chatter, resistance to rust and a number of other problems that were bane to the early prairie farmers.

Canada has originated some of its most eminent varieties from the search for better stem rust resistance, all the while retaining excellent milling and baking qualities.

I believe this brief historical overview is necessary to our discussion on the importance of the proposed amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, amendments which will provide for a voluntary producer of wheat and barley check-off. The check-off will provide western Canadian plant breeders with additional research funding to continue developing new varieties which will in turn help Canada maintain its competitive edge and ensure a future for our industry.

*Government Orders*

Plant breeding enables us to produce new varieties more resistant to diseases and insects, to give larger yields and a higher grade and better quality. Specific varieties are needed to adapt to specific conditions. For example, varieties of eastern Saskatchewan and Manitoba must be resistant to the rapidly changing races of leaf and stem rust. Varieties for western Saskatchewan and Alberta must have resistance to drought. For northern wheat growing areas the new varieties must be early maturing to minimize losses from early autumn frost.

Since the early 1930s over 600 crop varieties have been introduced into Canada and since 1990 more than 70 varieties of seed crops resistant to disease, cold and stress have been released.

One might say after all these years we must be getting very close to the perfect variety. It is much more complex than that. Our plant breeders have achieved wonders in developing varieties best suited for the full range of Canadian growing conditions and challenges. However, it must be remembered that the industry is constantly facing new crop threats. The pests and the diseases we fight do not always go away but when they do they are replaced by new ones.

It must also be recognized that a variety that suited our purposes extremely well over five or ten years ago may no longer be in great demand in the marketplace.

One of the key roles of today's scientists is to help develop the varieties that will enable us to meet the new and diverse international market demands. It is plant breeding research that gives us the ability to grow crops that can be made into the products such as frozen bread dough or into Asian type noodles with just the right consistency to beat out all of our other competitors.

The costs of research extend beyond the need for a lab where trained scientists experiment in crossing two varieties of wheat. To find the required gene, such as a gene resistant to a particular strain of stem rust, the wheat breeder may have to find it in native wild grasses. Information is needed on the milling, baking and other qualities of potential plant breeding material. Above all, new varieties must possess the high quality milling and baking qualities which are the characteristics of Canadian wheat and which meet the needs of the end user.

(1205)

Tests must be performed on new varieties to be recommended for registration. A new variety must perform for at least two and normally three seasons to the satisfaction of a committee of specialists recognized by my hon. colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. All varieties must be registered prior to sale.

Is it costly? Yes, it is. Is it worth it? Absolutely. Specialists in the field believe that a well co-ordinated and adequately funded research program over 10 to 15 years in all western wheat classes would bring significant results such as the development of varieties that are 15 per cent higher yielding and equal in protein content to current varieties. This would be above and beyond any yield increases resulting from existing research funds.

If the price of wheat were \$125 per tonne this would translate into \$400 million annual increase in gross returns to prairie farmers. Perhaps this explains the foresight of Canadian producers who have asked for this check-off and who are quite willing to invest what amounts to less than one cent a bushel or about 20 cents an acre. I call it an excellent business decision on the part of producers.

I strongly recommend that the Canadian Wheat Board Act be amended to allow voluntary wheat and barley levies to be deducted in support of plant breeding research.

Support will give producers the research program they want, one directly accountable to the producers who fund it. Members will be supporting this government's commitment to continued research through a framework that includes the industry as a strategic planner or partner with a shared responsibility.

In backing this legislation members will be recognizing the need for the Western Grains Research Foundation to continue the important work carried out by the David Fifes and the Charles Saunders of the country. Most important, members will be supporting the future of plant breeding research which offers Canadian producers a strong presence in the international marketplace.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate our colleague who has just spoken, so optimistically, to Bill C-50. Past events do not, however, warrant her boundless optimism today.

Would the member indicate to this House the minimum number of producers needed to participate in this voluntary deduction scheme at 40 cents and 20 cents a tonne respectively for wheat and barley, in order to raise the \$4.7 million anticipated by the Minister of Agriculture?

The Minister of Agriculture estimated that 90 per cent of Western grain producers will participate willingly, but there is, of course, a clause allowing grain growers to opt out if they wish.

My question is as follows. If, five years down the road, only 40 or 50 per cent of producers actually pay for research and development, while the others are benefiting from the fruits of the research, will voluntary participation still be tolerable?

*Government Orders*

(1210)

Another of my fears is that a future Liberal government might gradually withdraw from agricultural research and development. This is a constant danger, one we cannot ignore.

I must tell you, Madam Speaker, that I do not have all that much confidence in the Liberal Party when it comes to agricultural research and development.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Cowling:** Madam Speaker, that was an excellent question from the member across the way. He mentioned being optimistic. I want to remind the member that this is a new government on this side of the House.

Of course I am optimistic about the future. I am a farmer. I come to this House with a long record of community involvement and have been involved in major farm organizations across the country developing agriculture policy. I know how important it is to have a voluntary wheat and barley check-off that will fund plant breeding research for western Canada.

Farmers have been saying this for a long time and that is why it is so important that as a government we move ahead. As a Liberal government we are keeping our promise to those people out there producing that grain.

In my constituency of Dauphin-Swan River, Jim Parker, one of my constituents from Gilbert Plains, was a pioneer in plant breeding. He was an optimistic gentleman and clearly an example of the producer-farmer involvement in plant breeding. Parker developed a more rust resistant variety of wheat. This illustrates how farmers are committed to the research and recognize its importance.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague from Frontenac and critic for agriculture, has covered all the issues raised by Bill C-50 on the Canadian Wheat Board. I must say that I do agree with him that it is essential to support initiatives from people who want to take charge of their development, as in the case of western grain producers.

Since last October's elections, we have heard the term consultation used to mean just about anything most of the time. It means meeting with many groups from a given sector, talking a lot and listing their recommendations in a neat document that will end up on a shelf. For once that bureaucracy does not get in the way of the public will, we are certainly not going to object to an initiative grain producers consider desirable.

Two elements of the proposed legislation caught my attention however. First, the means by which the Canadian Wheat Board will pay the balance of research funds to the agency concerned, and second, the voluntary nature of deductions. The bill states that the Board must pay the research funding agency back no later than 180 days after the end of each pool period.

In the present case, this would be the Western Grains Research Foundation as the agency that offered to raise the contributions. The Foundation, which represents 12 Prairie farm associations, seems the most logical choice. According to the Foundation, producers would derive a gross revenue of approximately \$400 million from research. The bill also provides that the Board will decide which agencies will receive research funding. In that case, the choice appears to be unanimous. But, for the protection of the producers' money, it could be suggested that the bill be amended to provide for the selection of the agency to be made by a vote among representatives of the wheat and barley producers. In the event the Foundation were dissolved or new ones emerged, it would be better to have a consultative process than to let the Board decide alone.

(1215)

By the way, while board members come from the agricultural sector, all five of them are appointed by the minister. As for the voluntary nature of the 20 or 40 cent deduction, it would not get very far in Quebec, where mandatory deductions are favoured.

I understand that a different approach be taken in the West, particularly given the different historical development of farming in the Prairies. The voluntary approach could be criticized for allowing individuals to benefit from research without having contributed to its funding. On the other hand, it also enables lower income producers who cannot afford to contribute to the research fund to benefit from it anyway. It may nonetheless be advisable to set a minimum participation rate below which the deduction mechanism will have to be reviewed or abolished.

In addition, as the deduction rates are set by order in council, on the advice of the Canadian Wheat Board, it should be specified that could only be changed after consulting all agencies representing western wheat and barley producers.

One last word of warning in closing. The research this bill will help finance should be geared towards meeting the needs of all producers. It would be unfortunate if it focused on problems peculiar to businesses of a specific size.

*[English]*

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food):** Madam Speaker, I will now congratulate the first speaker from the Bloc, the member for Frontenac, on being appointed critic for agriculture and agri-food as we could not make comments after his first comments in the House today.

I also want to comment on some of the concerns that the Bloc has raised. One is the statement made by the Bloc inadvertently

*Government Orders*

that the wheat board buys Canadian wheat and barley. The wheat board does not buy Canadian wheat and barley. The wheat board sells Canadian wheat and barley on behalf of producers in western Canada. It does not buy the product at all.

Regarding the other concern of some overlap or concern about spending taxpayers' dollars, one really tremendous thing about this amendment to the act which I want to clarify for them is that this will cost Canadian taxpayers absolutely nothing.

The cost of administration within the wheat board and in the research foundation will both be subtracted from the fees collected voluntarily from the producers.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Madam Speaker, we are always concerned about program overlap and duplication but I think it will not be the case here. At least, we hope not, so that Western grain producers will not be at a disadvantage. As it is, with their contributions of 40 cents and 20 cents, they already pay twice for research.

[*English*]

**Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon-Souris):** Madam Speaker, I deem it an opportunity to speak on Bill C-50 with a backdrop of optimism and accomplishment in this harvest season throughout our country.

Our agriculture and agri-food sector is positioning itself to tackle the future with increased confidence and fundamental strength. We must ensure the decisions we make today and the initiatives we undertake in the future are part of a comprehensive long term plan for a modern progressive industry that is nothing less than the best in the world.

(1220)

Research is fundamental to this government's goal of making Canada the world agriculture and agri-food leader. Without research the grain farmers of the Canadian prairies would never have gained their reputation as producers of the highest quality wheat in the world, a reputation that is well deserved and one that the government intends to preserve, protect and promote.

In our platform outlined in the red book the government made a very strong commitment to research. Currently the Department of Agriculture and Agri-food spends about \$21.5 million on wheat research and \$8 million on barley research each year. The industry has recognized that we need to do more to keep up with our competitors and the industry has recognized that government cannot and probably should not do it alone.

It has looked at what we need to maintain our international reputation and keep up with competitors like Australia and the EEC which have been investing heavily in their wheat and barley production and programs for several years. They have realized we need to spend additional money on research.

This is why I am recommending the House support the proposed amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act that we are discussing today. These amendments are required to make way for a voluntary wheat and barley check-off that would help fund plant breeding research in western Canada. It is estimated that the proposed wheat and barley check-off will result in about \$4.7 million additional cost per year added to the funds already mentioned earlier today.

What do prairie producers hope to accomplish with the additional infusion of funding into plant breeding research? They hope to continue to develop new strains, to meet new and developing markets, and to better meet changing climatic conditions.

As the minister outlined earlier this morning plant breeding research gives us new varieties to resist disease and insects, to increase yields and produce higher grades. The voluntary check-off program was brought to the government by the Western Grains Research Foundation. The foundation has a track record in supporting effective, purer research in the west.

The idea for the check-off came about when the producer organizations making up the foundation were discussing the problem how to innovatively boost research funding. They did not come to the government asking for additional funding. They did not throw up their hands in despair because the money was not handed to them. They came with a plan of action. They said they wanted to place some of the responsibility squarely on their own shoulders.

Since that time the Western Grains Research Foundation had been working with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, to develop the mechanism to make their proposal a reality. The proposal is being brought to the House today for additional member support. I believe that this legislation is indeed an excellent example of a partnership initiative which will benefit the entire sector.

While the legislation before the House today calls for amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, all funds will be managed by a third party with emphasis on funding work that will meet future marketing needs. The foundation will be accountable to the very producers who pay for it, accountable through an annual report to all permanent book holders and accountable to producers who have the ability to opt out at any time. Any producer who does not wish to participate may so indicate in writing and indicate that they are not supportive of the program.

The projections however are that a 90 per cent participation will be in place because of the producer driven initiatives mentioned earlier.

*Government Orders*

In conclusion, through partnership efforts such as this leading edge research and development will continue to receive support. The grain producers of western Canada may ask for your support of these legislative amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, legislative amendments which will allow them to divert a portion of their income toward their future, a future that they can secure through technology.

(1225)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. member for Brandon-Souris to give me his opinion. In his speech, to which I listened very attentively, he talked about the importance of research and development.

Does the hon. member for Brandon-Souris undertake today to put pressure on his good government to release funds?

I would be satisfied with \$700,000 or \$800,000 a year for R&D on maple syrup products which, fortunately or unfortunately, come almost exclusively from Quebec.

[*English*]

**Mr. McKinnon:** Madam Speaker, in relation to the components of the bill, we are talking only of wheat and barley.

I would bring to the attention of the members opposite the fact that if we are talking about the \$21 million that agri-food and agriculture have in place right now, I believe those allocations are put through the budgetary process from this department.

If we are talking about the half cent, the \$4.5 million that we are discussing here today, we are only talking about wheat and barley research. I can only comment that I would not support additional funding out of this allocation for anything other than barley and wheat research.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C-50, especially as the bill relates to the Canadian Wheat Board, one of the superior marketing agencies not only in Canada but in the world.

Much of my comments will be directed to the Canadian Wheat Board as it is this agency that will allow a check-off on board sales of wheat in the four western provinces and sales of barley in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C.

It is important to note that this check-off is voluntary. I as a member of Parliament oppose the idea of imposing on farmers a check-off that could be viewed as another form of taxation. In part in response to the previous question, we as a government must be committed to research and development from public revenues. The public of Canada as a whole benefits greatly from the increased economic spin-off of research and development and especially so in the agriculture sector.

This voluntary aspect shows the principle of co-operation of farmers working together through the Canadian Wheat Board and other agencies in terms of achieving greater research and development as they already do in terms of marketing.

It is designed as the wheat board was in the very beginning to challenge the inequities and the inefficiencies of the bare bones marketplace.

It is significant to note that Alberta barley is not contained in the bill. I will have some questions later at committee stage on that point. I need to know and I will question whether there will be duplication of research. I need to know and I will question whether Alberta barley producers are given a choice in terms of whether their funds go to research in Alberta or through the Canadian Wheat Board system.

Let me for a moment talk about the bill specifically. The purpose of the bill is to bring in additional plant breeding research. The plant breeding research funded by the proposed check-off is anticipated to improve farm income through two main mechanisms: first, by reducing unit production costs through improved field performance due to increased disease and pest resistant varieties and, second, by maintaining and increasing exports through the development of varieties with desired market qualities.

(1230)

A key point is exporting and marketing those improved varieties in a way that enhances and maximizes producers' returns. That is where the Canadian Wheat Board really comes in.

It is important at this stage to review where the government is at in relation to the Canadian Wheat Board. I would like to go back to our policy announcement in May of last year. I will quote from the red book. I am sure members in the Reform Party will want to hear this. The book states: "An effective and efficient agri-food strategy must provide policies and programs such as orderly marketing boards, the Canadian Wheat Board and stabilization programs to minimize the impact of market price fluctuations and ensure adequate returns to producers, processors and other efficient managers in the system".

I stand by that commitment and I fully support the Canadian Wheat Board. I used to be involved extensively in the west. I continue to get calls from farmers in the west emphasizing that this government should maintain that support with the onslaught from some of the industry at the moment.

Yes, there are some who are attacking the Canadian Wheat Board and have been for a number of years. It should not surprise us. They are looking for short term personal gain at the



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expense of the industry as a whole. They are attacking Canadian institutions when they should be attacking the fundamental problem in terms of the grain industry, the use of the export enhancement program south of the border.

In fact I would suggest that some of those groups have fallen victim to the American corporate interests and are fostering their agenda rather than a truly Canadian agenda.

Yesterday I was shocked as members of the Reform Party stood in their places and condoned the illegal practices of those breaking the law in terms of Canadian Wheat Board marketing. It really amazes me that a party that talks about law, order, justice and following the law would condone those practices. All I can say is shame.

The two key characteristics which distinguish the Canadian marketing structure which is focused on the wheat board are single desk selling and price pooling. I think I had better speak for a moment on those. Through single desk selling, the Canadian Wheat Board is the only accredited agent for the selling of Canadian wheat and barley in export markets. This ensures that the needed quality and quantity of grain is provided to the marketplace. It ensures that the Canadian Wheat Board has negotiated power and flexibility, enabling it to provide farmers with the best possible return. That is an agency that maximizes returns to primary producers, works in their interest, finds those markets and does the market intelligence on behalf of all wheat board area producers.

The second major component is price pooling. Under that the Canadian Wheat Board ensures that farmers benefit equally from sales regardless of when and where their grain is sold. Returns are deposited into one of several pool accounts. All farmers delivering the same grade of wheat will receive the same return at the end of the crop year. The federal government ensures that any shortfalls are covered.

The member opposite is raising funny questions here. The reason I feel so emphatic about that principle is that I come from the east coast and I can see those of us in the potato industry missing opportunities because we do not have an agency like the Canadian Wheat Board that maximizes returns and works in the producers' best interests. I have seen that concept operate. I realize that an agency like the Canadian Wheat Board works far better than the absolute bare bones marketplace that I talked about earlier.

(1235)

A very important component relative to the Canadian Wheat Board is the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee. I will just take a moment to explain. The advisory committee consists of 11 elected members who represent more than 130,000 permit

book holders throughout western Canada. Elections are held every four years. The committee provides good advice to the Canadian Wheat Board in terms of its marketing initiatives.

I think I am running out of time. I would have liked time to talk about the challenges, certainly the Americans. The Reform Party members seem to be the only ones out to attack the Canadian Wheat Board and try to do away with that really good structure of marketing. Members will note that in the four challenges from the United States we won every one.

In closing, it is very critical the Liberal government stands behind our commitments to the Canadian Wheat Board, those commitments that we ran on in the last election across the west and won. Although I am from eastern Canada, I stand fully behind that board in terms of its ability to maximize returns to primary producers.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with considerable attention and what surprised me is how strongly the hon. member for Malpeque supports the Canadian Wheat Board. Like him, I come from the East, from Quebec to be more accurate, and I have four questions to put to the hon. member for Malpeque. These questions could require long explanations but I would be happy with a short answer.

Is the hon. member for Malpeque proud of the Canadian Wheat Board? Does the hon. member for Malpeque think that, in the past 12 months, the Canadian Wheat Board was dynamic enough in finding new markets? Could the hon. member for Malpeque tell us if he believes that the Canadian Wheat Board is democratic enough? Finally, does the hon. member for Malpeque believe that the appointment of members by the government, by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, is today, in 1994, a good thing, as it was in 1949?

[English]

**Mr. Easter:** Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of the Canadian Wheat Board. I have been fortunate enough to have travelled internationally. Farmers around the world look at the Canadian Wheat Board and wish they had an agency like it.

The Canadian Wheat Board over the past 12 years has been aggressive. It can be improved in terms of its aggression in some areas. We have to understand that one of the difficulties the Canadian Wheat Board has had is that we had a government in Canada for the past nine years that did not believe in the principles of the Canadian Wheat Board and did everything it could to undermine the ability of the board to operate as effectively as possible.

In terms of democracy, I mentioned a moment ago the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee. Looking at the record over the last nine years of the previous government, the one that lost the last election, it did not use the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee which was the elected representative

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of farmers. It did not want to hear what those elected representatives of the farmers had to say in terms of support for the wheat board. The previous government undermined those democratically elected producers, the mass majority of which support the Canadian Wheat Board in the west.

(1240)

In terms of commissioners there are several concepts of marketing. If commissioners are appointed, they should sit at the pleasure of the government. I personally believe we should conduct an investigation to ensure that the commissioners appointed by the previous government are operating in the interest of the policies of strengthening and maintaining the Canadian Wheat Board and are not trying to undermine it from within. The principle of appointing commissioners is that the government appoints those with expertise in marketing. It is not like an election where people are elected by popularity. They are appointed for their expertise in marketing, those who will do the best job of marketing on behalf of producers.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville):** Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the hon. member for Malpeque.

First I want some clarification. The member said we condone the law breaking that is going on by farmers shipping wheat over the border to the United States without a wheat board permit. This is absolutely untrue. He is deliberately distorting what Reform has presented.

As well the member said that the Reform Party is out to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. He knows he is distorting the truth. We are not out to destroy the wheat board.

I have three questions. Does the member's party support him in his left wing purely socialist view in regard to the Canadian Wheat Board? Does the member believe that farmers should determine how they run their organization, the Canadian Wheat Board, or does he hold his strong socialist principles in such esteem that he refuses to give farmers control over their organization?

My last question is with regard to the advisory committee representing 110 permit book holders. What power does it have? I will answer that one because he will not. It has no power whatsoever. Why not elect a board of directors that has power?

**Mr. Easter:** Mr. Speaker, I will try to keep my answer short. In response to the first question I may have misinterpreted the Reform Party. I hope that one of its members will get up on a point of order later today and ask that the government charge those people violating the laws of the land. Maybe that would clarify it specifically.

These members have tried to talk about inefficiencies. I just want to make one point before I sit down. The Canadian Wheat Board has reduced its staff substantially over the last number of years. In fact, with a staff of 430 the wheat board transacts \$4.5 billion to \$5 billion worth of business annually which translates into an administrative cost of less than 3.5 cents per bushel for wheat and 2.8 cents per bushel for barley. That is amazing efficiency on the part of the wheat board in terms of operating for producers.

As the member knows full well, the democracy is in the election of the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee which advises the board on matters. Democracy also exists in terms of this party campaigning in the last election that it would strengthen and maintain the wheat board and stand by it. We intend to do that. We have been elected to do that and I stand by that commitment.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate. I would like to make my points of view known with regard to Bill C-50 and possibly make some remarks on some of the issues that have been raised in this assembly.

As we know the bill has as its main purpose to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act. It allows members of the House to look at the Canadian Wheat Board in its broader sense and make some judgments and certainly make our points of view known in this assembly with regard to those matters.

(1245)

Bill C-50 is set before us with one specific purpose. It allows a voluntary deduction from the final payment cheques of wheat and barley producers for the purpose of plant breeding research programs. That should be the focus of our discussion but certainly other items could be raised in the general arena.

When we talk about a voluntary check-off we should also recognize that this is somewhat of a taxation on producers. The producers of the country should have some kind of right to determine whether they accept it or not.

We know that in bringing the legislation forward a number of industry representatives have given support to the program and that is good. The farmers involved in those organizations have been consulted and we think that is good as well.

We recognize the driving force behind the legislation has not been the government in total, even though it may take credit for it through its red book. Rather, the Western Grains Research Foundation has initiated it and through a variety of actions has made it possible that the amendment has come before us today.

That research organization is made up of 12 prairie farm organizations. It certainly has done some excellent work in the area of funding research for Canadian farmers.

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A number of successful WGRF funded research projects have already been undertaken at Agriculture Canada Research Centre located in my constituency of Lethbridge. I would like to recognize those here today.

There is a communication to the hon. member for Vegreville from the chairman of the board of directors of the Western Grains Research Foundation. Mr. Roy Piper indicated that the Western Grains Research Foundation since its incorporation in 1981 had been working toward improved funding of grains related research.

He said: "We now provide grants of about \$1 million annually. An accumulative total of our grants paid and committed through 1996 is \$11.5 million". He goes on to say: "Of this amount, 50 per cent has gone into projects in plant breeding in wheat, barley, canola, pulse crops and plants. Most of this money has been paid to Agriculture Canada research stations and the Universities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta". I can only commend the organization for providing that support. A number of benefits have certainly occurred to us as farmers.

In my constituency one project should be of note. Research funded through the research grants is going on in the area of biological control of the Russian wheat aphid, which if allowed to continue to spread could be very devastating to our grain production in southern Alberta and other parts of Canada.

One of the other items of note is a funded project at the University of Alberta. They are applying biotechnology to reduce green seed in canola. We all recognize that having green seed in our canola certainly downgrades the canola and downgrades the net return to the Canadian farmer.

The Reform Party is supporting Bill C-50 largely because of the support expressed for it by the major stakeholders in the grain industry and because of the excellent work since 1981 of the Western Grains Research Foundation and the projects it has funded.

The central feature of the bill as has been recognized and outlined by the minister is the voluntary nature of the program. Western wheat and barley producers would voluntarily pay levies of 20 cents a tonne on wheat and 40 cents a tonne on barley. I do not think there is any necessity to go into detail but this then makes it incumbent upon the government in terms of accountability for this tax.

(1250)

The request is 20 cents per tonne on wheat and 40 cents per tonne on barley. It is my hope there will not be an abnormal increase in that funding imposed by the government. If there is any kind of increase in funding it should be done with the co-operation of not only the farm organizations we have talked about today but also Canadian farmers as well, because it is a tax. It is a cost to us as farmers.

There is also the inclusion of an opt out provision. That opt out provision is expected to have a number of beneficial outcomes. It introduces a degree of market discipline that is difficult to create in a bureaucratic setting. The voluntary aspect of the program-and I hope it does not change-allows farmers who disagree with how the WGRF operates or with how it is allocating its funds to effectively withhold their contributions until the research foundation responds to their objections. This should help to ensure that the research foundation acts in a responsible and a very responsive fashion.

Another benefit provided by the voluntary nature of Bill C-50 is that it provides a degree of flexibility for the farmers depending on their needs and their interests. Hard-pressed farmers would not be forced to contribute to the program nor would farmers who have had an unexpectedly bad harvest be expected to contribute. Likewise, if farmers do not feel they will benefit from the research being conducted, they cannot be compelled to participate.

As my colleague from Vegreville explained earlier, the Reform Party will support Bill C-50 both because of the voluntary nature of the check-off and because of the support it has received from the farmer groups in the Western Grains Research Foundation. However, there are some aspects of the bill that raise concern in my mind.

A potential problem is that Bill C-50 might be looked at by government as a way to shift the cost of its research and development responsibilities to the farmers. According to the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food the \$4.7 million that is expected to be generated each year by the check-off for plant breeding research is in addition to what the government already spends on agricultural research and development.

In other words this is not a reallocation of funds from within the current budget, but rather an additional research and development initiative controlled by a private sector organization that is designed to complement the existing government research efforts.

When taking this into consideration with the effects of inflation government support for agricultural research has decreased in recent years. If the government makes further cuts to agricultural research programs then the impact on the research foundation program will be seriously undermined.

Nobody is disputing that producers have a role to play in supporting agricultural research. They are the ones who benefit directly from such spending and it only makes sense that they bear some of the costs. However, Canadian farmers need government support to survive in a global marketplace that is awash in agricultural subsidies. At a time when governments of the United States, the European Community and Australia are all increasing their financial support for plant breeding programs, the Canadian government should not reduce its own support.

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Any attempt to make the WGRF an alternative to publicly funded research rather than a complement to it will adversely affect the competitiveness of Canada's agricultural industry. Today in the House the minister assured us that the government will not reduce its present contribution in terms of research and development in the area of wheat and barley. I respect him for making that statement in the House. As an opposition member and a member from the farming community of Alberta I intend to hold him accountable to the commitment he has made to this assembly.

(1255)

As I said earlier one of the most attractive features of the bill is the voluntary nature of the check-off. The Reform Party would like to see this philosophy extended even further. We believe Canadian exporters of grain should not be forced to operate exclusively through the Canadian Wheat Board.

Reform is encouraging the implementation of special opting out provisions for entrepreneurs interested in developing special niche export markets. If individual farmers believe they can get a better price for their produce, especially barley, than the price negotiated by the Canadian Wheat Board then we believe they should be given the freedom to do so.

Instead of allowing farmers this freedom the present government has already demonstrated it will support the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly. The best example of this is what happened when farmers this year tried to take advantage of high prices in the American market. Rather than encouraging such a growth of an entrepreneurial spirit, Revenue Canada and the Canadian Wheat Board instead worked together to impose heavy fines on all prairie grain farmers attempting to transport grain into the United States for direct sale to customers.

When we in Reform talk about opting out provisions, be it for the plant research check-off in Bill C-50 or for the broader questions of farmers opting out of the Canadian Wheat Board pooling system of export of grain, what we are really talking about is choice. Farmers must be given the choice to control their own lives. The Reform Party has serious doubts about whether the Canadian Wheat Board as it is currently organized is capable of providing the flexibility and choice demanded now by Canadian farmers.

A good place to start is to undertake a review of the Canadian Wheat Board. I am not suggesting that the Canadian Wheat Board should be disbanded. There is a lot of support for the Canadian Wheat Board, but there is a lot of support for change as to how it operates.

For many years now the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in assisting individual farmers to penetrate foreign grain markets. However I am suggesting it has a virtual monopoly over all sales. This virtual monopoly is unnecessary and serves only to stifle the initiative of those farmers who wish to market on their own.

Another aspect of the Canadian Wheat Board that should be reassessed is its undemocratic nature. Because the board of directors is appointed by the government there is no democratic way for producers who support greater freedom from the Canadian Wheat Board to influence its actions. Reformers believe that steps must be taken to democratize the Canadian Wheat Board. We have already had a discussion in the House about that.

The people who are now on the Canadian Wheat Board are political appointments. Most likely most of them were appointed by the last government. I am sure it is going to be the intent of this government as soon as it is possible to take those people out of their appointed positions and appoint its political friends. But where do farmers stand in that kind of action? Farmers do not have a role in determining who represents them and one of the most important boards in this nation, the Canadian Wheat Board, has a monopoly.

The present government appointment system should be changed to a board of directors consisting of producers elected through a fair and open electoral process. The first thing this would accomplish is to increase the legitimacy of the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers would know they have had a means of influencing wheat board policy through exercising their vote. They would also be more likely to accept wheat board decisions made by a democratically elected board.

Flowing from this democratization would be the improved responsiveness of the wheat board. Not only would election of board members encourage candidates to listen to farmers' concerns but farmers would be in a position to hold wheat board members accountable at election time.

In conclusion, let me quickly review the main points I have tried to make here today.

(1300)

Reformers have decided to support Bill C-50 for two reasons. First, we believe that the voluntary check-off provides farmers with a degree of flexibility and choice in how their money is spent and invested in their future. Second, we are optimistic that this will encourage the Western Grains Research Foundation to be responsive to farmers' concerns. As well, we support Bill C-50 because it allows producer organizations, in this case the Western Grains Research Foundation, to have more say over their own destiny. Decisions on how to spend the moneys raised by the check-off will be made by the private sector stakeholders, not by the government.

Finally I have argued today that much remains to be done to improve Canadian agriculture. Specifically there is need for a reform of the Canadian Wheat Board. By advocating the democratization of its board of directors we hope to encourage the creation of a more flexible, more responsive Canadian Wheat Board for the farmers of Canada.

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**Mr. John Solomon (Regina-Lumsden):** Madam Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus I would like to join in making some comments on Bill C-50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

The Liberal government is amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act to introduce the voluntary check-off program for wheat and barley research. I believe this is a very good move on behalf of the government and on behalf of the producers and those who support this move.

It is reminiscent of the pulse crop producers in Saskatchewan who over the years have had check-offs on their crops, on their production for the purpose of research, for the purpose of enhancing their markets, for the purpose of providing greater returns for agriculture in the pulse crops that are produced in the province of Saskatchewan.

It has proven very successful there. I predict it will be very successful if it is managed properly by the government and by the administrators for the wheat and barley end of it as well.

The proposed check-off has been debated by western farmers over the last few years. There is no major opposition to the concepts and the government is responding to a proposal from the Western Grains Research Foundation. The proposal was developed by producers and farm organizations, the research community and the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Western Grains Research Foundation is proposing a 20 cents per tonne check-off on wheat and a 40 cents per tonne check-off on barley. This could produce an estimated \$3.8 million for wheat and \$900,000 for barley. The levies will be deducted from the CWB final payments beginning with those for the 1993-94 crop year. These funds would be automatically transferred to special accounts set up and administered by the WGRF.

The bill excludes check-off on soft wheat and barley marketed at delivery points in Alberta. This is a point that requires further review and explanation. The Alberta government has introduced a long list of check-offs on farm products.

It is our view in the case of barley producers that some of the money is being used in a permanent campaign against the Canadian Wheat Board. All farmers should be in the check-off as proposed in this bill. Alberta farmers will obtain the benefits of plant research financed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba farmers while the Alberta barley growers association uses its check-off to attack the Canadian Wheat Board which is trying to build its industry.

If the Alberta barley producers want to maintain a check-off for political purposes, it would be their business. If the aim of the check-off is to foster plant breeding research to reduce the administrative costs of the check-off, since the barley growers association, including Alberta producers, members of the WGRF and others, there is no logical explanation to exclude them from this voluntary check-off.

I have a question for the member for Lethbridge, a member of the Reform Party. How do the member and the Reform Party square their support for the bill and yet do not support the Alberta farmers from being involved in the check-off, contributing to the research and contributing to the benefit of their industry and using their money to contradict and campaign against the CWB?

**Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge):** Madam Speaker, I certainly can only respond in a general sense rather than in a specific sense.

My understanding is that the Alberta barley growers have as their purpose and function to promote their organization and to make contributions to research. To say that they are just a political body I would not agree with that. They are trying to make a case that the wheat board is not serving their purpose.

(1305)

More of a concern about the Canadian Wheat Board comes from individual barley producers who are financing their own campaign against the wheat board. They are entrepreneurs who feel that they can market on their own and can develop a market in the United States and other places in the world. They would like the opportunity and privilege to do so. What we should do in the Canadian Wheat Board legislation is allow for that to happen.

We cannot have producers having their cake and eating it. There would have to be some kind of a provision that if a producer wishes to do it on their own and go out into the free marketplace as an individual producer then they have to take that risk and not be able to all of a sudden jump back into the Canadian Wheat Board when something looks better in that case. Therefore there has to be some kind of a trade-off done through the Canadian Wheat Board legislation.

I believe that Alberta producers want to play their part in research and development, specifically in barley.

**Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Simcoe):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

The purpose of the bill is to allow for a voluntary check-off on board sales of wheat in four western provinces and the sales of barley in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. The funds collected, an amount estimated to be \$4.7 million a year,

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would be administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation and would be used for plant breeding research.

The research moneys would be directed toward improving farm income through two main mechanisms: by improving the field performance of barley and wheat through varieties with increased disease and pest resistance, and by developing varieties with specific qualities required by the marketplace.

The CWB act is specific in the terms of the deductions that can be made from final payments. The bill would amend the CWB act to allow voluntary research check-offs to be made. There are a number of key provisions in the bill which are worth taking note of.

The CWB would now be legally empowered to make voluntary deductions from final payments to producers of wheat and barley for the purpose of plant breeding and research. We are really talking about responsible legislation from the government that in essence is helping western Canadian grain farmers ensure the future and viability of the industry.

The program is voluntary but I believe that participation will be high as most farmers, including myself, realize the importance of research and development. The program has the potential to bring in \$4.7 million in additional plant breeding research. This figure is significant in light of the fact that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research centres spent \$18.7 million on wheat research in 1991-92 and a further \$10.5 million for barley.

Plant researchers have expressed the belief that a well coordinated and adequately funded research program over 10 to 15 years in all western wheat classes could lead to the development of varieties that are 15 per cent higher yielding and equal in protein to current varieties.

Based on a current price of \$125 per tonne for wheat, the preceding implies that the gross total return for the research levy is projected to be worth approximately \$400 million to the prairie farmers annually.

Producer funded research programs are not new. This type of initiative is well established and conforms to our GATT obligations, as producer funded programs are not subject to any restrictions. Over 15 U.S. states have check-off programs on wheat. These are made at the state level and are deducted at first point of sale.

(1310)

The levy can be refunded by request within 60 days. The check-offs are generally voluntary and have a high level of participation. In general most funds are used for market development activities and domestic production. Research also receives a small portion of the levy fund.

There is also an Australian example. The Australian wheat board has a wheat industry fund levy that has been in place since the 1989-90 crop year. In this case a non-voluntary levy is used in part to fund plant breeding research. It is set at approximately 1.5 per cent of the return price. As all hon. members can see, Canada is not breaking new ground here; we are simply catching up.

Another key aspect of the bill is the provision made by way of order in council for fixing the rate of deductions and for excluding from deductions certain grains and/or classes of grains for certain regions within Canada. A study of the needs for enhanced plant breeding programs in wheat and barley has shown the need for an additional \$3 million annually in wheat and \$1 million in barley.

The business plan of the WGRF proposes a check-off of 20 cents per tonne or a half cent per bushel of wheat, and 40 cents per tonne or about one cent a bushel for barley.

I believe this is a small price to pay. The world grain industry today has a high dependence on export markets. Consumers demand both stability of supply and the quality of the product for their end use requirements. The ability to meet these demands provides a competitive advantage for Canada.

Satisfaction of both these demands depends to a large extent on the genetic make-up and the varieties grown by barley and wheat producers in Canada. It is expected that there will be significant growth in demand, not only in the heavily populated Pacific rim nations but around the world, particularly for the quality and quantities of grain that western Canada has so far been unable to supply.

Canada must be able to respond rapidly to new demands for the varieties of wheat suitable for specific end use such as frozen bread dough and noodles. Meeting this challenge could mean significant new market opportunities for western producers.

The bill also provides for the deposit of the amount of deductions from the final payments into a special account, by way of order in council providing for the ultimate distribution of those amounts to the account through the WGRF to the various organizations where needed.

These would include governments, organizations, corporations, foundations, educational institutions and other bodies having among their objectives the support of scientific research to develop and improve wheat and barley varieties.

The WGRF is made up of 12 major prairie farm organizations, including the United Grain Growers, the Manitoba Pool Elevators and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The board of directors is made up of these 12 organizations as well as one representative from the research branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada which will collectively set their priorities.

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The program has been designed with its own checks and balances. There is accountability at the individual producer level since a person can flag their support or disapproval by opting out of the program. There is accountability at the institutional level since the WGRF is made up of such a broad base of farm groups.

The WGRF which will be overseeing the research also represents the interests of its member organizations. There are costs associated with the program. The CWB has estimated a one-time setup cost of \$56,800 and the annual costs of approximately \$55,700. The WGRF has estimated its total costs at \$50,000.

(1315)

The total administrative costs are estimated to be less than 2 per cent of the research funds generated and will be deducted from the levy funds. The proposed bill obliges the WGRF to provide annual reports to both the producers and the federal government of their activities.

What we have finally is a recognition that producers have an important role to play in an activity that is directly related to their livelihood.

Producer funding is increasingly important because plant breeding of wheat and barley has been eroded by so many years of inflation. By allowing producers to have such a direct role in this process they can contribute directly to ensuring the future and viability of their industry.

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina-Lumsden):** Madam Speaker, the main political issue of Bill C-50 would be the opening up of the Canadian Wheat Board Act. That is the view of the New Democratic Party caucus. We are a bit concerned about opening it up even though it is for a good purpose. Inadvertently this may have a negative effect on the wheat board and its operation.

The reason I mention this point is that members of the Reform Party are demanding freedom to choose. They want referenda and other approaches to the wheat board and its orderly marketing process. It is my view and the view of some farmers I represent in the province of Saskatchewan that it poses a possible threat to the stability of the board.

I want to ask the Liberal member if the government could give some assurance or a clear statement on the future of the wheat board and to confirm again the government's commitment to orderly marketing and its election promise to ensure that the Canadian Wheat Board is an ongoing strong, single desk marketing agency.

**Mr. Calder:** Madam Speaker, I understand where the hon. member is coming from with this. First, the bill allows for more funding and is actually GATT responsive. That is one thing we have to look at here.

To allay his concerns as to whether or not it is backed, I just want to read off some of the grassroots organizations that have already said they approved. The list includes the Prairie Pools Incorporated, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Manitoba Pool Elevators, the Alberta Wheat Pool, the Canadian Seed Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Seed Growers Association, the United Grain Growers, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers and Keystone Agricultural Producers.

I do not think the hon. member has anything to worry about concerning the Canadian Wheat Board in the future.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member opposite. He spoke about the support the bill has from all of the different organizations. I believe he went on to list 12 organizations that had indicated support.

Would he also have enough confidence to seek direct support from producers by making it possible for them to say when they apply for a permit book whether or not they support this type of check-off? I suggest to the member opposite that although there is a lot of institutional support, these people may not speak for the majority of farmers. The fact that they have to continually reapply to get this check-off back if they do not support it is very cumbersome.

Let us give producers the option of indicating whether they support this when they apply for their permit book. Would he support that?

(1320)

**Mr. Calder:** Madam Speaker, the key here—we have to take a look at what is being discussed in the bill—is the word voluntary. That is exactly what we are discussing here.

As a poultry producer, I have a lot of faith in my industry. I know what research and development means for the chicken industry. I hope that wheat and barley producers have that same commitment to their industry and that they want to put money into research and development.

In looking at research and development in this industry, if the researchers see they have the backing of the people who are involved in the industry itself, they will go a lot farther in the development of wheat and barley for the world market.

Let us face it. Canada is an exporting nation. If we have the best quality wheat and barley product to put forward on the world market, I know we can go farther. I will cite members an example in the chicken industry.

In the 1960s, it took us 14 to 16 weeks to produce a four-pound chicken and we said: "Wow, that is as far as we can go". I do it in 36 days now and through research and development, they are also talking about a 30-day chicken. Wheat and barley is no different.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of Bill C-50, an act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

I commend the minister of agriculture for the work he is doing to improve the prospect of the Canadian farmer. My riding of Oxford has a large variety of agricultural production. The north end of the riding is dominated by livestock, mostly dairy. Just north of Woodstock is the Western Ontario Breeders Incorporated which collects, tests, stores and sells semen around the world for the artificial insemination of cattle. Toward the south end of the riding, we have a predominance of tobacco production. Over the past decade as tobacco has decreased, these producers have looked for alternative crops to grow on the sandy soil of the tobacco belt.

We have found that not many crops are successfully grown in this soil. As one moves throughout tobacco areas, one can see the occasional farm growing ginseng or peanuts. However not all farmers can afford to make this change, nor can we have these markets flooded by new producers.

Another experimental crop which was successfully introduced this year on a limited acreage by Mr. Joe Strobel of Tillsonburg was hemp. This crop was harvested last month and will be used in the production of hemp clothing.

This is why this bill is important to my region. The provisions in the bill for research and development of new crops is good for all Canadian farmers. It is hoped that this research may even develop a new wheat or barley variety that could be successfully grown on lighter land such as that formerly used for tobacco.

We sometimes forget just how competitive the agricultural industry is world wide. With our shorter growing season in Canada, we must take full advantage of improvements in crop and livestock variety and quality in order to finish ahead of the competition.

If research can develop new and better crops that can be used for human and livestock consumption, then we can forge new markets around the world. These new markets will not only develop income for our farmers but will generate employment throughout Canada.

As this country has moved from a primarily agrarian economy to our present industrial and information age economy, we sometimes forget how important agriculture continues to be not only for the food it produces but for the jobs it creates. Jobs in our transportation networks, packing plants and food processing plants are all dependent on agriculture.

As every farmer knows, the greatest resource we have is the land. This land is a farmer's capital. It is our basic resource and our goal has to be to preserve the land and to make it as productive as possible. The research that is called for in this bill is good for all Canadian farmers.

I would like to address a few remarks to my hon. friends from Lethbridge and Peace River. I had the pleasure last week to sit with the advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board. This is an elected body of grain farmers from the various regions of the grain provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta.

(1325)

To a man these elected representatives supported the Canadian Wheat Board largely because of its success in marketing our grain and because of its pooled selling. There was some discussion about the possibility of some entrepreneurial ventures regarding barley. I am sure that will be discussed by the board. There are farmers elected who give input to this board. I was pleased to meet with them and to know that they were satisfied with what was being done.

When the bill becomes law we will be able to say to our farmers that we have passed a law that will improve the ability of the Canadian farmer to compete in international markets. This is a strong step forward for Canadian farmers and the Canadian agri-food industry as a whole.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Oxford, who represents his riding so well, just told us once again that he wishes western producers would pay 40 cents and 20 cents per metric tonne for R&D; he also expressed in the same breath the hope that tobacco producers who can no longer grow tobacco will benefit from research spin-offs.

I wonder whether the hon. member for Oxford is not a little dependent on Western producers for his region's development. If it is good for his region, he should urge his government to rack its brains to find a way to make everyone-or at least those who may eventually benefit from agricultural R&D-pay.

In addition, I would like to ask the hon. member for Oxford, who also seems very happy with the Canadian Wheat Board, to enumerate some improvements that would make the board more active, vigorous and democratic. I must tell you, Madam Speaker, that the Canadian Wheat Board is far from enjoying unanimous support in the west. Most producers want to keep it, but most of them also want the Canadian Wheat Board to make major changes, in particular at the senior management level.

[*English*]

**Mr. Finlay:** Madam Speaker, my hon. friend raises some interesting points. He might be encouraged to know that the wheat farmers of Oxford county and of other parts of Ontario are already paying a dollar a tonne into a fund for research.

Probably he is also aware that the Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Marketing Board takes a certain amount from each pound of tobacco that is sold through their marketing agency. The money is used for exactly what he is concerned about, research into varieties and improving the production of tobacco in Oxford, Norfolk and Elgin counties.



*Government Orders*

I am not sure that Frontenac is any closer to western Canada than Oxford. I am sure that all farmers are interested in maintaining the best possible production in all parts of the country. Research is essential.

(1330)

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar-Marquette):** Madam Speaker, I was looking for question period. I thought I would get out of this before that started.

It is a privilege for me to address the bill and I am going to address it more or less in a way that a Reform farmer does, not a Reform politician.

I thank the hon. member for Malpeque for all the free publicity for Reform he is giving us. We really appreciate that. It is good advertising.

The spirit of Bill C-50 goes in the right direction. The spirit is good. The increase in private funding for research, pretty well every farmer supports. I am starting to wonder who drew up the bill. When I look at the body of the bill it looks very sick, very old and very decrepit. I do not think it is going to provide the incentive this money is supposed to give.

To me it looks like it must have been a Liberal lawyer drawing it up, not a Liberal farmer because I am sure some of the clauses would be different.

We take a look at clause 31(3) and all of a sudden I realize we have another agency. The agency is called the western research fund and if we look at the track record of federal agencies we know that they usually have deficits, not surpluses. When we look further on we will see that is exactly what the next clause says. It says the cost of collecting these moneys will be deducted from distributed moneys. What have we left over?

I am becoming very suspicious that there will not be very much money for research which we originally intended.

We go back down to the other clause, and all of a sudden we find out we have another fund, a reserve fund, more administration. How much cost is there going to be to the administration of this 20 cents a bushel levy? It does not end there.

Then we go to clause 33(2) and it says there will be provisions made that certain projects are not eligible for this funding and certain research projects that do not pertain to research on these products could be funded. There is no clear direction in the bill.

We go down further to clause 33(3) and we are talking of an annual report that will have to be made to the minister but there are no guidelines that say what kind of a report. It will be at the minister's discretion what kind of report. Is it going to be a report saying it is minus or plus? Or is it going to show us which projects were funded? Why is there no body to the bill? I want some body in the bill.

Then we go further down and we find the door is left wide open to whatever we can think of. If it is at the minister's discretion to call the report, why call for something when there are irregularities in it, especially if the government of that day would not like the irregularities.

Why not put out a bill that is simple and will direct these funds to the research that we want to target? It is very simple. As I mentioned the other day, give farmers the choice. In the next federal election the hon. member on the other side would be really provoked if he were forced to mark his ballot Reform and then ask for it back because he did not agree to vote for Reform. Let us try it and see what they will say. Maybe they all will vote Reform. Maybe it is going to be that impressive. If we want democracy let us have it everywhere.

(1335)

I am not surprised, if I look at the bill, that we have problems in government. If bills about immigration and bills about law and justice are so vague and so unpredictable no wonder we have lawyers having the richest industry in the world today. To me as a farmer if I want to support something I want to have that right to say so. I do not want somebody to tell me you put this money in here and then if you have time, if you feel things are not right you can ask for it back. I want that money to go to research. That is why I suggest very strongly to the government, if it wants my support as a farmer, to give me that opportunity. I will guarantee that if farmers have that opportunity the government will get more money for check-off to research funding than it will otherwise.

I have another suggestion for the government. If we really want to co-operate in the House why not ask some of the Reform members on this side to help draft the bill because I know it can be improved. The intent is tremendous. We want to co-operate. It is always suggested that we do not want to co-operate. Any member on this side could draw up a bill that would direct that money specifically to the research that we wanted.

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the comments of the member for Lisgar-Marquette. I guess that is about as far as we can say, that they were enjoyable.

I do want to point out to the member from the Reform Party that it keeps stressing that decisions like this by governments should be producer driven. There are already, as he and the Reform Party well know, 12 farm organizations and others requesting addition to the list. I do not really know what more they want than that type of thing. The legislation is producer driven and we as a government are responding to that at absolutely no taxpayer cost whatsoever other than providing a very efficient administrative process or availability to do so.

*Government Orders*

When I mention that it is clearly stated in the bill that Alberta barley producers will not be taking part. I would ask the member if he has any comments on the fact that since the Alberta barley growers through the Alberta barley commission have their own fund which they voluntarily submit money to, would he consider suggesting to the Alberta barley commission that it become part of this research situation?

When we look at the figures of the amount of money that the Alberta barley commission collects, it collects \$1.11 million and spends \$270,000 or 24 per cent of the amount of money that it collects on administration. When it is done through the Canadian Wheat Board it will cost 2 per cent.

Would the member for Lisgar-Marquette and his Reform Party colleagues consider suggesting to the Alberta barley producers who certainly want a good return on their dollar that it would be a much better return?

The Reform Party is always talking about administrative costs and wastes. We see 24 per cent used on administration and less than 50 per cent of what it collects used on research, market development, producer servicing and policy development. That same organization is sitting on an annual surplus of farmers' money that it is doing absolutely nothing with after having collected it of \$295,839.

**Mr. Hoepfner:** Madam Speaker, I do not have all those figures available that readily. I do not know all the Alberta barley producers but I can guarantee the hon. member that if they are not paying their fair share in research, they will.

(1340)

He says they have representation from all farmers and that the wheat board is doing such a fantastic job for farmers. I remind the hon. member that in 1993 after staff reductions, after tremendous cuts, salaries to the Canadian Wheat Board increased by \$1.4 million.

Not only that, the advisory group spent \$50,000 more on travel and sold 15 per cent less last week than the year before. They should not try to tell me that it is working for farmers. Last fall the wheat board and the provincial and federal governments told us there was no market for our tombstone wheat.

Farmers in southern Manitoba marketed that wheat within hours. My son sold his whole crop of wheat in four hours. There was a good market for it and a good price. They should not tell me that all farm organizations are always supporting farmers or doing the best job because I get a little riled up.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member for Lisgar-Marquette.

I am a farmer in the Canadian Wheat Board area. We have heard a number of speakers on the other side who are not in the Canadian Wheat Board area extolling the values of the Canadian Wheat Board. A lot of these people who have spoken earlier belong to an area called the Ontario Wheat Board in which the directors are elected rather than appointed as with the Canadian Wheat Board. Does the member for Lisgar-Marquette agree that the Ontario Wheat Board model of an elected body rather than appointed is better than the current one we have at the Canadian Wheat Board?

**Mr. Hoepfner:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that question. If I read the Liberal red book on the fairness it is portraying that everybody will get under that government, I am sure the Liberals are going to give the western Canadian farmers that privilege to elect their wheat board just like they do in Ontario. If that is the case I applaud them for doing it. It shows democracy in real style, not democracy by region.

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT**

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources)** moved that Bill C-48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on second reading of Bill C-48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend other related acts.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take this opportunity to describe to my colleagues and all Canadians how this bill is consistent with this government's agenda for Canada's natural resource sector.

(1345)

[*English*]

As well I will describe the importance of the natural resource sector to Canada's economic strength and job creation and the role of my department to ensure that the natural resource sector continues to be a cornerstone of our economy, of employment and of Canada's progress toward sustainable development.

Bill C-48 will establish the Department of Natural Resources under one act. At the present time authorities for the minister and the department are set out in two acts, the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act. According to the bill natural resources incorporate all of the resources covered in the two departmental acts. Specifically, these resources are mines, minerals and other non-renewable resources, energy and forest resources.

*Government Orders*

While we recognize the provincial responsibility for the management of natural resources in Canada, the federal government has the responsibility in partnership with the provinces to maintain and enhance the contribution of the natural resource sector to our economic growth and job creation.

In essence, Bill C-48 provides a legal framework for the federal Department of Natural Resources to provide a national perspective on mining, energy and forestry issues and to provide leading edge expertise in research and development to help the natural resource sector meet current and future challenges.

[*Translation*]

One of those challenges is Canada's progress toward sustainable development. Bill C-48 respects the federal government's commitment to encourage progress toward sustainable development.

[*English*]

For example, the bill states that to carry out the minister's assigned powers, duties and functions the Minister of Natural Resources is required to have regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources. While this requirement is contained in the present Department of Forestry Act there is no such reference in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act. This provision will now be clearly stated and applied to all natural resources.

Canada's natural resource industries are not sunset industries. Let me make that point today very emphatically. These industries provide a major portion of Canada's gross domestic product. For example, in 1992 the value of energy, forestry, mineral and metal production totalled \$69 billion or 14 per cent of our GDP. In 1992 net trade in energy, mineral and forest products amounted to \$40.5 billion and provided much of the basis for Canada's \$15 billion trade surplus.

One in every 13 members of Canada's workforce is employed in the energy, forest and mining sectors in all regions of this country. In fact natural resource activity provides the economic backbone for over 500 Canadian communities, many of them in remote areas.

As well, our natural resource industries are high tech industries. Canada is a world leader in the development and application of technology to improve productivity and competitiveness of our mining, forestry and energy industries. This effort to develop new technology has resulted in the emergence of new industries and therefore new jobs.

For example, Canada's requirements for accurate information about our resources has stimulated a new industry known as geomatics. This high potential, \$1.3 billion industry employs over 12,000 Canadians. Furthermore Canada's geomatics industry contributes \$100 million a year in exports.

(1350)

Economic challenges face Canada's natural resource industries. Improved productivity and efficiency are essential to our country's ability to remain competitive in the natural resource sector. However the environmental challenges facing the sector are equally important. As a result, I believe that Natural Resources Canada will be a vital bridge between industrial and environmental concerns as we move to meet the challenges of the future.

Fiscal restraint affects all orders of government in Canada. Therefore we must find new and innovative ways to work together. I believe that our ability to encourage the integration of economic and environmental demands will be enhanced through co-operative ventures and partnerships which involve all stakeholders.

Throughout the years the department's research and technology expertise has built a solid reputation throughout the world. Its work has been geared to improving resource sector competitiveness and environmental performance. Natural Resource Canada's scientific and technological expertise has focused on all aspects of natural resource management.

For example, in forest management the Canada forest accord and its action plan, the national forest strategy, represent a commitment to sustainable forest development in the country. Through partnerships between federal and provincial governments, environmental and aboriginal groups and other forest users, we are working together to test and apply new approaches to manage forests as ecosystems.

Our mining industry is always moving forward, searching for innovations to become even more efficient and more competitive. As a result, the mining sector has one of the highest productivity levels in the world. The department's science and technology expertise has contributed to the development of many of these innovative processes. Many are linked to the challenge of meeting environmental concerns. Examples include acid mine drainage, effluents and promoting the use of metal recycling.

The energy sector will continue to be an important part of the department. There is no question that oil and gas development is important to sustain jobs and to Canada's overall economic strength. We are committed to market based principles. We are committed to sustainable development. Therefore we will work closely with industry, the provinces and others to harmonize economic and environmental goals.

*Standing Order 31*

Increased energy efficiency is widely recognized to have the greatest potential for short term contributions to our progress toward sustainable development. Moreover, energy efficiency can help Canada make a positive contribution to the government's goal of limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy efficient technologies also contribute to wealth generation and job creation. Many companies and businesses have discovered that energy efficiency makes business sense. Innovative, made in Canada technologies for new products, processes, systems and services can also be exported to a rapidly expanding world market.

[*Translation*]

Natural Resources Canada will therefore continue to address the economic and environmental concerns of the natural resource sector. Canada will continue to lead and be a model in all aspects of natural resource management and use.

[*English*]

I will continue to work with the provinces, industry, environmental and aboriginal groups, and other stakeholders in the natural resource sector. The Department of Natural Resources will promote sustainable development practices and will apply its science and technological expertise to enhance our international trade, our competitiveness and the contribution by the natural resource sector to Canada's economic strength and job creation.

(1355)

The bill will provide the Department of Natural Resources with the legal mandate and framework in which to deliver all these commitments as we move forward to the next century.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia-Matane):** Madam Speaker, my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and I understand full well that the purpose of this bill is to ratify what is already a fact; a pure formality, it seems. I dearly hope that our colleagues in the Liberal Party do not expect us to ratify this bill establishing the Department of Natural Resources.

It is easy for us to speak on the subject of natural resources. Quebecers elected us, members of a sovereignist party, both to defend Quebec's interests and to begin the dialogue with the rest of Canada in order to prepare Quebec's accession to sovereignty. It is essential for us to defend Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources. We would be acting contrary to our mandate and the will of those who elected us if we did not speak out against this bill.

All governments of Quebec have always demanded respect for provincial jurisdiction under the Canadian Constitution. The Constitution Act, 1982 describes provincial powers fairly precisely under section 92(a) with respect to the exploitation, conservation and management of forest resources, including the rate of primary production.

This position was maintained by the Government of Quebec when the former Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Sirros, said in the National Assembly on May 25 that the full authority of the Government of Quebec for managing natural resources on its territory-

**The Speaker:** Order. You can continue after question period, when we resume debate.

It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### HELICOPTER FLEET

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie):** Mr. Speaker, when the government took office 11 months ago it immediately took action to stop the waste of taxpayers' money. One of these actions was the cancellation of the EH-101 helicopters. These helicopters were the Lamborghinis of the helicopter world, sleek, fast and very expensive.

They were not what was needed to modernize our helicopter fleet at a reasonable cost. Notwithstanding the commitment to modernize our fleet is something that must be done and be done soon. The present Sea Kings have done a marvellous job over the past 30 years. They are, however, near the end of their life expectancy.

I ask that the government take a serious look at replacing our helicopter fleet with an appropriate made in Canada model reflecting our commitments to our armed forces as well as the Canadian aerospace industry, both of which are so important to the constituents of Erie.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### AIRPORT FACILITIES

**Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport does not care about the problems of our regions. He suggests policies which will adversely affect transport in remote areas. As the national policy on airports is about to be implemented, his department keeps eliminating, arbitrarily, regional airport facilities.

*Standing Order 31*

Sept-Îles is the most important airport on the North Shore. The closing of the second of three runways creates additional risks in terms of safety, including for any airplane experiencing problems. Moreover, this decision will reduce the exceptional potential of the airport facilities in Sept-Îles.

It is unacceptable that the streamlining policies of the Minister of Transport, who seems determined to stop the region's economic development, be once again implemented at the expense of regions.

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[English]

### CANADA COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island):** Mr. Speaker, recently publicized internal memos have drawn the attention of Canadians to very unethical accounting practices between government departments and Canada Communications Group.

It is incredible that Canada Communications Group would enter into illegal contracts in order to hide money from the scrutiny and accountability of Parliament. We intend to hold the government accountable for this scandalous practice.

The ministers involved have promised a full investigation. We will be watching for the reports with great interest. I am informing the House, as I have informed the ministers, that should this investigation not provide full disclosure I will be calling for further public review before the government operations committee.

Our debt is currently \$532,098,154,000 and has grown by \$88,000 since I started speaking. We cannot tolerate any more mismanagement of our precious tax dollars.

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### SPRUCE GLEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Spruce Glen Public School's graduating class of 1994. These students are now in their first year at Huntsville High School and they carried with them the tutelage of Susan Hawkins, teacher extraordinaire.

Ms. Hawkins, while teaching at Spruce Glen Public School, undertook a class project entitled "Rescue Mission; Planet Earth, a Children's Edition of Agenda 21".

The students participated in the rewriting of environmental plans for the future which arose from the 1992 earth summit in Rio de Janeiro. This led to a teleconferencing project involving the Spruce Glen students and others from around the world. Spruce Glen was designated as Canada's focal point.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. Hawkins and the grade eight students for their proactivity in undertaking this important initiative and commend them on their continued support in educating others on the importance of the environment.

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[Translation]

### KINGSTON FRANCOPHONES

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario):** Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, during Question Period, the hon. member for Rimouski-Témiscouata said that the problems in obtaining from the Kingston city council a piece of land on which to build a French-language high school confirmed the Commissioner of Official Languages' statement to the effect that it will be difficult to turn Kingston into a bilingual place.

The Prime Minister assured the hon. member that the problem, which is related to finding a piece of land and is not a linguistic issue, will be solved and that a French-language school will be built in Kingston.

It is sad to see how the Bloc Québécois has a distorted perception of the reality. The Bloc should know that the million francophones living outside Quebec are alive and well.

In my riding, we are proud of our French-language schools. Indeed, in spite of the fact that French-speaking people account for only 2 per cent of the total population, we have one high school and three elementary schools for francophones. I myself benefitted from that school system, as did many other Canadians, thanks to the policies implemented by the Liberal Party over the last 25 years.

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[English]

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, September 22, a member of the Reform Party stated in the House opposition to Bill C-41. I would like to state for the record that I am deeply disappointed with the member's opposition to such a well conceived bill.

Given that the Reform Party continues to campaign on a law and order, get tough platform, demanding strong justice legislation from the government on a daily basis, I am particularly surprised that it is not supporting the government's efforts to increase the severity of punishment for crimes motivated by hate, crimes even more reprehensible than random acts of violence because they are clearly premeditated based on the offender's hate for his victim.

This is just another example of the Reform Party's empty rhetoric, inconsistent messages and lack of substance.

[Translation]

**SOFTWORLD '94****THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the Canadian Environmental Network held its general meeting. The organization consists of a number of ecological and environmental groups from Quebec and the other provinces and territories. The work they do in educating the public and in making governments and industry aware of the need to protect our environment is essential, although the government often fails to appreciate this fact.

(1405)

At the meeting, a number of network representatives told us of their concern about possible cuts in grants by the Department of the Environment. The government must not abandon agencies that remind us daily that the environment concerns everyone and that recognizing our responsibility for our environment is the key to sustainable development.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East):** Mr. Speaker:

Cautiously, wisely,  
 Canadians had thoughts  
 That investing in RRSPs  
 Meant a future without knocks  
 But comes the finance minister  
 year after year,  
 Teasing and punishing  
 and  
 creating such fear.  
 Pension consultants have said: it is wrong!  
 To punish Canadians for being wise and strong.  
 But the finance minister says:  
 ``We must take steps  
 In order to meet  
 Our budget deficits"  
 Reformers agree  
 The deficit's bad  
 But reducing expenditures  
 Would make us so glad  
 Its the expenditure rocks  
 Not in our socks!  
 Hands off our pensions, Mr. Minister, we say  
 Stop all the rumours, long before budget day.

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton-York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that the aggressive promotion by Fredericton, New Brunswick, of the information technology industry has resulted in a first time, major international conference being hosted by Fredericton.

Softworld '94, Canada's premier international conference and showcase for the information technology sector, has attracted over 480 delegates from 28 countries around the world. These delegates are senior executives from across North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America.

Softworld '94 is not a typical conference and trade show. It is specifically designed to encourage deal making and investment between Canadian and international firms.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has played a substantial role in organizing and funding the conference. I thank the Government of Canada for its support. This major initiative once again illustrates the important place of Fredericton and New Brunswick in Canada's information and high technology sector.

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**HEALTH CARE**

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Institute of Child Health today released its report "The Health of Canada's Children". Based on 1990-91 data, it paints a dark portrait of the poverty, illness and death that afflict so many of them.

In Manitoba the child poverty rate and deaths during infancy and among pre-schoolers remain alarmingly high, exceeding the national average. Almost 1,000 Manitoba babies were born underweight.

It is therefore timely to remind the House that since the election of 1993 the government has launched initiatives for First Nations children and a nationwide prenatal nutrition program.

I am optimistic that a reformed social security system will win big for the 1.2 million poor children of Canada. This is crucial. Children are less than 30 per cent of our population but they represent 100 per cent of Canada's future.

*Standing Order 31***CONFERENCE ON UKRAINE**

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to convey the pride felt by Manitobans because we have been selected to host the upcoming special G-7 conference on partnership for economic transformation of Ukraine.

Canada has had a long and rich Ukrainian presence. Between the two world wars some 70,000 Ukrainians immigrated to Canada for political and economic reasons. Although 80 per cent of Ukrainian Canadians are native born, today there is a strong and significant attachment to Ukraine and to its socioeconomic wellbeing.

In order for Ukraine's political independence to be sustainable and stable, economic prosperity is a must, and Manitobans of all backgrounds are proud to be a part of this process.

May the special G-7 conference on Ukraine lead to further co-operation between our two great countries.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**LOBBYISTS**

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, when they were in the opposition, the Liberals demanded that the government introduce stringent and effective measures to provide better regulation of lobbyists' activities.

(1410)

According to documents from the Department of Industry, the government gave in to pressure from lobbyists even before Bill C-43, which was supposed to implement Liberal commitments, was tabled. The bill does not include, for instance, the obligation for lobbyists to reveal their fees, nor does it do away with the corporate tax deduction for lobbying expenses.

These specific provisions were intended to restore public trust in government. Dropping them without further ado, as the Liberal government has done, is irresponsible, in our opinion.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE SENATE**

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, many times in the House members are reminded to show due reverence for the other place, also known as the Senate.

Our unreformed Senate is an out of date, undemocratic institution filled with out of date patronage appointees. To date there has been only one elected senator, a Reformer, the late Stan Waters.

Until the membership of the Senate is chosen directly by the people of Canada, the democratically elected representatives of Canadians should not feign deference to it.

Canadians have indicated that they have very little affection for the Senate. As elected representatives of the people-

**The Speaker:** That statement is out of order.

\* \* \*

**WINE AND GRAPE FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines):** Mr. Speaker, from September 16 to September 25, St. Catharines celebrated the grapes and wines of the Niagara region.

My riding of St. Catharines hosted the 43rd annual wine and grape festival. The festival is an annual harvest tradition of elegant gourmet dinners, outdoor events, concerts, winery tours, parades, children's events, a royal ball and a wide variety of winery hosted events.

The grape, wine and juice industry in Canada is a vital part of our economy. In Ontario alone the industry represents thousands of full time and seasonal jobs. Canadian wines with its VQA, vintage quality alliance, have won many international awards for excellence.

I would like to take the opportunity to honour the excellent wines of the Niagara region and of Canada, and congratulate this year's grape and wine king, Dr. Clair Wiley.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**REFERENDUM ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY**

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Mr. Speaker, last week I rose in the House to ask the new Premier of Quebec to keep his promise about holding a referendum on Quebec's political independence not later than eight or ten months from now.

Following his swearing in yesterday, Mr. Parizeau said, in referring to the 1995 timeframe, that it was too early to be either more specific or more undecided. This is an obvious sign of ambivalence.

The Leader of the Bloc Quebecois used the symphony as a metaphor for the position of the two sovereignist parties on a referendum date in 1995.

Unfortunately, today Quebecers are not getting much in the way of harmony from the two sovereignist maestros on a definite referendum date. Ignoring the wishes of the public and the solemn commitment by Mr. Parizeau regarding a referendum, some of our separatist stars, showing a total disregard for promises and democratic values, want to postpone the referendum date and thus penalize Quebec by not letting it exercise its right to choose.

[English]

## YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

**Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody-Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, September 25, 1994, over 3,000 people gathered in Coquitlam to send a message to the government that they want real change to the Young Offenders Act.

On August 13, Graham Niven, a 31-year old man stopping by a Mac's Milk store, was brutally and senselessly kicked to death by two teenagers, one of them just 15 years old. This is just one of a recent number of tragedies in the Vancouver area.

Addressing the rally were the voices of citizens from our community. Diane wants the government to know that its rules have tied her hands as a caring parent. Her 14-year old daughter is a young offender. The discrepancies and inconsistencies of our youth justice system were voiced by the school board, the RCMP, the mayors, a provincial cabinet minister, the Cadman and Niven families and young people themselves. Neither the YOA nor Bill C-37 are enough.

Yesterday alone my office received over 500 faxes to add to our community petition for real changes to the Young Offenders Act. "YOA give the people a say".

\* \* \*

(1415)

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon-Clark's Crossing):** Mr. Speaker, concerns still continue in the Patrick Kelly case.

In spite of the fact that 10 months ago the crown's main and in fact only witness recanted her testimony saying that she was forced to give this testimony by investigators in the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force, the minister still is acting without any great sense of urgency.

Why is the minister and his department so casual about this matter? Why has so little been done by the minister and his staff over the last 10 months? Why are charges of corruption and dishonesty on the part of the investigating officers not regarded as serious by the minister?

Why have officers involved in this case not been suspended pending an outcome of the investigation? Why has evidence that would clear Patrick Kelly not been made available to his lawyers? Why has it taken eight months to contact the one single witness on which his freedom in this whole case depends? Why is the same investigating officer whose honesty and motives are under serious question involved in the new investigation?

It is time the minister acted with some sense of urgency in this case. The Canadian justice system is under attack as a result.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

### SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, after promising an action plan for social program reform, the Minister of Human Resources Development said yesterday that next week he would only table a discussion paper.

He also made it clear that social program reform would again be postponed, when he said that the government's position would be presented next spring or next fall. In other words, a year from now.

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Should we see these successive delays as an attempt by the Prime Minister to put off the cuts his minister wants to make at the expense of the needy?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we are trying to find out what Canadians think about a reform that is extremely important. The paper will be released to the public, and a parliamentary committee will travel across the country to hear what the public has to say. That is democracy at its best.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, this looks more like hesitation at its best than democracy. I want to ask the Prime Minister whether we are to infer from all this that postponing the reform was motivated by the Prime Minister's reluctance to take unpopular measures before a referendum is held on the sovereignty of Quebec?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, our job is to give Canadians good government, and that is what we intend to do. Good government involves consulting people.

A few months ago, the Leader of the Opposition criticized us for going too fast, but now he says we are not going fast enough. We were elected for at least four or probably even five years, if we look at the precedent set by the Conservatives. So we have plenty of time, and we will take that time to do a good job, which is what Canadians expect from their government.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, good government means a government that governs and does not spend its time consulting, publishing white papers and travelling all over the place and making speeches.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he realizes that by postponing social program reform indefinitely and restraining his minister's urge to make cuts, he is actually asking the unemployed in Quebec to wait at least another year until the training issue is settled.



*Oral Question Period*

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, anyone who says this government is not doing anything should look at what we have done since we came to power. The helicopters were out in half an hour. Then we dealt with the problems around article XI at GATT. We dealt with the problems around NAFTA. We dealt with the problem of fraud in the cigarette trade. We brought down a budget. We made cuts, we made changes and we intend to go on being an active and responsible government. I am sure that a year from now, if the Leader of the Opposition is as good as his word, when they have lost their referendum, he will no longer be a member in this House.

\* \* \*

(1420)

**REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS**

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance has intentionally not ruled out the possibility of taxing RRSPs in his next budget. This is what Alain Dubuc, an editorialist at the daily newspaper *La Presse*, had to say about this:

—a tax that would affect the living conditions of present and future retirees counting on this income in good faith is immoral."

He goes on to say:

It is the most outrageous idea conveyed by a minister of finance in a long time."

In the interest of the already overtaxed middle class, I give the Minister of Finance another chance to end the speculation about taxing RRSPs. Can he undertake today not to tax RRSPs in his next budget?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development-Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, the idea was not conveyed by the Minister of Finance but by Bloc and Reform members who raised it many times here in this House. So if there is a "trial balloon", they are the ones responsible.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, the simple fact that he does not automatically rule out this possibility poses an unacceptable threat to middle-income taxpayers.

Does he not agree that it is totally immoral to change the rules in the middle of the game and create a kind of retroactive tax by taxing RRSPs in his next budget?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development-Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the Bloc Quebecois is afraid of listening to Canadians, of a pre-budget process that

will be open and of making constructive suggestions. It is very clear that the Bloc has nothing to say to Canadians who want a chance to tell us what they want to do.

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[English]

**SOCIAL REFORM**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, details of the government's social policy review appeared today on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*. It seems the only place the minister has not discussed details of his much delayed action plan is here on the floor of the House of Commons.

Why is the Minister of Human Resources Development insulting members of Parliament by leaking details of this action plan to the media before presenting it to Parliament?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, it is almost a historic moment that someone has accused me of actually talking to the *Globe and Mail*.

I caution the hon. member and all members that this is a period of time when there are going to be all kinds of speculative stories and reputed leaks. I suggest that the member be patient and simply wait for the real paper and real proposals which will be tabled in the House next week.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that these are proposals and not just discussion points that the minister has referred to.

The minister boasted at the beginning of this Parliament that he would be introducing an action plan to reform Canada's social program but we have seen this delayed again and again for months.

Has the minister lost his nerve? We want to know, where is the action?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, the action really resides in the will and motivation of the Canadian people to make a fundamental reform and bring about a modern social system based upon real compassion and justice for Canadians.

Presumably during the last election campaign opposition members made certain commitments to their electors ensuring that their points of view would be heard. Therefore I find it exceedingly strange they would be so opposed to any attempt to have real serious dialogue and consultation.

I recommend that the hon. member change her position and turn around and use this as an opportunity to engage Canadians in a very serious debate about the future of this country.

*Oral Question Period*

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River):** Mr. Speaker, of course we are in favour of consultation. It is just that consultation must end sooner or later and then we must act on it.

(1425)

The social policy review was undertaken because as the minister knows, the status quo is simply unsustainable. Our social programs are too costly, too inefficient and in desperate need of reform.

Knowing that social programs must be better targeted and that Canadians will have to take more personal responsibility to provide for their own retirement, will the minister tell the finance minister to keep his hands off Canadians' private pensions and RRSPs?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I prefer to answer my own questions if you do not mind. In my experience the hon. Minister of Finance is a gentleman of great discretion and judgment and he knows exactly where he wants to put his hands.

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[Translation]

### TAX REFORM

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Ontario's finance minister proposed giving Ottawa exclusive control of a national sales tax that would replace the GST and all provincial sales taxes. In return, the provinces would receive a greater share of individual income tax revenues.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Does he intend to follow up the Ontario finance minister's proposal and are we to understand that the GST reform he is considering will be based on this suggestion?

[English]

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development - Quebec):** Before answering, Mr. Speaker, may I say I would like to see the *Hansard* blues.

[Translation]

The treasurer of the province of Ontario telephoned me yesterday morning, just before question period, to let me know about the suggestion he made yesterday. The details were not provided and I think that our officials are going to meet. We are very open to any suggestion that will help us harmonize the tax. That said, we will certainly have many questions about the suggestion, but I think that any constructive suggestion is worthwhile.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance think that to really simplify consumer taxes, eliminate duplication and reduce the huge administrative costs, he should instead abolish the GST as promised and transfer this tax field to the provinces in exchange for an equivalent reduction in transfers, as the Bloc Quebecois recommended in its report on the GST to the finance committee in June? The minister wants suggestions—there is one.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development - Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, we will certainly consider the suggestion from the Bloc Quebecois with the same open mind as we received the suggestion from the Treasurer of the Province of Ontario. We did so when they presented their report. We discussed with the provinces and we must say that the provinces, including Quebec, are not unanimously in favour of it.

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[English]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich-Gulf Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I have a 1992 internal report which examined mismanagement in the Department of National Defence and raised the spectre of abuse and cover up.

The deputy minister's office was renovated at a cost of \$327,000. This contract was awarded without tender and concealed under a completely different project in order, and I quote from the report, "to hide the cost of the DM refit which would be considered excessive by the public".

Can the Prime Minister tell the House what action the government has taken to correct this bureaucratic mismanagement within the defence department?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Secretary of State (Veterans)):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Defence I will take the question under advisement for the minister.

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich-Gulf Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is not just one of excessive spending; it appears that the department compounded its sins in trying to hide the report by classifying it "protected C".

(1430)

According to the Treasury Board guidelines "protected C" is reserved for extremely sensitive information which might cause extremely serious injury such as loss of life.

Will the minister agree that this seems to place DND in a position of deliberately trying to conceal information?

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, we are skating on a little bit thinner ice, "deliberately conceal". I would ask hon. members to please be very judicious in their choice of words. I will permit the hon. Secretary of State for Veterans to answer the question if he so wishes.

*Oral Question Period*

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Secretary of State (Veterans)):** Mr. Speaker, again in the absence of the minister, I will take it under advisement for the minister of defence.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FISHING QUOTAS**

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister refused to admit in this House yesterday that he had encouraged Gaspesian fishermen to gear up for turbot fishing. Yet, at the very last moment, just hours before they were to cast their nets, the minister refused to authorize the transfer of turbot licences in addition to having slashed their quotas one month earlier.

How can the minister explain his decision to grant a turbot fishing quota to Seafreez, a company located in his riding which hires Russian trawlers, when he refused to grant the same quota to the Gaspesian fishermen, thereby forcing them to live off UI or even welfare?

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, the member really ought to try to be consistent.

The issue here is cutbacks in quotas and whether or not new entrants would be allowed into the fishery. New entrants whether they were in Newfoundland, Quebec or anywhere else were not allowed into the fishery.

With respect to the allegation made for the second day in a row, and I admire the member's persistence and also his power to take a punch, that allocations to Seafreez increased or that allocations to Russian vessels increased, let me read the numbers.

The allocation in 1993 to Seafreez was 5,000 tonnes. In 1994 it was reduced to 2,200 tonnes. The allocation caught by Russian vessels under charter with Canadian companies, and they were doing this for years in advance of this government coming to power, decreased by 60 per cent last year.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that quota cutbacks may become necessary for reasons relating to the biological environment. But what we want to know is why the minister gave part of the available quotas to a company located in his riding, a company that used Russian trawlers to fish its quota? That is what we want to know.

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, the member knows the answer. Not a single pound, not an ounce, not even a sniff of that turbot has been processed in my constituency, not one single job. It is processed in the great historic community of Canso, Nova Scotia, which is in a different province.

When all the members of the fishing constituency in every province in Canada recognize there is a resource crisis, when the world meets in New York and recognizes a fisheries crisis, when NAFO meets in Halifax and recommends a fisheries crisis, surely even the Bloc Quebecois should recognize a fisheries crisis.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

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**CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION**

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

(1435)

Last week I asked the minister if he would release the Nordicity study which recommends a new tax for the CBC. His ministry received the study in early March, fully six months ago, and still we have not seen it. This document has now been leaked to the press, but the minister continues to say there will be no secrets regarding the CBC.

When will the minister release the study his government has commissioned recommending a new tax for the CBC?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, our colleague will be very pleased. The report will be released but there is no recommendation by the government to impose new taxes. If there are recommendations they are contained in that report which I have read.

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear that the minister has now read the report. However through the Access to Information Act I do have a copy of the contract between the minister and Nordicity and I quote: "a report to examine a tax on theatre tickets, video rentals, cable fees, TV sets, VCRs, radios, satellite dishes, pay per view services". This list goes on and on.

We have the contract and the media has the complete report. How can the minister now deny that he is planning a new tax to pay for the CBC?

**The Speaker:** Before the minister answers the question I would ask all hon. members please not to use papers or anything to wave around to make their point. The point is very well made with just your voices.

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage):** Mr. Speaker, our colleague does not seem to be able to tell the difference between having studies carried out and making policy. Studies are being carried out day in and day out. Policy is an act taken by the government. When policy is made she will be informed.

*Oral Question Period**[Translation]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The cleaning-up of sediments contaminated by dormant PCBs in the St. Lawrence River, across from the GM facility in Massena, New York, will begin in a few days. These sediments, which contain between 500 and 5,000 parts of PCBs per million, are a major threat to the environment. The clean-up will be carried out by GM and the American government.

Did the minister demand to participate in the preparation and monitoring of this operation, given the risks involved for those living along the St. Lawrence River?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm information from SVP to the effect that Environment Canada will monitor this extremely dangerous operation during only 10 per cent of the total time required to complete it?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, what SVP says is not accurate. The hon. member should know that SVP may no longer exist as an organization since it was on the brink of bankruptcy two months ago. It was mentioned in just about every newspaper that SVP is now bankrupt.

What the federal government did in co-operation with the former Quebec government was to develop an action plan precisely to solve, with the help of American organizations, the problem which exists in Massena. The previous Quebec minister, Mr. Pierre Paradis, was co-operative and I intend to write today to the new environment minister to make sure that we are ready to ensure that the clean-up is done properly. I expect the same degree of co-operation from the new Quebec minister.

*[English]*

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of the Environment.

As reported in the media, 40 fuel pipeline containers of DDT have been found at the former U.S. army pumping station in Rainy Hollow in the province of British Columbia.

(1440)

Could the Minister of the Environment tell the House the present status of the cleanup of the site?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that all the barrels have been removed. They are on their way to Washington state. Frankly, with the co-operation of the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States and the Government of Canada we have not only succeeded in cleaning up the site, but we are sending the Americans the bill.

We have asked for an inventory of all similar sites across Canada to make sure that Canadian taxpayers are not forced to foot the bill for American problems with dumpage.

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**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, it is time for accountability. The government promised to scrap the GST. When will the Minister of Finance announce a plan?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development - Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we are currently in discussions with all of the provinces in order to obtain a harmonized tax, which is something that all Canadians including consumers and small and medium size businesses want.

Those discussions are ongoing. It is obviously something that we want and I am sure it is something that the members of the Reform Party want. I would remind the hon. member we stated that we would do this within a two-year period.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In the House and in the red book the government promised to scrap or replace the GST with no increases in tax levels to individual Canadians.

Could the minister stand in the House today and give assurance to Canadians that promise will be honoured in any new tax plan involving the GST or the introduction of other kinds of taxes?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development - Quebec):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, y-e-s.

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*[Translation]***GAY RIGHTS**

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga-Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, the gay community is still struggling to have its rights recognized. Last week, the hon. member for Central Nova expressed in this House a rather controversial view concerning this community.

*Oral Question Period*

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the view expressed by the hon. member for Central Nova reflects this government's policy concerning the recognition of gay rights?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, in my party as in others, many opinions are expressed. Our members can speak freely. When the government introduces a piece of legislation, government members vote according to the party line or else a free vote is held.

If party leaders were to be responsible for all the opinions expressed in this House, they would have a lot of problems. This is a democratic country, and every citizen can express an opinion. The government listens to all views expressed, introduces legislation and then the party supports the government.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga-Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, following the unspeakable remarks made by a government member, will the Prime Minister demand a public apology?

**The Speaker:** Honourable colleagues, just this morning this matter was raised in a point of order. Inquiries will be made to answer this point of order. If the hon. member could put his question simply and directly, we will continue.

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister condone remarks any member of this House may make, challenging the rights of the gay community? Is the Prime Minister responsible enough to answer this question from his seat? That is the question.

**The Speaker:** No, that question is out of order.

\* \* \*

(1445)

[English]

### FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in response to my question the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans agreed to an independent review of management enforcement procedures of DFO on the Fraser River. Yet the terms of reference of the review released yesterday do not include fisheries management or enforcement activities.

Will the minister assure us that enforcement and management activities will be included in the stated terms of reference of the review?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, those conducting the review, and there are four independent individuals who are experts in their respective fields, are free and able to comment on any aspect of the matter.

I will personally ensure that the report they give, whatever it says, is made public and subsequent to that, remedial measures taken.

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House and again today the minister promised a review of fisheries management and enforcement involving four individuals, none of whom is involved with DFO. In fact three of the four are associated with agencies listed in the DFO phone book.

Is this the minister's definition of independence?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, I have no idea at this stage what the hon. member is referring to. If he is suggesting that these individuals have some involvement with fisheries management or have some expertise that has been called upon in the past and therefore because of their expertise are not qualified to participate at this time, I would be surprised. If an involvement in the fishery disqualifies one from commenting then I guess this fishermen critic would be disqualified from commenting for the Reform Party.

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[Translation]

### GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

**Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac-Gatineau-Labelle):** Mr. Speaker, the government took office with a commitment to work with the provinces to cancel unnecessary programs, streamline the process and eliminate overlap.

What specific examples can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs give us of action taken to make Confederation more efficient?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal):** Mr. Speaker, for a year, we had excellent co-operation with the Government of Quebec, which we hope will continue in the future.

Among other things, we concluded agreements on managing the environment, on environmental regulations for pulp and paper and on exchanging information between those responsible for financial institutions, to name only these.

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### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. In a very surprising statement last Tuesday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment announced that the government would present a comprehensive reform of the

Canada Labour Code and that the matter of anti-strikebreaking legislation would be looked at within this reform. It is the first time such a reform is announced, although anti-strikebreaking legislation is sorely needed.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development confirm that the government will undertake a reform of the Canada Labour Code as a whole and, if so, when?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member fully understands that having good industrial relationships in the country is one of the key elements in producing better growth, better productivity and having a prosperous economy.

As part of that overall initiative of the government we have undertaken a series of discussions with a wide variety of groups, with labour groups, with labour professionals and with employer groups to begin discussing what changes we might make to the labour code down the road when we come up with the kind of consensus or agreement that we think would be appropriate.

We are studying how we can modernize the labour code and move toward certain specific recommendations.

(1450)

At this time I cannot say specifically what they will be because we have not finished those discussions yet.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, given the intolerable situation faced by Ogilvie Mills workers, does the minister not agree that he must urgently table an anti-strikebreaking bill so that the workers who are covered-I should say who are unfortunate enough to be covered-by the Canada Labour Code have the same rights as those covered by 75 per cent of provincial labour codes, including the one in Quebec, since 1977?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I met last week with representatives of the unions involved in the dispute between ADM Ogilvie and themselves. Certainly as a result of that I agree that there is proper room for filing a complaint or a grievance against the way in which the bargaining has taken place.

I have already sort of signed off a request so that they can go before the Canadian Labour Relations Board and table their grievance, which I think is a proper one. We have already taken action on that specific request and as part of the general examination I spoke about we are looking at the labour codes of other provinces and how they apply to replacement labour.

## GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar-Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food commented that farmers exporting grain to the U.S. must obey laws that are in place.

Under the Western Grain Transportation Act railways face financial penalties for non-performance. These railways have continually broken this law for years without consequences.

How can the minister fail to enforce this law against non-performing railways and at the same time encourage law enforcement against farmers selling their own grain at the best prices available?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the situation pertaining to the railways to which the question refers, the hon. gentleman will know that while there are provisions in the Western Grain Transportation Act that deal with the performance standards of the railways, under the previous government the appropriate regulatory regime required under those legislative provisions was never implemented or enacted.

We have the draft regulations being prepared at the moment so that those provisions of the Western Grain Transportation Act pertaining to railway performance can be implemented and utilized in appropriate circumstances. The hon. gentleman can rest assured that there is no double standard.

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar-Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer.

As the minister knows very well, last May the subcommittee on transportation recommended that back tracking of grain was illegal, disruptive and should be stopped. In June the minister guaranteed that action would be taken. Now he is delaying this action six months at a time.

Would the minister explain to the House who is running this country, the railways or the Liberal government?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Mr. Speaker, since May 16 I have been meeting on a very regular basis with not only representatives of the railroads but also their unions, the grain companies and all the governmental institutions involved in the transportation of western grain in order to ensure the backlog problems that occurred in the last crop year are minimized and hopefully avoided altogether in the current crop year and for the future.

Those meetings through the spring and the summer have identified a range of actions, including the solution to the back haul problem that the hon. gentleman refers to, plus the matter of demurrage and storage charges on rail car, plus improvements in the efficiencies of the system, plus the addition of private cars to the fleet and so forth.

*Oral Question Period*

All those measures are going forward and, as promised in the spring, those which require either a legislative framework or a regulatory framework to allow them to be implemented will be proceeded with in the House this fall.

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[Translation]

**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs. Last February 25, the minister said, in answer to a question from the Official Opposition, that he would do his utmost to solve the problems at Davis Inlet and that he would support the relocation of the Innu community, which is experiencing a tragic and inhuman situation.

(1455)

Now we are told that the whole relocation process has been put on hold. How can the minister explain this delay, on the part of his government, in relocating the Innu community other than by saying that it is to meet demands from the Newfoundland government, which wants to put pressure on these people?

[English]

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, tremendous progress has been made in Davis Inlet. Right now as a result of the agreements we have signed alcoholism is down 25 per cent; six houses have been built; the lodge has been reconstructed; they are working out agreements with Labrador Inuit College; we have agreed to the move to Sango Bay; and we are looking at a road pattern.

I was very disappointed with what happened last month. Part of those agreements, at least the spirit of those agreements, was that an Innu court would be developed and an Innu policing system would be developed, only a small part of a major agreement.

Most ministries are still working with the Innu, health, fisheries, coast guard. We will continue to work with the Innu people because they are making good progress. Hopefully Mr. Roberts and the Solicitor General will reach an agreement on policing within the next couple of weeks and progress will keep on flowing.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the grain growers in Wild Rose my question is for the agricultural minister and his department. These farmers would like to know if the minister believes that in Canada they should have the freedom to sell their own produce as they see fit. Y-e-s or n-o.

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Mr. Speaker, sometimes those who are trying to avoid all the facts like to reduce things to simple one line answers and that is thoroughly inappropriate to these circumstances.

Farmers in western Canada would tell the hon. gentleman that this is a critically important and vital subject. It is a subject that is exceedingly complicated in terms of the administration of world markets. I have undertaken that farmers will have the opportunity in a forum which I intend to commence this fall to explore all of the pros and cons of the issue so that all the facts can be fully known and understood and that the information available to farmers is fully complete and not partial or biased.

\* \* \*

**TUNA FISHERY**

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Given that this year's quota of bluefin tuna on the east coast by the inshore fleet has been caught in near record time, resulting in the early closure of the fishery just last Friday, I have a question for the minister. Given that there still seems to be an abundance of bluefin tuna on the east coast and given the state of the Atlantic fishery, would the minister consider transferring some of next year's quota to this year's quota so that the fishery may remain open?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The short answer is, because this is run on a two-year quota cycle, that we are consulting with all the players in the industry. I met with senior officials today and once the consultation is completed, if such a transfer is recommended by the fleet itself, the majority of the fleet, we will look at it favourably. If not, we will stick with the current fish plan.

The bottom line is conservation will not be put at risk.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HAITI**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, we just learned that an American soldier was killed in Haiti. We do not have any more details about the incident and I want to ask the Prime Minister if, given the seriousness of the situation, he is being kept abreast of the latest developments and if he can inform this House accordingly?

*Points of Order*

**Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that unfortunate incident. We believe that operations in Haiti are progressing rather well and that a much more serious bloodbath was avoided through the negotiating efforts of former President Carter.

(1500)

We hope that President Aristide will be back in office in the next few days, and we intend to lift embargoes at the earliest opportunity, so that Haiti's economy can function normally and that the situation can go back to normal as quickly as possible in a country which has already experienced too much suffering.

\* \* \*

[English]

### LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake):** Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the federal environmental review panel investigating a proposal to expand low level flying in Labrador. All the public interest groups, including the Innu, the group with the most at stake in the process, have withdrawn from the proceedings.

How can the Minister of the Environment continue to give federal government approval to the assessment process when she knows how unfair and insensitive it is to the Innu and the traditional aboriginal way of life in the area?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my reply to a letter I received from Ovide Mercredi earlier this week, the panel members include seven eminent people, the former president of the Canadian Geographical Society among others, who have impeccable credentials.

I also pointed out to Mr. Mercredi as I pointed out to representatives of the Innu community with whom I am organizing a meeting this week, if there is any evidence of a panel member showing any bias, I will be the first person to remove that member from the panel.

The panel needs to have an unbiased approach. It needs to have the necessary tools to hear all sides of the case. That is why I personally wrote to Ovide Mercredi asking him to encourage the Innu community, some of whom are continuing to participate, to participate fully so that their story can be heard by this impartial panel.

[Translation]

## POINTS OF ORDER

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, during question period, my colleague from Hochelaga-Maisonneuve tried to put a question to the Prime minister, but you ruled that question out of order.

I may have repeatedly been out of order and I would ask you to enlighten me because, like other members of this House, I have on many occasions referred to remarks made by one member or another and asked, as is proper, the government, the ministers whether they rejected, supported, agreed with or wanted to qualify such remarks.

My colleague from Hochelaga-Maisonneuve did the same thing, making a very general reference to the remarks a government member made about the gay community.

My question is as follows: What is the difference between referring to remarks made by the hon. member for Central Nova and asking the Prime Minister whether he rejected or supported her remarks and the questions we have been asking in this House so far, referring for instance to remarks by the hon. member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell or someone else on other issues?

Why in this particular case did you rule the question out of order, while such questions have always been allowed?

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, according to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, to citation 168 in *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* in particular, a member cannot appeal a decision by the Speaker nor consult the Speaker from the floor of the House.

Second, Madam Speaker, acting this morning on behalf of Mr. Speaker, took a matter under advisement. If I remember correctly, the Chair has not yet ruled on this matter which was referred to the Speaker this morning.

For these two reasons, I think it would be totally against the rules for anyone to question the Speaker's decision.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, the government whip has just spoken on a point of order I raised myself. I would simply like to remind him that, as the guardian of parliamentarians' rights, you have always agreed to provide guidance and information to ensure the smooth operation of this House.

The question I asked is very much in this spirit. I simply want to ask for the Chair's assistance in understanding the order of business and seeing that our behaviour is always in keeping with the letter and spirit of the rules and traditions of this House.



*Points of Order*

(1505)

As far as the second part of my comments is concerned, please note that my point of order and the question from the hon. member for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve did not deal at all with the problem now under advisement that was in dispute the other day. It is simply a point of order saying this: Why should a member not be allowed to ask the Prime Minister to confirm or deny remarks when it has always been allowed? That is it. So one should not confuse the facts, as the Government Whip seems to be doing.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I simply want to support the point of order raised by the Bloc Quebecois House leader. This morning, I raised a point of order pursuant to Standing Order 18. This has nothing to do with the point of order now raised by the Bloc Quebecois House leader.

The basic issue is whether or not a member of Parliament has the right to put a question to the Prime Minister regarding comments which are totally unacceptable and full of hatred. That is the issue. Mr. Speaker, I suggest you do not follow the Standing Orders during question period.

*[English]*

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, we in the course of our debates and our questions sometimes use words that the Chair considers at the time to be inappropriate. The hon. member points out that at an earlier time some questions were permitted. I would hope that the hon. member at a later time will let the Chair know when there is this inconsistency.

As for an explanation, I am loath to explain why the decision was taken. Yet so that the House can understand, if it has to do with the administrative responsibility of the government, in my view I have allowed the questions. Whether a minister will be responsible for any other member of Parliament or what the other member of Parliament said, I do not think this is admissible. That is why I ruled that question out of order, because it called on a minister to give an opinion with regard to another member.

Again I would hope that members would not call upon the Chair at every turn when there is a statement or question that is ruled to be out of order. If the hon. member wishes to pursue this with me in my chambers I will be happy to hear him at that point.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley-Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Earlier today during members statements I was ruled out of order presumably based on Standing Order 18. If I am wrong in that assumption I would appreciate your information to the contrary. Standing Order 18 states in part:

No Member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the Royal Family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof.

Citations 485 to 492 of Beauchesne's talk about unparliamentary language. I would appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, that I did not use unparliamentary language in any portion of my speech.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member is absolutely correct. I was referring to Standing Order 18. I would call this matter closed now.

(1510)

I know that many times hon. members would like to pursue and debate but at one point the Chair must rule. As I said to the member, I am referring specifically to Standing Order 18 and I would hope that in future all hon. members, my colleagues, would give the respect due to the other place and members in the other place.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga-Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to say that I have no intention of challenging the decisions which you may make in this House.

However, you will recognize, as the leader says, that it is important in our role as members of Parliament to understand what kind of flexibility we have when it comes to asking questions. In my opinion, the issue raised by the point of order is this: When we tried twice to understand the comments made by an hon. member, we did so from a legal standpoint and in the context of the government's activities.

You are well aware that the comments made were paving the way for a review of the Canadian Human Rights Act. Allow me to point to your attention the fact that the question asked is closely related to a governmental responsibility of the Prime Minister.

**The Speaker:** Order. Dear colleague, the question was deemed out of order because of the way it was phrased.

*[English]*

If it was referring to a government policy then the question would have been permissible. That is what I based my ruling on and I stand by my ruling with all respect here.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, always in the interest of our proceedings, like the Bloc Quebecois House leader said, what we tried to see and what we are still trying to figure out, is the leeway we have when we address the Chair to raise-

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the first question was in order but the second one was not.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed from September 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** It being after 3 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, September 22, 1994, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the second reading stage of Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act.

Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 83)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Assadourian	Asselin
Augustine	Axworthy (Saskatoon-Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bachand
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Berger
Bernier(Beauce)	Bernier(Gaspé)
Bertrand	Bethel
Bevilacqua	Bhaduria
Blondin-Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Bouchard
Boudria	Brien
Brown (Oakville-Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Béclair
Bélisle	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Canuel
Caron	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Clancy
Cohen	Collins
Comuzzi	Cowling
Crête	Culbert
Daviault	de Savoye
Deshaias	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Discepola
Dromisky	Dubé
Duceppe	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Fewchuk
Fillion	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Fry
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West)
Guay	Guimond
Harb	Harvard

Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Jacob	Jordan
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Langlois	Lastewka
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois-Salaberry)
Lebel	LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands-Canso)
Lee	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond-Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Lincoln	Loney
Loubier	MacAulay
MacDonald	MacLaren (Etobicoke North)
Maheu	Maloney
Manley	Marchand
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle-Émard)	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mercier	Milliken
Mills (Broadview-Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Ménard
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Paré	Patry
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Essex-Kent)	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Ringuette-Maltais	Robichaud
Rocheleau	Rock
Rompkey	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton-York-Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Skoke
Solomon	Speller
St-Laurent	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Szabo
Taylor	Telegdi
Terrana	Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski-Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri	Vanclicf
Venne	Verran
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Wood
Zed—199	

#### NAYS

##### Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Benoit	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton-Melville)	Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Chatters
Cummins	Duncan
Epp	Frazier
Gilmour	Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)	Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George-Peace River)	Hoepfner
Jennings	Johnston
Martin (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Penson	Ramsay
Ringma	Robinson
Schmidt	Silye
Solberg	Speaker
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson	Williams—44

*Government Orders*

## PAIRED MEMBERS

## Members

Bergeron	Dalphond-Guiral
Debien	Gerrard
Graham	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Pillitteri	Young

(1540)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I declare the motion carried.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment of the hon. member for Gatineau-La Lièvre to the motion of the hon. member for Richelieu relating to Private Members' Business.

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**PARTY FUND RAISING**

The House resumed from September 22 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When you proceed with the vote may I request that the vote be taken by row as opposed to the traditional party vote, since this is a private member's item and there is no whip discipline.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I thank the government whip for his intervention. That will be the case with this division.

As is the practice, the division will be taken row by row starting with the mover and then proceeding with those in favour of the amendment sitting on the same side of the House as the mover. Then those in favour of the amendment sitting on the other side of the House will be called. Those opposed to the amendment will be called in the same order.

The question is on the amendment.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 84)

**YEAS**

## Members

Adams	Arseneault
Assad	Bryden
Bélair	Harvard
Loney—7	

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alcock	Anderson
Assadourian	Asselin
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand	Bakopanos
Barnes	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Berger
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Bodnar
Bonin	Bouchard
Boudria	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton-Melville)	Bridgman
Brien	Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Brown (Oakville-Milton)	Bélisle
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Canuel
Caron	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cohen	Collins
Cowling	Crête
Culbert	Cummins
Daviault	de Jong
de Savoye	Deshais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Discepolo	Dromisky
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Duncan
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	Epp
Fillion	Finestone
Finlay	Frazer
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gilmour	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Gouk	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Harb	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hart
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George-Peace River)
Hoepfner	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Irwin	Jackson
Jacob	Jennings
Johnston	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lalonde	Langlois
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois-Salaberry)	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape Cap Breton Highlands-Canso)	Lee
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond-Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Maheu
Maloney	Manley
Marchand	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle-Émard)	Massé
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney	Mercier
Meredith	Milliken
Mills (Broadview-Greenwood)	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Morrison	Murphy
Murray	Ménard
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paré
Patry	Payne
Penson	Peric
Peters	Picard (Drummond)

*Points of Order*

Plamondon	Pomerleau
Ramsay	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringma
Ringuette-Maltais	Robichaud
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rock	Rompkey
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Fredericton-York-Sunbury)	Serré
Sheridan	Silye
Skoke	Solberg
Solomon	Speaker
St-Laurent	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Taylor
Telegdi	Terrana
Thompson	Tobin
Tremblay (Rimouski-Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Valeri	Vanclief
Venne	Verran
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Williams
Wood	Zed—206

## PAIRED MEMBERS

## Members

Bergeron	Dalphon-Guiral
Debien	Gerrard
Graham	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Pillitteri	Young

*(1550)*

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I declare the amendment lost.

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I would move that the same vote be applied in reverse to the main motion.

*(1555)*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** As we say in English, nice try.

The next vote is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In my opinion, the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** As is the custom, the recorded division will be taken row by row, beginning with the mover. Then I will ask the other members who are in favour of the motion and who are on the same side of the House as the mover to please rise. Then the votes of those who support the motion and are on the other side of the House will be recorded. The votes of those who are opposed to the motion will be recorded in the same order.

(The House divided on the motion, which was negatived.)

*(Division No. 85)*

## YEAS

## Members

Asselin	Bachand
Beaumier	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bethel	Bodnar
Bouchard	Breitkreuz (Yorkton-Melville)
Bridgman	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Bélisle
Canuel	Caron
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Cummins
Daviault	de Jong
de Savoye	Deshais
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Fillion
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gilmour	Godin
Guay	Guimond
Harper (Calgary West)	Hayes
Hill (Prince George-Peace River)	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jacob	Knutson
Lalonde	Langlois
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois-Salaberry)
Lebel	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond-Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Marchand
Martin (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McTeague	Mercier
Meredith	Morrison
Ménard	Nault
Nunez	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Essex-Kent)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Ramsay	Robinson
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Silye	Solberg
Solomon	Speller
St-Laurent	Stinson
Taylor	Thompson
Tremblay (Rimouski-Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Venne—85	

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alcock	Anderson
Arseneault	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Barnes	Bellemare
Berger	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bhaduria
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brown (Oakville-Milton)	Bélair
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall

*Government Orders*

Chamberlain	Chan
Clancy	Cohen
Collins	Cowling
Culbert	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Discepolo
Dromisky	Duhamel
Duncan	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Epp
Fewchuk	Finestone
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Frazer
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Gouk	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)	Hanger
Harb	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hart	Harvard
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hoepfner	Hopkins
Irwin	Jackson
Jennings	Johnston
Jordan	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kirkby
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape Cap Breton Highlands-Canso)	Loney
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Maheu
Maloney	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle-Émard)	Massé
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McWhinney
Milliken	Mills (Broadview-Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Parrish
Patry	Payne
Penson	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Proud	Reed
Richardson	Rideout
Ringma	Ringuette-Maltais
Robichaud	Rock
Rompkey	Schmidt
Serré	Skoke
Speaker	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Tobin
Valeri	Vanclief
Verran	Volpe
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Williams
Wood	Zed—138

## PAIRED MEMBERS

## Members

Bergeron	Dalphon-Duval
Debien	Gerrard
Graham	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Pillitteri	Young

*(1605)*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the motion lost.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

*[Translation]*

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia-Matane):** Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-48 before the House today, the federal government assumes rights and powers that directly encroach on the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces over natural resources. This is unacceptable. Apparently, the federal government is unable to read what is said in the Canadian Constitution and refuses to listen to Quebec's demands.

What we see in Bill C-48 is a federal government that continues to get involved in a jurisdiction that is Quebec's exclusively. It assumes the power to go over the heads of the provinces and Quebec, directly funding organizations and individuals.

*(1610)*

The federal government prefers to ignore Quebec's demands, but I am willing to bet that many of my colleagues in the other provinces share my position. I would like to say the following for their benefit. These unwanted intrusions by the federal government lead to overlap between provincial and federal strategies for developing this sector, especially since many provinces have already set up their own strategies for promoting, regulating and developing their natural resources.

Quebec's forest management strategy tabled last May by the Quebec government is a good example. The strategy is entirely independent from the National Forest Strategy developed by the federal government and the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers.

The Government of Quebec has to provide funding for both strategies. However, successive federal governments have ignored what is said in the Canadian Constitution as well as the legitimate demands of the Government of Quebec.

Take, for instance, the report of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Forestry and Fisheries, in November 1990, about the struggle of provinces to defend their jurisdiction over natural resources. The committee says that in the course of the twentieth century, the government had on several occasions tried to affect national policy in the forestry sector but had sometimes met with resistance by the provinces to any potential encroachment on their jurisdictions.

*Points of Order*

The committee felt it was clear that the federal government had to play a more credible role to guarantee the success of all these national forestry strategies.

Although the committee suggests it is necessary to obtain the co-operation of the provinces, it is clear that the federal government has felt free to intervene in this area without the specific consent of the Government of Quebec.

Quebec protested, to no avail, against the creation of a Department of Forestry, quite properly seeing this as an intrusion in one of its jurisdictions. Quebec did not sign the National Forest Strategy. Since 1991, after the demise of Meech Lake, no Quebec ministers have been involved in the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. Quebec has just released its own strategy for forest management, as is its right in matters over which it has exclusive jurisdiction.

How can the federal government legitimately intervene in an area that falls under provincial jurisdiction? How can it claim to act in the best interests of Quebecers, when for years it has ignored both its own Constitution and the demands of successive governments of Quebec?

Obviously, the Liberal government's stated desire to put an end to overlap and duplication would be a perfect excuse for getting rid of the Department of Natural Resources or letting provinces opt out of federal programs that involve natural resources.

Perhaps I may compare the mandate of the Department of Natural Resources of Quebec with that of the Department of Natural Resources of Canada.

(1615)

Based on the analysis of federal-provincial overlapping carried out by the Treasury Board of Canada in 1991, the activities of the federal Department of Natural Resources and its Quebec counterpart overlap to a large extent.

That is why I would like to propose an amendment to Bill C-48, an amendment respectful of the Constitution of Canada and respectful of Quebec's traditional demands. Here is my amendment. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Frontenac:

That every word following "that" be struck out and replaced by the following:

this House refuse to give second reading to Bill C-48, an Act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, because the principle of the bill does not provide for granting the minister the power to compensate Quebec if the province decided to exercise by itself the exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources it was conferred under the Constitution Act of 1867 and 1982.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The Chair was consulted, and the amendment is in order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current-Maple Creek-Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the government for adopting Reform policy with respect to departmental consolidation. Since we are dealing with

the legalization of a fait accompli I should probably be thanking the previous government for this recycled bill, a toast to absent antagonists.

Having said that, the government is pretty unclear on the concept. As a matter of fact the government is pretty unclear on almost every concept, but I will leave that for another day.

The object of consolidation is to increase managerial efficiency and save money. What has been accomplished? Instead of 10 assistant deputy ministers there are now seven, which is commendable. Minor economies have been made in human resources, accounting and so on, but the total decrease in corporate overhead has been only \$16 million, 1.6 per cent of the department's annual budget. The elephant laboured and brought forth a mouse.

The department has expressed pride in the fact that the amalgamation was done with only minor staff reductions. The act states in section 8 that all employees in the old department will occupy their same positions in the new department. Perhaps this makes some sense in the short term with respect to clerks, typists, technicians and other lower rank staff who would merely swell the massive ranks of Canada's already existing unemployed. Is there really no scope for reducing the number of middle managers and technocrats to conform with today's economic reality?

(1620)

This department, which deals almost exclusively with matters of provincial responsibility, has a \$1 billion budget and about 5,000 employees, of whom 3,000 are right here in Ottawa. How can that be rationalized?

I know that the uncontrolled growth of bureaucracy is not a disease that attacks only governments. I have worked for or been associated with a few multinational resource companies and they have the same problems. They also have built-in safety valves which prevent such growth from destroying them, as it surely would if it went unchecked.

Every few years the boards of companies like Exxon, Shell or Noranda become aware that the ratio of payroll to gross revenue is grossly out of whack. Department heads are summoned to the CEO's office and the word goes out: too many engineers, too many planners, too many people engaged in redundant programs, too many assistant managers, too many professionals who never leave their offices, and so on.

The axe is swung and corporate survival is assured. It is not pretty and it is not nice but it preserves not only the company but also the jobs of the people who actually harvest the resources and produce corporate and national wealth.

Up to now Canadian governments have not responded to these same economic imperatives. With no apparent limits to their capacity to increase income and no real motivation for cutting expenses, they simply raise taxes, or more recently borrowed unimaginably large sums of money.

*Government Orders*

I know perfectly well that streamlining government operations will not in itself get us out of the awful mess we are in. It has been said many times in this House that the entire cost of government operations is less than half of the annual deficit. If we do not start there, where will we start and when?

Let me cite a couple of specific examples of where I believe that small but significant cuts could be made in departmental spending. The mining sector has 168 full time equivalent employees and a budget of just under \$26 million. More than half of that budget represents contributions to mineral development agreements with the provinces, primarily with Quebec. These are sunset programs, most of which will expire next year.

Planning, observing and studying these MDA programs requires a substantial investment in time and resources. If the federal government must participate in these programs as a form of equalization, and I question the wisdom of that, it would be much more efficient to just send cheques. We do not need two levels of bureaucracy administering the same programs.

The mining sector's most essential functions are gathering statistics and helping to formulate government policy with respect to taxation, investment and trade. These duties could readily be handled by Stats Canada and by a few specialists in the various ministries responsible for the administration and execution of the policy.

At the end of the day the usefulness of this small sector of the Department of Natural Resources is open to question. Certainly the possible cost benefits of dismantling it should be considered.

Not all questionable department expenditures are related to overlap and duplication. The Atomic Energy Control Board is the sole agency in Canada which regulates the storage and use of radioactive material. This is fitting and proper. The agency suffers from a severe case of bureaucratic bloat. Between 1985 and 1993 the number of licences to sell, store or use nuclear materials decreased by 17 per cent, from 4,543 to 3,743, while the number of AECB employees rose from 252 to 373, a 48 per cent increase.

(1625)

This organization is supervising only 10 licensees per employee. Senior department officials attribute this ridiculous ratio to increased public concern for health and safety. Really, now.

The AECB is now working on a partial cost recovery basis. All private licensees pay a fee for service. The AECB provides no service. It is a regulatory agency and its fees are therefore just another form of taxation targeted at small specialized industries that cannot duck. The system reminds me of the practice in China of requiring a condemned man's family to pay for the cartridges used for his execution.

If the agency got rid of one third of its employees it would not have to proceed with its well known plans to increase fees by an additional one third annually until 1997.

Before I conclude my remarks I want to tell the House my favourite civil service story. It concerns Charles Camsell, an early director of the Geological Survey of Canada. He and some young assistants were on a long canoe traverse of several weeks' duration. They came to a Hudson Bay post. They had been living on the usual diet of the day which was beans, bannock and fish for these many weeks. One of the young fellows got up the nerve to approach Mr. Camsell and ask him if they could get a little variety in their diet since there was a store near at hand. The old man reached down into his pocket, pulled out a quarter and sent one of the boys over to the Hudson Bay post for a can of tomatoes.

If we had one or two guys like Charlie in the Department of Natural Resources today we might see some action in the direction which the people on my side of the House would like to see.

In closing, the mandate in article 6 of this act is a motherhood mission statement which hardly anyone would disagree with. It looks great, but should there not be something in there about cost effectiveness?

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Manicouagan-Canada Labour Code.

[*English*]

The first three members on Bill C-48 had a limit of a 40 minutes maximum. Now we will go into the next phase of debate during which members will have 20 minute interventions, followed by ten minutes of questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane-Superior):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the House again today at the second reading of Bill C-48, an Act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related Acts.

I would like to add to the statement by my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton Northwest and Minister of Natural Resources. The natural resource sector is tremendously important to Canada's economy, and the Department of Natural Resources should ensure that this sector remains a cornerstone of Canada's economic growth as well as a significant source of jobs.

*Points of Order*

As indicated earlier, Bill C-48 will establish the Department of Natural Resources and provide the legal framework within which it will operate.

(1630)

The department's mandate will be defined in one document rather than in the two acts now in effect, namely the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act.

Sustainable development is very important. My colleague from Edmonton Northwest has indicated that one of the challenges facing the natural resource sector is Canada's progress toward sustainable development. Our ability to integrate our economic and environmental goals at all levels of natural resource management is essential if Canada is to become more competitive in this sector. Bill C-48 confirms the government's commitment to this objective.

[English]

The natural resources sector is important. The statistics quoted earlier by my hon. colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, proves that natural resource industries provide a major contribution to Canada's gross domestic product, our trade surplus and job creation in our country. Over 500 communities depend on natural resource activity to sustain their economy. As well, our natural resource industries are high tech industries. Canada has a well-deserved reputation as a leader in the development and application of technology to improve the productivity and competitiveness of mining, forest and energy industries. It is through our expertise in this area that new technologies have emerged.

New technology has also created new industries in Canada. For example, as the minister has pointed out, Canada's requirement for accurate information on our land mass, such as maps of our geography, has stimulated new industries like geomatics. Already, this burgeoning industry employs 12,000 Canadians and exports \$100 million each year.

The role of Natural Resources Canada. The Department of Natural Resources has developed a solid reputation for its research and technology expertise over many years. It is this expertise that has and will continue to bridge industrial and environmental concerns facing natural resource industries. Over the years the work of Natural Resources Canada has led to improved resource sector competitiveness and environmental performance.

Earlier, my hon. colleague the minister described some of the department's work in forest development, innovative mining processes and energy efficiency. These examples demonstrate how Natural Resources Canada is positioned to bridge the industrial and environmental concerns facing the natural resource sector.

[Translation]

In summary, the Department of Natural Resources will continue to promote sustainable development practices, will apply its scientific and technological expertise to the enhancement of our international trade and will increase the natural resource sector's contribution to economic growth and job creation.

Bill C-48 will establish the Department of Natural Resources and help Canadians understand the department's role as an intermediary—that word is extremely important—in bridging industrial and environmental concerns.

Under Bill C-48, the Minister and the Department of Natural Resources will have a mandate to work with the provinces, industry, environmental and aboriginal groups, and other stakeholders to ensure that Canada's natural resource sector continues to prosper now and in future years.

I listened earlier to the speech by my colleague from Matapédia-Matane and I was very surprised, to say the least, by how he approached the presentation of this bill. First of all, he limited his comments almost exclusively to the constitutional aspect, that is, the Constitution as it applies to this bill. He accused the federal government of meddling in Quebec's business.

I would like to take this opportunity to put that allegation in context. To start with, there was the 1992 Canada-Quebec Agreement on Forest Development providing for \$136 million over five years. The hon. member for Matapédia-Matane said that Quebec had never signed such a document. We are talking about an amount of \$136 million made up of equal contributions from each government, that is \$68 million.

(1635)

In the case of the Eastern Quebec Development Plan, the total amount of \$68 million was paid by the federal government, as was also the case with the \$10.5-million Indian reserve land program.

My point is this: under the Charlottetown accord, the forestry sector was to become an exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. But as you know, the province of Quebec rejected the accord.

The second point I want to make is that the two existing acts, namely the Forestry Act and the Energy Administration Act, remain almost intact. In other words, the federal government participates in the financing of management activities related to those two natural resources sectors, but does not in any way interfere with the actual administration of the two programs.

I have a message for the hon. member, who might want to transmit it to the new Quebec government. If the federal contributions which I just mentioned are unacceptable and are perceived to be a form of interference, then the Quebec government can send them back, because we can certainly use them elsewhere. I know what I am talking about; while Quebec received \$136 million, Northern Ontario only got \$30 million, that is \$6 million per year.



*Government Orders*

Consequently, last year, 45 million small trees were not planted because there was no money available. So, if Quebec does not want those federal contributions, I will be very pleased to accept them on behalf of my constituents.

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia-Matane):** Mr. Speaker, in the Charlottetown accord, if that is what my hon. colleague is referring to, we did ask for total jurisdiction over forests. That is why we are going to have to hold a referendum: to obtain it. Quebec receives federal funding. It needs that money, and as long as we are part of this country, that is our money too.

As I said, Quebec did not sign the national strategy. We did not sign it. Sometimes deputy ministers travel. The fact remains that we did not sign. My hon. colleague from Ontario says that Quebec received millions of dollars, but then Ontario received transfer payments for regional development. So, there is compensation on both sides.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this: does he agree with me that the federal government has very long arms when it come to grabbing, controlling, strangling the provinces even more? We in Quebec object to that. We do not refuse the money. We need it. It is just that we should be compensated and that is precisely what Quebec has been asking for since Lesage and Johnson. That is what we are asking for, and we have been asking for this for over 30 years.

It seems to me that this bill goes beyond the purview of the Constitution. I would like him to comment on that.

(1640)

**Mr. Bélair:** With pleasure, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to say that the amalgamation of two existing acts as in this case is always subject to Section 92(b) of the Constitution Act, 1867, which provided at the time that natural resources belonged to the provinces. That is exactly the point I was making earlier: these resources still belong to the provinces, but the federal government reserves the right to provide financial support to those provinces that want some.

Quebec benefits greatly from this, with the \$68 million it received from the federal government corresponding to the 68 Conservative members it used to have in this House. Quebec received a very fair share indeed. Again, if my hon. colleague is convinced that when Quebec gets its independence, its will no longer need federal funds, by all means send the money back!

Coming back to the Charlottetown Accord, Quebec rejected it, with all the implications this had.

**Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac):** So did Ontario.

**Mr. Bélair:** That is right, but we are talking about Quebec here. We are not talking about Ontario but Quebec. My colleague also raised the issue of regional development. This bill is not about regional development, it is about agreements on forestry. The figures just quoted were derived exclusively from forest resource development agreements.

Regional development is a different matter altogether. Must I add in closing that, with respect to regional development, Quebec's share is about \$600 per capita, as compared to \$133 for northern Ontario?

[English]

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina-Lumsden):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-48 is a bill which in principle I support and the New Democratic Party caucus supports in-

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order, please. I would like to hear all the statements, everyone in turn. We are now listening to the comments of the member for Regina-Lumsden.

[English]

**Mr. Solomon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to share with the House and the members that the New Democratic Party caucus supports in principle the taking of the bill to committee.

The bill when it becomes law will amalgamate, as I understand it, under one minister the powers, duties and functions of the minister in the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act.

The bill defines natural resources to include all areas covered in the Department of Forestry Act and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Act. The definition clause contains a definition of sustainable development, the same definition apparently as in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

There is a requirement under the general duties clause for the minister to consider the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources in carrying out the minister's duties and functions. The general duties clause of the bill reiterates some modifications to the duties in the Department of Forestry Act to make these duties apply to all natural resources. It also describes current activities of the department and is consistent with federal government responsibilities and priorities in the natural resources area.

A reorganization bill usually has many objectives and opportunities: either amalgamation, centralization, efficiency, streamlining, expansion or in many ways hiding budgetary expenditures. During the report to the committee I will be looking at some of these objectives of the bill.

*Points of Order*

I have a couple of concerns I want to raise with the member for Cochrane-Superior. The minister in her remarks today said, and I quote: "Economic and environment concerns will continue to be addressed". She also said in the same statement that she will be committed to the market principles. It is my sense that these are contradictory, that you cannot be carrying out on behalf of the people of Canada an economic and environmental study to ensure that these are addressed yet leaving all of the elements of the responsibilities of the minister up to market principles.

I wanted to make the above point and I also have two questions. First, does the member not believe that these are contradictory, that the minister has indicated this previously? Second, has there been any provincial government response other than the members from the Bloc with respect to possible encroachments of provincial responsibilities in the energy sector, the forestry sector or some of the other natural resources sectors with specific reference to the province of Saskatchewan which is a province that I represent in this House?

(1645)

**Mr. Bélair:** Mr. Speaker, to address the member's question directly, it is unavoidable today that the environment and the economy be together. We should strive to protect our environment while not being a nuisance to economic growth.

We should strike a balance between the two. We have seen many instances where environmentalists were representing an extreme point of view and industry was representing the other point of view.

I was really surprised and pleased that finally in the hearings of the natural resources committee, there seems to be movement on both sides. Industry has finally said publicly that, yes, there are environmental problems in Canada. The environmentalists are also saying that some progress is being made.

This is the object of the bill. It is the power and the duty of the Minister of Natural Resources to try to conciliate these two extremely important parts of our Canadian way of doing things. She will strive to do so.

The second part of the question concerned provincial jurisdiction. As I said a while ago to my colleague from the Bloc, amalgamating the two existing acts, the Forestry Act and the energy, mines and resources act, is totally in accordance with section 92(b) of the Constitution Act of 1867.

It is almost status quo, although it may not be the right thing to say at this point. Nothing has changed. The federal government still wants to be able to invest in provincial projects. They still want to establish those partnerships with the provinces, industries, recreational clubs, anglers and hunters, everybody as a matter of fact. It is doing so by financing those projects and is not directly involved in the administration of those projects.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou-Rivière-des-Prairies):** Mr. Speaker, of course I support the proposal of my colleague, the hon. member for Matapédia-Matane, to delete some words from the proposal of the Minister of Natural Resources and to add to Bill C-48 the amendment presented in this House.

I would like to take this opportunity to show this House that the changes that these amendments make to the minister's proposal will simply make her proposal comply with the many requests expressed by all the successive premiers of Quebec for many decades, which this government is again trying to flout.

Indeed, we can go back to Premier Jean Lesage in the early 1960s who said, "Resource development is in provincial jurisdiction. It is among the priority rights and needs of the provinces, who are better able than the federal government to act effectively and in a lasting way in this field". He added: "It must be clearly established as a basic rule of our federal system that Parliament's exceptional powers must remain just that, exceptional, and must not be used to invade fields that are normally in provincial jurisdiction".

Daniel Johnson, Sr., who was also a premier, continued in the same direction as his predecessor and said that exclusive provincial jurisdiction includes "the exploration, conservation and development of resources" in particular.

Continuing with Jean-Jacques Bertrand, another premier, who in the same spirit said that Quebec also had to have jurisdiction over underwater mineral exploration, adding that Quebec could not accept the federal government acting unilaterally to manage provincial waters and control pollution in them, or acting with the provinces on the basis of the national interest, a concept which is very often invoked.

(1650)

Even former Liberal Premier Robert Bourassa, who was a staunch federalist in Quebec, said that "in the energy sector, neither unilateral action by the federal government, nor uncoordinated measures by provincial governments will enable us to reach the necessary goals. This can only be achieved through concerted action from both levels of government and from all governments".

In its present form, Bill C-48 merely increases the federal government's role in an exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Former Premier René Lévesque said that the Canadian economy was not an homogeneous thing which could be successfully controlled and regulated with a single policy or program. Provincial governments are in the best position to act, since they know better than anyone their own economic context as well as all the relevant factors such as resources, industrial structures, domestic market, social climate, etc.

*Government Orders*

More specifically, Mr. Lévesque argued that provinces have the sole right of ownership over their natural resources, adding that "as regards minerals and other resources located outside the immediate provincial territory but within the 200-mile economic zone, Quebec favours a joint jurisdiction whereby a province's legislative authority would prevail".

Mr. Lévesque also pointed out that since mineral resources and their management come under provincial jurisdiction, it is up to the provinces to find the best way to ensure the survival and growth of their mining industry.

Even in the days when federalism was perceived as a *beau risque*, and those days are certainly gone, Mr. Lévesque suggested that each province should have exclusive legislative power over its natural resources and interprovincial trade. In that latter sector, provincial laws would have superseded federal legislation so that the federal government would not have been able to use its general power to oppose a provincial law.

As you can see, the bill before us does not comply with the wishes expressed by the numerous premiers who have represented Quebec over the last few decades. That is why I support the amendment proposed by my colleague from Matapédia-Matane, because that is the only way of ensuring that this government respects the will of the provinces, especially of Quebec, as it should under the relevant provisions of Canada's Constitution.

The Government of Quebec has always been opposed to the federal government's spending power, that is, its power to use Quebecers' taxes. Canada is not doing us any favours. What it gives us comes mainly from our own pockets. What we object to in this bill is this ability to spend, to take our money and manage our economy in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction according to all the laws of Canada and to Canada's Constitution.

[English]

Once again the federal government is going to extremes in its willingness to centralize everything in Ottawa.

[Translation]

That is what Mr. Bourassa used to call domineering federalism.

[English]

In its willingness to centralize everything in Ottawa, in attacking the exploitation, concentration and management of natural resources, a sector which is exclusively in provincial jurisdiction, we cannot endorse a federal process to which Quebec in particular does not entirely subscribe.

For us federal intervention in natural resources is totally illegitimate if the provinces are opposed to the project. Quebec, of course, and we have said it before, has always opposed the creation of a ministry of forests, for example, rightly viewing this as an intrusion into one of its exclusive jurisdictions.

As well, Quebec is not a signatory to the national forest strategy and no Quebec minister has participated in the work of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers since the Meech failure. It is Quebec that must exercise its full jurisdiction to determine its own policies, programs and priorities in the area of natural resources.

(1655)

[Translation]

To convince this House of the challenge facing us, I would like to close my remarks by repeating a statement made by a former Quebec premier, Adélard Godbout-this goes way back; we did not start fighting for our causes yesterday-who expressed this somewhat prescient or prophetic opinion at the time: "Full respect for provincial rights is essential to Canada's unity and progress. Any infringement on provincial rights would inevitably weaken Confederation". That is obviously a reality which this government and its predecessors have always refused to understand.

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane-Superior):** Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question. When the forest management plan for Indian lands expires in 1995, when the Canada-Quebec agreement on the development of forestry resources expires in 1996 and the plan for Eastern Quebec expires in 1996 as well, will the hon. member for Anjou-Rivières-des-Prairies recommend to his caucus and their colleagues in Quebec City that they should not renegotiate and should turn down all potential funding?

**Mr. Pomerleau:** Mr. Speaker, the question is very apt, and I hope the answer will be as well. As long as we are part of Canada, as long as we pay our taxes and provide 25 per cent of Canada's income, we will insist that 25 per cent of any funding that is made available should go to Quebec.

[English]

Most Canadians actually believe in two assumptions concerning Quebec. We see it every day in the House. Most Canadians believe that we are a bunch of troublemakers who are never happy with what we get.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Pomerleau:** Well, you can see it is quite true.

The second assumption is that Quebec receives much more money from Canada than it puts in. Most Canadians believe that assumption. If it is really the truth, then what is the problem? Let

*Points of Order*

us go. You are going to make money and you are going to solve the problem. That is what we want. But until that time, democratically speaking, we are going to stay here and we will ask to have 25 per cent of what is necessary for us because we give 25 per cent of our revenues to Canada.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, in the region I come from in metro Toronto we look at natural resources in terms of attachment because we have so few of them.

It is interesting to note that in many municipalities we have a department of urban forestry. We do have a regional conservation authority of great significance. We have citizens' participation and action in the cleaning up of our rivers. In other words, we have an attachment to water, soil and the natural resources probably because we are urban Canadians.

We do not have obsessions about jurisdiction. We think that the few trees and the few rivers we have belong to us as municipal dwellers, as provincial dwellers and as Canadians as a whole. However, we have in common with everybody across the country the preoccupation about the future of these resources. This is what my intervention will focus on this afternoon.

(1700)

I congratulate the minister for introducing this important bill. I praise her for including a reference to sustainable development in clause 6(d) under the powers, duties and functions of the minister.

I would urge the minister to consider a better treatment of the concept of sustainable development. In this bill it comes after the minister's duty of co-ordinating, promoting and recommending certain policies with respect to natural resources and explosives. It comes after assisting in the development and promotion of Canadian scientific and technological capabilities. It comes after participating in the development and application of codes and standards. It finally appears as the fourth item. It is in clause 6(d) in having regard to the integrated management of Canada's natural resources. That is where we find sustainable development.

I urge the minister, the parliamentary secretary and the committee to take a page from Bill C-46, the bill to establish the Department of Industry which we debated yesterday. Look at clause 5 of that bill where the concept of sustainable development is outlined in the first part under the powers exercised by the minister. It says that the minister shall exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions in a manner that will promote sustainable development. It comes as the number one overall consideration.

It would make sense because in clause 2 of Bill C-48 there is a very good definition of sustainable development. Actually, it is the word for word definition given in the 1987 Brundtland report. We applaud the minister and the government for having done so. This definition has become the turning point in our way of thinking, in our way of placing the environment and the economy in a new context.

Therefore it would make sense that in a bill of such importance relating to our natural resources that sustainable development would not rank as an afterthought in the fourth clause dealing with the powers of the minister. It should be elevated to the first and stand on its own without any reference to words like integrated management, the meaning of which we really do not know. There is no definition of integrated management in clause 2 but there is a definition of sustainable development. In that sense it is hoped that a suitable amendment will be moved in committee and the matter resolved along these lines.

What does sustainable development mean? It is important that we enter into this debate with some principles on what will be guiding future ministers and officials over the next 10 or 20 years when they apply this legislation.

Reduced to its basic elements, sustainable development is a concept that stresses the importance of integrating the economy with the environment. It means that when we pursue growth, we pursue it with environmental, economic, social and even cultural concerns in mind. That is what sustainable development is intended to imply.

(1705)

From that general concept we would want to know what are the principles which come under that general heading. How should we be guided in the management of our resources when we say: "We accept the concept of sustainable development; it is in the act. We have a general definition. Now what does it really mean? Could you tell us?"

In search of these elements the first principle would be to integrate the economy with the environment and make those goals convergent rather than in conflict. They can be convergent and mutually reinforcing rather than in conflict.

Also, it would require applying accounting practices that would indicate to the nation that when we cut down a forest or when we fish, in other words when we reduce our stock of natural resources, that shows up in our national accounts as a loss and not just as a revenue. While there is definitely a revenue when a forest is cut down, that asset is gone for the next 95 or 110 years. Therefore, we must know of the loss in our national accounting of that asset. This form of accounting is badly needed.

Another principle that could be adopted is to ensure that the stock of natural resources is not drawn down from the present acceptable and desirable levels. The stock of our natural resources should not only be maintained but also improved. Its quality should also be improved wherever possible. This is not just for us and our requirements but for future generations. It is this preoccupation with the long term, this preoccupation with the years 2050 or 3000 which makes the concept of sustainable development so important and so politically attractive. It looks at the long term, the future.

*Government Orders*

Another principle is an operative one. In the application of this act everything within the power of the minister should be done to prevent climate change. Why? Because we know that climate change means also a change in our natural resources. It would mean a change in the location of agriculture. It would probably mean a shift toward the north of our forests. It could have a profound effect on our fisheries. It impacts on our natural resources. I cannot think of another principle as important for the Minister of Natural Resources than that of preventing climate change.

If we look at the policies of today, it is legitimate to ask ourselves: Are our energy policies sustainable? If we look at the way we spend our public funds in terms of energy, we find that for every dollar the Government of Canada spends to promote energy efficiency, it spends over \$100 in support of the fossil fuel industry. This support increases pollution and supports dependence on non-renewable resources. This support has a negative impact on climate change.

If we look at the 1990 accounts, the latest for which figures are available, what do we find? We find that the value of tax deductions by the oil and gas industry in Canada amounted to some \$5.8 billion. With these deductions the government lost some \$1.2 billion in revenue. The current expenditures by the Government of Canada to the energy sector are close to \$700 million. Of that amount only 5 per cent goes to research and development on alternative energy sources.

(1710)

I do not need to stress the importance of research and development in alternative energy sources and the importance of changing our dependence in energy from non-renewable to renewable sources. Everybody knows that.

That means that under this act and the new minister's commitment to sustainable development it is desirable to have a profound shift in the department's budget. It should move rapidly from a budget on which the emphasis is on non-renewable to renewable sources of energy and should move more rapidly to the implementation of policies that reinforce and accelerate the movement toward more efficient use of energy.

I am not talking of a carbon tax, although we all know that one day the concept of a carbon tax will have to be tackled if we are serious about the question of climate change. However, the political moment has not yet arrived.

**An hon. member:** Thank god.

**Mr. Caccia:** Well, that may be an expression of relief for the present, but the chickens are coming home to roost sooner or later and we will have to cross that bridge at the proper time.

Moving into forestry, we can ask ourselves: Are our forest policies sustainable? This is a sector in which we must apply the concept of sustainability. There is a considerable debate in Canada on what constitutes a forest and a sustainable forestry. Is the volume of forest really the best indicator of the state of our forest resources, one can ask. Does increasing the cubic metre figures make up for loss of forest and species diversity? Is volume really the only criterion we should be examining? Or does the loss of area of old growth forest not represent an important factor if we think of future generations, if we think of biodiversity?

All of us know that one tree does not make a forest, of course. Today many Canadians and many regions of the world are undertaking alternative and sustainable forestry practices. In that respect British Columbia is a fascinating example of new ideas. All of us know there are alternatives to large cuts which destroy forests. There are much better alternatives to clear cutting. There are alternatives which would permit the protection of wildlife habitat. There are alternatives which would permit the retention of biodiversity.

Perhaps this is not the time nor the place to open the debate on clear cuts, especially when one has only 20 minutes. However, we know that our past performance with clear cuts has earned us a very bad reputation abroad.

If the purpose of the new department as it is spelled out in clause 6(f) on page 3 is to participate "in the enhancement and promotion of market access for Canada's natural resources products and technical surveys industries, both domestically and internationally" then we must pay very close attention to our forest practices. Those practices are being watched from abroad and our future export opportunities in forest products hinges on them.

(1715)

In that respect, I would like to pay homage to the forestry code introduced last spring I believe by the Government of British Columbia. I want to express the hope that this forestry code will not only be given the necessary regulations soon but also the necessary funds to be enforced effectively because it is through measures of that kind that we can establish for Canada a good reputation abroad with respect to forestry practices.

We can also ask ourselves what is the role of the forest services of Canada. Is it one to perform only scientific research? Is it one to look for industrial opportunities only? Is it one that is also to give guidance and leadership in forest practices for the rest of the nation? Suddenly after all these years the time has come to examine the mandate of forestry Canada and to determine whether it is still adequate in a changing world as we approach the 21st century.

*Points of Order*

Moving on to mining, we can also ask ourselves whether our mining practices are sustainable. Obviously this matter needs to be given some close attention. It seems to me that instead of having policies that encourage our production and consumption, our policies should be focused on resource reduction, the development of new materials and greater momentum to recycling so that the results will be in decreased mining activities, mining wastes, water consumption, pollution, deforestation and erosion.

In this respect, in recent years the car industry in particular has made enormous progress with new materials and in general Canadian industry has made considerable progress, although not as good as other nations, in achieving energy efficiency in the consumption of energy per unit of production. We have come a considerable distance but we still have a long way to go if we want to emulate and do as well as Japan and other OECD countries. Compared with those countries we are not doing as well.

Having attempted to set out some principles that could guide us in the management of our natural resources and in the implementation of this bill once it is proclaimed, the Department of Natural Resources has a very important role to play. It would be desirable if it were to apply principles and practices that are sustainable and that apply the concept of sustainability for the long term.

We are, after the Rio conference of 1992, coming around the corner in an effort to ensuring that we have a sustainable development that takes into account the economy and the environment. We must make sure that this agreement by the global community which took place in Rio de Janeiro two years ago is implemented and brought into the legislatures of this country.

I will conclude by again congratulating the minister for having introduced this bill. It is of paramount importance. It is good to see that the concept of sustainable development has somehow found its way into it but it must be given greater prominence; actually, it should be given primacy. Once that is done important principles of the application of that concept will need to be fleshed out so as to give direction to the department in the decades ahead.

(1720)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Before proceeding to questions and comments I would like to remind all hon. members that as mentioned this morning Private Members' Business will be delayed by 20 minutes due to minister's statements. Proceedings on Private Members' Business will therefore commence at 5.50 p.m. this evening.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the hon. member opposite, the member for Davenport. I recognize his very longstanding, very real commitment to the environment and to sustainable development. This is not a recent conversion. This is as we know a very real, longstanding and very genuine commitment to conservation.

Given the position of stature of the member opposite within his own caucus and given the gravity of the consideration of fossil fuels to that part of the country that I represent, I would like to ask the member to respond to this question specifically.

Would the member recommend an immediate tax on fossil fuels to ensure conservation and to induce consumers to shift away from fossil fuels? Because of his influence within his own caucus, if the hon. member for Davenport had his way today would we have a tax on fossil fuel to conserve energy and to induce people to switch to other fuels tomorrow?

**Mr. Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, if the member for Davenport were on an ego trip he would certainly want to tackle this question fully and give a very comprehensive answer.

We do already have taxes on fossil fuels. Every time we buy gasoline at the pump we pay some hefty provincial and federal taxes; those taxes already exist.

If the thrust of the question of the hon. member is whether I would recommend policies related to the introduction of a carbon tax then we are talking of something completely different. A tax on gasoline or on coal or on gas as I said exists already and it varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. An additional tax would not be a carbon tax. It would be a fake carbon tax. It would be more of the same. It would be nothing new.

A carbon tax is a massive change from the present system of taxation that we have on income and labour and investment and flow of capital to a system of taxation that would be taxing consumption and mainly anything that relates to consumption of fossil fuels.

It is an enormous political somersault, if I may use that term. It would be a big step for which we are not ready and so since we are all more or less realists, and in my caucus I do not have the reputation of being a great realist but I still have my feet on the ground, to recommend a carbon tax would be asking for something for which we are not equipped politically or otherwise.

Sooner or later we will have to cross that bridge if the trend identified by scientists continues. These are not Marxist or left-wing scientists, these are meteorologists at the United Kingdom

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University of East Anglia, for instance, who have recently produced a map indicating that over the last 30 years there has been a change in annual temperatures. There has been a change in average winter temperatures.

(1725)

I would be glad to show the hon. member a map to that effect, which in essence shows that the increase in average temperatures that has taken place over the last 30 years shows a considerable warming in certain parts of the world.

This warming has led to the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic caps. This melting has produced a certain flow of cold water into the northwest Atlantic and some other oceans, which could be an explanation for the fact that certain fisheries have disappeared.

I am saying that if this trend continues and we have over the next 30 years another +1.5C as an average increase—thus amounting to +3C—we will be in for some big problems because the water levels of our coastal cities will be higher. We will have to do some basic coastal public works.

The livelihood and the survival of millions of people in certain parts of the Pacific where the islands rise only a metre or a metre and a half above sea level will be in serious danger. Scientists are speaking about the flooding of some one-quarter of Bangladesh.

We will see the movement toward the north of agriculture and of forests. In other words, we will have a completely different set of natural resources and of problems resulting from that. It may be for the next generation of politicians.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Davenport for his comments regarding sustainable development. The member talked about the important need for sustainable development, particularly in the industry of forestry.

I wonder if he would consider that one of our most important natural resources we have in this country is our resource of top soil for farming. Top soil gives us the ability to produce food but is being eroded at an alarming rate.

Since the beginning of organized agriculture on the great plains we have lost about one-half of our top soil. Yet we have government farm policies that encourage this practice to continue. Where would the hon. member rate this in his overall scheme of sustainable development?

**Mr. Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be treated as an expert when you are not one. Coming from the great agricultural riding of Davenport, one would perhaps expect more from me. The most important natural resource we have is the human resource in this country. We all agree on that.

Whether top soil for farming should be the next one—it may be so—I do not know. I know that the Senate in 1983, particularly Senator Sparrow, produced a very interesting report on the losses in top soil. That report has been languishing since 1984. He even went so far as quantifying the yearly losses in dollars in top soil, which was a unique feat by our historical standards.

I should urge the hon. member to get a copy of Senator Sparrow's report and perhaps ask questions of the minister tomorrow.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan-Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-48 has been described by many as a housekeeping bill, to combine the federal Department of Forestry with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In my opinion Bill C-48 is far more than that. Today I want to begin by praising Bill C-48 while also raising a few concerns. First, I wish to praise the government for continuing with this integration started by the former government, both from a standpoint of tax dollars saved and new understandings included in Bill C-48. From a recent departmental briefing I see that this amalgamation is expected to save something in the range of \$41 million over a four-year period starting in 1994-95 primarily through streamlining at the corporate level, including such things as putting together financial services and human resources of what formerly were two cabinet level departments.

(1730)

The jobs of the rank and file public service generally were spared the axe although the downsizing did remove a cabinet minister and three assistant deputy ministers.

The preservation of those other jobs is perhaps due to the fact that the Canadian Forest Services—and I would like to comment on the forest services here—is already one of the most decentralized of all in the federal government with some 90 per cent of the people not in Ottawa.

Another reason for praising this legislation is the new understanding presented by Bill C-48 of what principles and methods should be used to manage the nation's natural resources. For example under "interpretation", Bill C-48 defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The bill's list of the minister's duties in clause 6, items (d), (e), and (f) are as follows:

The minister shall:

(d) have regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources;

(e) Seek to enhance the responsible development and use of Canada's natural resources and the competitiveness of Canada's natural resources products;

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(f) participate in the enhancement and promotion of market access for Canada's natural resource products and technical surveys industries, both domestically and internationally;

Although day to day management of natural resources falls under provincial jurisdictions these directives in Bill C—48 should lay to rest many longstanding public concerns that the federal government might either encourage the so-called rape and destruction of our natural resources on the one hand or collapse before extremists advocating only recreational and tourist use of natural resources on the other hand.

The legislation makes clear that the minister must have regard for integrated management and sustainable development. That is good for everybody.

Another reason to praise Bill C-48 is that it will help counteract an unfortunate tendency by some people to speak of our natural resource industries as though they were so-called sunset industries, as though their time had somehow come and passed. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The role of science and technology in the Department of Natural Resources is widespread with the scientific establishments at numerous sites from Victoria to Resolute Bay to St. John's as part of a science and technology budget at Natural Resources Canada in the order of \$432 million projected for 1994-95.

Among the minister's duties are that the minister shall, and I quote clause 6, sections (b), (c) and (i):

(b) assist in the development and promotion of Canadian scientific and technological capabilities;

(c) participate in the development and application of codes and standards for technical surveys and natural resources products and for the management and use of natural resources;

(i) gather, compile, analyse, co-ordinate and disseminate information respecting scientific, technological, economic, industrial, managerial, marketing and related activities and developments affecting Canada's natural resources.

Another indicator that our natural resource industries are continually elevating in addition to the specific growth in science and technology is the modernization of their insights, their principles and the managerial techniques as the world moves toward sustainable development, in part pushed by the new wave of green consumerism.

As a prime example of such integrated resource management the federal government has been a major participant in the Whitehorse mining initiative whose report presented September 13 included a set of more than 150 recommendations in light of 16 principles and 70 goals voiced by more than 140 individual participants in the process.

For all these reasons I applaud the government for uniting these departments into one through Bill C-48. However, I also want to voice some concerns.

(1735)

Bill C-48 helps to spell out the federal role and relationship with provincial jurisdiction over forestry and mining. Despite much talk about the so-called new economy, the \$40 billion forest industry remains number one in Canada, providing some 777,000 jobs or one in every 16 in 1993 with approximately 350 Canadian communities dependent on forestry for their financial existence. It also adds a \$19 billion contribution to Canada's net balance of trade, by far the largest of any industry in Canada.

Although the mining industry has been hard hit in recent years, there are some 150 communities across Canada that depend on mining and mining related activities. This contributes 4 per cent of our GDP, 17 per cent of our exports and a net \$11 billion surplus to our balance of payments as well as being the source of 60 per cent of rail freight and 55 per cent of port traffic. Directly and indirectly, mining provides some 300,000 jobs.

Clearly, forestry and mining are two of the most essential contributors to our national economic health. Therefore I would have preferred to see clause 7 of Bill C-48 say that the minister shall co-operate with the provinces and municipalities rather than may as it now does. These economic sectors are simply too important for us to tolerate government duplications or squabbles regarding jurisdiction. As a Reformer I am especially concerned that there should be as little overlap as possible between the levels of government and that no activity be undertaken by the federal level if the provincial level can handle it.

I also have questions on clause 35, subclauses 7 and 8, which detail other things the minister may do.

Subclause 7 says that the Minister of Natural Resources may make grants and contributions and, with the approval of the Governor in Council, provide other forms of financial assistance. I am told that Parliament can exert control here by simply refusing to appropriate money to the minister for such purposes. But once the funds are voted, the minister does not even need to consult with cabinet before making grants and contributions.

I believe Bill C-48 should have included some procedure to build into the granting process public accountability and transparency as well as requiring at the minimum consultation with cabinet.

Subclause 8 provides that:

(1) The Minister may co-ordinate logistics support and provide related assistance for the purposes of advancing scientific knowledge of the Arctic region and contributing to the exercise of Canada's sovereignty in that region and its adjacent waters.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the Minister may



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(a) make grants and contributions; and

(b) make recoverable expenditures on behalf of any other department, branch or agency of the Government of Canada or a province or any university, organization or person in respect of its share of the cost of any logistics support or related assistance.

I have the same concerns as mentioned above about the authority for grants but I would like to ask some additional questions.

First, is this Bill C-48 the appropriate place to authorize a minister regarding contributing to the existence of Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic? If there is doubt regarding Canada's sovereignty in that region, it seems that a so-called housekeeping bill on natural resources is at best an inappropriate place to bolster such authority.

Second, in view of the tradition that natural resources north of 60 degrees latitude fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, why is the Minister of Natural Resources given this twin function of asserting Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and authorization to recover costs from groups performing exploration or research, maybe filming a movie or leading a tour group?

I look forward to hearing the government's explanations for what look to me to be shortcomings in a bill which otherwise deserves the praise and support of the House.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, in listening to the hon. member's intervention, I was wondering about his thoughts on the future of Canada's forests since he comes from an area where the forests are so well managed and where an experiment was carried out by the Vernon provincial district in the marketing of lumber.

(1740)

As you know, Mr. Speaker, until 1985 the forestry department was part of the Environment Canada department. It was put in that department because it was felt that forestry seen from an environmental perspective is managed with concerns also for wildlife, water and biodiversity considerations. That holistic approach was valid then as it is today.

Would the hon. member favour a move whereby the department of forests would again become part of Environment Canada?

**Mr. Stinson:** No.

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take what little time is left to congratulate the minister on this bill. I hardly think that it is merely housekeeping. By defining sustainable development in accordance with the Brundtland report and by putting it into the part of the bill under the clause which says "the minister shall", it has given this principle of sustainable development some validity. The other aspects of the minister's duties should be considered in light of that statement. I want to refer to one or two of them. Subclause 6(c) states:

The minister shall participate in the development and application of codes and standards for technical surveys and natural resources products and for the management and use of natural resources.

Subclause (d) as we have noted and as my hon. colleague from Davenport pointed out so well states:

Having regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources.

Subclause (c) says:

To seek to enhance the responsible development and use of Canada's natural resources.

It seems to me that it makes it pretty clear that the minister has a twofold purpose and that they must be integrated. Further in the bill we get to subclause 3(2):

The minister may enter into agreements with the government of any province or with any person for forest protection and management or forest utilization and for the conduct of research related thereunto or for forestry publicity or education.

It seems to me that this allows the minister considerable leeway in assisting all Canadians who desire to preserve or enhance or continue our natural resources to be accommodated.

Personally, 24 years ago I entered into an agreement with the province of Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources, under its Woodland Improvement Act and established forest on my property. It was a joint venture. I must say it is a pleasure to walk through those trees now, 24 years later.

The minister is also empowered to collect and publish statistics for the mineral explorations development and production of the mining and metallurgical industries of Canada. The words "exploration and development" have been added. I think that suggests that the minister has some responsibility for not only maintaining that industry but for maintaining it in a sustainable way.

(1745)

With respect to some of the comments of my hon. colleague opposite, I find in clause 6 that the minister must co-operate with persons conducting applied and basic research programs and investigations. I have had concerns for some time that much of our research money tends to go to applied research and not basic research. We need to pay some attention to basic research.

My colleague from Davenport talked about biodiversity, old growth forests and some of these rather intangible and not fully understood benefits of the conservation of our natural resources. I notice that again in clause 6(b) the minister can keep under review and consider recommendations with respect to transportation, distribution, sale, purchase, exchange and with respect to matters relating to the sources of these resources within or outside Canada, which hopefully would mean that disasters such as the *Exxon Valdez* might be prevented in future.

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In clause 7(1) the minister may formulate plans for the conservation, development and use of resources specified in that section and for related research. The word related has been added and it adds a world of meaning to that clause.

I mentioned the woodland improvement act. Our forest resources need protection, development and sustainable development if we are to continue to be a world leader in these things.

With respect to a carbon tax I have a few comments. If we adopt green accounting in the resource industries, it might serve the same purpose. It might put in the hands of the captains of industry the kind of techniques, the kind of information that they need in order to make the kind of decisions that will continue to sustain us in the fields of forestry and mining.

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Oxford on his speech and the points that he raised in his rather brief address. I realize he was trying to give other hon. members an opportunity to speak.

I would like to ask him a couple of questions. First, what is his opinion of the inclusion of a definition of sustainable development in the legislation? Second, maybe he could confirm the rather strong position taken by the Prime Minister with respect to a carbon tax.

**Mr. Finlay:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the definition of sustainable development is in the bill. It would be very shortsighted at this juncture not to include that definition in the bill.

If we do not move wholeheartedly in that direction, and I mean at this level of government as well as provincially and municipally, we are going to be in a bad way.

I must apologize, I did not catch the hon. member's second question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** It being 5.50 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

(1750)

[English]

### CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North)** moved that Bill C-229, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (registration of political parties), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first I wish to thank the House for allowing me this opportunity to speak on Bill C-229. I also want to say that I am a bit disappointed that this bill will only have one hour of debate and will not have a chance to be voted on. However, that is how the system works and that is what we have to live with.

Before I speak about the changes I want to apply with Bill C-229, I want to briefly describe to members of the House the present situation existing in the Canada Elections Act.

The law reads that if 50 candidates are nominated in any region of the country they qualify as a national party. That is a very narrow definition of the law. It has to increase in order for democracy to work.

The changes I would like applied to the act are the following: first, to be a national party, that party should be running candidates in seven provinces at least. Second, representation should be from 50 per cent of the population of Canada. Third, 50 per cent of the candidates should be from each of the seven provinces in order to qualify as a national party.

In last October's election we had 15 political parties running for office. At the top of the list were the two national parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals who had 295 candidates nominated, next were the NDP, followed by the Natural Law Party of Canada which nominated 231 candidates, and the lowest party was the Marxist-Leninist Party which nominated 51 candidates.

Some people will argue that Bill C-229 restricts Canadians from practising their right to become a candidate or to form a political party. This is far from being true. In effect, what this bill does is it allows people in all regions of the country to participate in the change. For example let us take one of the principles of this bill. It states that the party must run 50 per cent of its candidates in seven provinces in accordance to population.

Today in the House we have an opposition party that ran 75 candidates in only one province. Out of the 75 candidates it won 54 seats and became the official opposition. By tradition the official opposition is the government in waiting and the leader of the official opposition is to be the Prime Minister in waiting. Can you imagine this country and this House which has a political party whose sole purpose is to break up this country and a Prime Minister in waiting whose sole purpose is to implement that break-up? That is not democracy.

I live in Ontario. I am the member for Don Valley North. People in Don Valley North never had a chance to vote on who the opposition is in this House. That is not democracy. We in Ontario have the right to decide, as much as the people in Quebec have the right to decide, who will be the opposition party. People in B.C. have the same right as do the people on the east coast. The way it is, this right is denied to the citizens of this land.

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Two opposition parties is the way it is today. One of them is headquartered in Quebec City claiming to be a national party. The other party is headquartered in Calgary again claiming to be a national party. If a national party is to be in this House of Commons, their headquarters should be located in the nation's capital in order to facilitate their activities.

Seventy-five per cent of Canadians did not participate in choosing this opposition party. It is only fair that we would also be asked. Twenty-five per cent of the population in this case should not decide the opposition party of this House.

(1755)

When I was campaigning in the 1993 election campaign I saw a big sign, 4 by 8, in front of the Reform Party candidate's headquarters which said: "We will run the country the way we run the campaign". The Reform Party ran the campaign without Quebec.

I am very happy that Reformers are thinking of expanding into Quebec. This is very good and I commend them for it. I also hope that with the changes I am proposing in this bill the Bloc Quebecois will have a chance to run candidates in other provinces, in other regions, next time around. I am sure they are going to be here and I hope to be here so we can have constructive discussion about the future of our country.

I return to the point I made about the 15 political parties that ran in this election. One of the benefits of being a national party is that you get reimbursement from the federal government.

For example the Conservative Party spent \$10,398,101. They received \$2,339,752.72. The Canada Party had the lowest expenditures in the last election campaign and had 56 candidates. They spent \$172.72.

Surely today's opposition party spent more than \$172. Surely it can spend more than that in order to have a proper opposition, a good opposition in this House, so the system can work and function.

Without implementing these changes I think we will lose the unity of this country.

I want to conclude my remarks for the time being, but pick up again toward the end. If we intend to have strong central government we have to change the law in order to achieve it. When we change the law we can achieve a united, indivisible Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond-Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-229, which would amend the Canada Elections Act with respect to registration of political parties.

This bill, which would oblige a political party to put forward candidates in a minimum of seven Canadian provinces that have, in the aggregate, 50 per cent of the population of all the provinces, is, in our opinion, undemocratic and contrary to one of the provisions of the Parliament of Canada Act.

The least that can be said about Bill C-229, introduced by the hon. member for Don Valley North, is that it targets the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party, among others. In our opinion, it is an insult to democracy, as it denies Quebec, a distinct society, the right to its own representatives in the House of Commons. It must be pointed out that the people of Quebec are true believers in democracy.

The hon. member for Don Valley North, in introducing such a bill, shows a very poor knowledge indeed of the Canadian political scene and of its diversity. The social, economic and cultural make-up of Toronto, where the member hails from, does not apply to every part of Canada, to Quebec in particular. It must be pointed out that Quebecers do not, any longer, feel comfortable with the old national parties, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, whose policies always sought to champion the interests and pursue the objectives of a mythical Canadian nation, with a total disregard for regional specificity.

Quebec chose to be represented by the Bloc Quebecois, and it is certainly not a member from the Toronto region who is going to stand in the way of the political representation of one fifth of the citizens and taxpayers of Canada in the House of Commons.

(1800)

This bill is completely inconsistent and does not respect Canadian political tradition. Since the passage of the new Canada Elections Act in 1970, there has been provision for the registration of political parties. However, the multi-party system appeared in Canada well before then. As early as 1920, members of other parties began to be elected to the House of Commons in sufficient numbers and with sufficient support and credibility to influence the system.

I would remind the members that, in the 1930s, Social Credit and the Commonwealth Co-operative Federation represented very special interests, with demands and hopes that were not at all national in scope. They were movements formed by Western producers to protest the excessive taxation authority of a highly centralizing federal government. None of them were represented in seven provinces or by a total of 50 per cent of the population of Canada. This is an important point to remember.

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In the early 1960s, these movements, which evolved into political parties, became important elements in Canadian party politics, hence the inconsistency and irrelevance of Bill C-229.

In the past, a number of political parties that sprang up on the Canadian scene were limited to a single province. Why then, today, is there a wish to take extreme action and amend the Canada Elections Act, except to stop the democratically elected Bloc Quebecois from demonstrating its repudiation of the old national parties and thus seeking to attain political autonomy. Nothing in the existing elections act mentions the need for a political party to nominate candidates in more than seven provinces to qualify for registration.

The act mentions only that in order to be registered and thus officially recognized nationally, a party must nominate more than 50 candidates, whether in one province or in the whole country, for the purposes of consistency, credibility and visibility.

This bill is a flagrant contradiction of the Parliament of Canada Act regarding the official status of political parties in the House. May I remind the member for Don Valley North that there is a rule whereby a political party must have at least 12 members elected to be recognized in this House.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member: How is it possible to recognize, in the House of Commons, a party which might not even be registered at the next general election? Even if the Elections Act requires that a given party nominate at least fifty candidates to be registered-which increases the probability of it being present in at least seven provinces-we consider that Bill C-229 is in net violation of the Parliament of Canada Act and the Canada Elections Act. In 1990, although the House had by then 295 seats, 12 members were still enough to be recognized as a party. The New Democratic Party's current status is a case in point: it wanted to be recognized, but it failed.

Let us be clear, the inclusion of such provisions in the Elections Act would mean the end of the multiparty system within the Canadian electoral system and the emergence of a "one-way" political system in which two parties, largely dominated by two parliamentary executives, would alternate serving the same interests and the same vision of a highly centralized Canada.

I should add that this bill lends credence to the argument that Canadian diversity is just a myth and that the distinctiveness of the Quebec society is gradually eroding. This is what we read recently in the *Globe and Mail*. That editorial said that Canadian society was one of the most homogeneous in the world. This is not what was reflected in the results of the last general election. In fact, the real myth is the notion of Canadian nationhood; to believe that one day there will be only one culture from coast to coast is ludicrous.

(1805)

We could say that somehow the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois are the political arm of Quebec's culture, fighting to protect its originality and distinctiveness.

We believe that Bill C-229 introduced by the member for Don Valley North is a sham since it does not take into account cultural diversity or the legitimate position of the party forming the Official Opposition. I will remind you, Mr. Speaker, that as the opposition we have behaved in a responsible manner and according to parliamentary rules. We have dealt with issues of interest to Quebec and Canada and used question period with efficiency and respect, no matter the issue. We have proven to be efficient, transparent and respectful of fundamental democratic principles.

Therefore, we strongly denounce the bill introduced by the member for Don Valley North as being undemocratic in its very intent.

[English]

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, for those who are watching the parliamentary channel instead of *Wheel of Fortune* or *Jeopardy*, the purpose of this private member's bill is to change the Canada Elections Act so that a party can only be a legitimate registered party here in Canada if it is running candidates in at least seven of the ten provinces, one of which has to be either Quebec or Ontario.

Of course, the purpose of this bill is very clear, and that is to knock the Bloc. I suppose there would be a lot of Canadians who would have a sneaking sympathy for the intent behind this bill. A lot of Canadians I have talked to, a lot of Canadians all of us have talked to are pretty ticked that we have in this House, making laws for our country, deciding or helping to decide how our money is spent, shaping the future of our country, a group of people essentially intent on the destruction of Canada as we know it.

A lot of people are asking is there not a way we can stop this. They are particularly exercised, particularly angry, when a group of people in this House who call themselves Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have interests in mind, have an agenda in mind, which again is adverse to the interests of the national unity of our country.

A lot of Canadians would sympathize with the member for Don Valley West and the intent behind this bill to try to stop regional parties from forming and coming forward.

Sometimes the cure is a lot worse than the disease. Although the disease is bad, this cure is a whole lot worse. It is kind of like those ancient dragons. You cut off one head but two worse heads, more fierce with larger teeth, spring up in its place.

*Private Member's Business*

What this bill really does is abrogate a lot of democratic rights in this country. Canadians should be aware that the reason a party has to run 50 candidates somewhere in order to be registered as a party is really designed to make sure that taxpayers' money is not totally and frivolously spent. What happens, as most of us know, is if a candidate is successful half the candidate's election expenses are returned to them courtesy of the taxpayer. A lot of people think that is an abuse of taxpayers' money but it would be a lot more of an abuse if anybody could run and expect to have half their expenses paid by the rest of society.

The law was designed so that there had to be at least some threshold of support for a group or a party before they could expect to receive some funding from the taxpayer. That is the real reason why the present act says that a party must run 50 candidates somewhere in Canada in order to qualify as a registered party.

The law was not designed to limit the right to association of Canadians and limit the right of Canadians to get together for purposes of political activity.

(1810)

I would suggest that it is very important that we not limit the right of Canadians, not make it more difficult, not put onerous requirements on Canadians who want to participate in the political process. This is a subject that obviously is very near and dear to my heart because for the last seven years of my young life I have spent building a new political dynamic to inject into a hidebound and reactionary system. We need change sometimes in democratic society and democratic politics.

That change usually starts small. It starts with a vision and support for it grows. It does not sort of arrive full blown from the soil. I am here to tell members that because I have participated in that kind of exercise.

If we insist that a political movement, a political dynamic, only has legitimacy if somehow it has instant support so that it can have registered candidates right across the country, and lots of them, it simply is going to limit the change, the newness and the renewal that we allow in our political system which is very unacceptable in a democracy.

The hon. member for Don Valley North when he spoke made two statements that I take very grave exception to. First of all, as a westerner I am absolutely outraged that he would say that you are only legitimate as a political party if you have an office in Ontario.

Somehow the arrogance of certain assumptions just overwhelms me. To say that only something rooted in Ontario has legitimacy in our political system is outrageous. I would suggest to the hon. member that the political renewal that has its base in western Canada is every bit as useful to this country, is every bit as positive a dynamic in our political system as a political party that has its roots in Newfoundland, Montreal or in Yukon. It does not matter where your head office is, it matters where your head is and that is the important thing.

I also take exception to the continual distortion by members opposite of the Reform Party and its policies. Here is another example that we just heard a few minutes ago. The member for Don Valley West said that the Reform Party signs during the election campaign said this we will run the country the way we run our campaign. Then he went on to say since we ran our campaign without candidates in Quebec, obviously we would run the country without Quebec.

What an abuse, what a distortion of what Reform really said. For the record, the Reform signs said, and I hope everyone is listening, that we will run the country the way we run our campaign, debt free. I challenge the member to indicate whether his party ran the campaign debt free. We sure know it is not running the country debt free. It is running this country into debt \$110 million every single day. To it, success is placing a debt on our shoulders of another at least \$100 billion in its term of office.

I would like to have less distortion and more facts from the other side about what the Reform Party has to offer this country.

The real problem in this country is not political parties and who they represent and where they have their head offices. The real problem in this country is that the status quo, the old system, the old thinking, the old way of approaching issues does not work for us any more. We need renewal. We need change.

What we see in this House with a party which represents only one province and whose agenda is to break up this wonderful country is not something that should be corrected by suppressing legitimate political concern and discontent, but by addressing the root of the problem that caused this situation to begin with. The root of the problem is that status quo federalism does not work. We are faced with an opportunity staring us in the face to fix this system, to acknowledge that changes are needed for the benefit of all Canadians. It is not just the province represented by the members beside us that are discontent with the way this country has been run. There are people in all parts of the country who are saying we need change.

(1815)

We need to serve notice that there has to be an honest debate about renewing our federation so that it works better for all of us. We do not need bills to suppress legitimate political expressions and democratic involvement. We need a government that will put ideas on the table to renew the way we operate as a country.

We need solutions and we need a resolution of this problem, not to hide it, not to suppress it, not to make it illegal, not to push it under the rug but to say we need change and the kind of changes we need.

*Private Member's Business*

We need changes where governments live within their means. Not only the province represented by the Bloc but all of us are staggering under the load of a huge mortgage on our country which is getting bigger every single day. We need a federal system that lives within its means, where we pay for our programs today and we do not offload our spending on to our children. That is what is needed in this country.

We need a country where citizens are treated equally regardless of race, language and culture or where they have their head office. We need a system where all Canadians are treated equally. It is very important that we get those kinds of systemic changes.

I challenge the hon. member not to bring forward bills that suppress legitimate democratic participation but really have solid proposals to get to the root of the problem, fix the system, renew our federation and let us go on together as a country.

**Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland-Colchester):** Mr. Speaker, I support my colleague from Don Valley North wholeheartedly in this most welcome legislative initiative, Bill C-229, a bill to amend the Canada Elections Act.

We did not have a mechanism like C-229 in place last October. Now we have a situation in this House where the Official Opposition party is dedicated to a proposition which can tear Canada asunder and whose agenda can monopolize this Parliament and eventually paralyse this government.

The Bloc members have been given all of the privileges and power that go with such a status. This party could constitutionally be called upon to govern the entire nation. How many nation states no matter how democratic or tolerant would accept as their official opposition, even as a legitimate national party, a party whose sole purpose is to rupture the country?

The answer of course is very few unless they have a collective national death wish. Surely it is not too much to ask that any party that aspires to represent Canadian citizens in this federal Parliament should reach out beyond the narrow parochial confines of its regional power base or of its own special interests.

My voters in Nova Scotia elected me to represent the interests of Cumberland-Colchester here in Canada's Parliament. They also expect me to bring a perspective to this job that extends far beyond the boundaries of my riding. After all, the voters of Cumberland-Colchester realize that my salary is paid by all taxpaying Canadians and that as their member of Parliament in this national capital I also have to serve the larger national interests.

In 1982 the former member of Parliament for Hull, Mr. Gaston Isabelle, with incredible foresight introduced Bill C-661 that would have required any party to receive registration in Canada to nominate at least 50 candidates in a majority of the provinces.

The purpose of this bill was to, as he put it and I quote: ``remove any trace of ambiguity as to the national character of political parties desiring to operate at the federal level".

(1820)

At second reading in March 1983 Mr. Isabelle noted:

It is easy to understand why a political party, if it wants to operate at the national level, should be obliged to field candidates in a majority of the provinces, that is in five out of six. These are candidates who will be working on the federal scene- Without this obligation, regional or provincial groups, which I prefer to qualify as local, will use Parliament as a platform for their own special interests.

Unfortunately Mr. Isabelle's bill disappeared and died inside a parliamentary committee and 11 years later what he prophesied has come to pass.

We have a chance once again to redress the great deficiencies he saw over a decade ago in the Canada Elections Act. The Bloc Quebecois got its present pre-eminence in this Parliament simply because it received 1.8 million votes that were distributed across the electoral landscape of Quebec only.

It won 54 seats in this Parliament, 54 seats of Quebec's 75, and yet the Bloc did not win the majority of the Quebec vote. There were over 3.7 million valid ballots cast in Quebec and the Bloc won less than 50 per cent, 49.3 per cent in one province only, yet they form the official opposition to the Government of Canada.

Compared to other parties in this House, the Reform Party received over 2.5 million ballots from Canadians in 9 out of 10 provinces and yet won two fewer seats. The Progressive Conservatives received more than 2.1 million votes across Canada yet won only two seats. The Bloc Quebecois based solely on the number of seats won has formed the official opposition of the Government of Canada.

It seems to me that the Bloc's claim to pride of place in the opposition benches based solely on the first past the post outcome is far from secure in terms of either ideal democratic practice or equitable electoral outcome.

No, I am not preaching for some kind of proportional representation to elect our MPs. Given our expansive geography and scattered population it is just not practical. Moreover it has been tried in various forms in various places in Canada in the past and each time has failed as too exotic a graft on the trunk of the Canadian body politic.

My daughter who is a master of political science tells me I must stress the importance of natural democracy rights. That is that we do have rights of the individual to mobilize parties in this country and to participate in government.

However, we must recognize the fact that Canada is very regionally diverse. Extensive country breeds regional political parties. At the last election we had 14 or 15 registered political parties and our tendency is to divide and distinguish ourselves regionally.

*Private Member's Business*

This is not a trend we should encourage in a national Parliament. Yet we have as our official opposition the regional party the Bloc Quebecois whose sole purpose in being here is to take its one province out of this Canadian family.

I believe we should also have the humility as parliamentarians to recognize that many of us as individuals got to this place not as a result of any sweeping mandate from the voters but, given the multi-party nature of Canadian politics, through the grace of plurality.

During the Liberal sweep of Canada I got 42 per cent of the votes cast in Cumberland-Colchester and my next closest opponent took 36 per cent. In the Reform heartland a member from Calgary had a 44 per cent plurality. The list goes on across the country.

There are many of us in the same situation. We are not only a regionally diverse nation, our electorate is also very diverse. We mislead ourselves and do them and this country a disservice when we see our constituents as distinct little tribes.

There is no such thing as a homogenized Nova Scotian, nor is one in Quebec where one size fits all. I take great pride and satisfaction in knowing that there is unity, there is oneness in the diversity that identifies Canadians.

We should recognize our duty as parliamentarians to provide a focal point for Canada here in this House. We can best do that by ensuring those who enjoy this House's privileges do so as members of registered parties who reflect the entire Canadian spectrum and not narrow regional interests.

(1825)

This bill in no way impedes the right of any member of any party to sit in this House now or in the future. What it does ensure, however, is that if they want to sit in this House as a member of a registered party enjoying the benefits that flow from registration their party must nominate candidates in at least seven provinces representing an aggregate of 50 per cent of the population.

That is not an onerous requirement for any party that aspires to run this country. As an Atlantic Canadian, I have a vested interest in regional special interests. However, I feel that this country and Atlantic Canada benefit from a strong national government.

We are best served by a strong national Parliament and this bill is intended to live up to the diversity and the multiculturalism of Canada. It is intended to represent the national character of Canada.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West-Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, the intended purpose of this bill is to stop single interest parties from being established.

The manner in which it is written could also stop multiple interest regional parties from forming. There is a realistic purpose in establishing a restriction on financial assistance in the form of a rebate or a portion of the election expenses.

However, this restriction now exists by way of a requirement to field at least 50 candidates in order to qualify for that election expense rebate. On one hand, it is understandable to want to prevent the emergence of political parties that advance the interests of a single province. This bill, however, is not a very democratic way to achieve that goal.

Many people have suggested that democracy really only exists for about one minute every four years when one enters the polling booth. That is not good enough. This country clearly does have different regions and from time to time problems in those regions give birth to new political movements.

Sometimes those regional parties disappear early in their existence, such as the Progressive Party. At other times, a party such as the Reform Party of Canada which saw its start in a region grows to become a contender to form the next Government of Canada.

I would point out to members that this can also work in reverse as we saw in the last election when the Conservative Party went from being the government to a non-party status in a single election.

Forcing political bodies to run in areas where they have no interest is more likely to create regional alienation than it is to present it. A far better solution would be to create a more responsive political system that would tend to address these regional problems before they could spawn a new local interest party.

Consider the problem created by a single issue like fiscal responsibility. The have provinces are having their financial resources stripped from them to finance irresponsible government spending while the have not provinces are getting less from the concept of wealth sharing because of that same lack of federal financial responsibility.

In this case, provinces on either side of the equation could spawn a regional party when the real solution should be found in a new sense of financial responsibility on the part of the government.

*Private Member's Business*

An issue could be much smaller, like the firearms legislation. Ill conceived legislation such as that currently proposed by the justice minister could conceivably result in the emergence of a group from a particular area wishing to ensure that we focus on control of criminals instead of persecution of law-abiding citizens.

A combination of issues could cause problems that might cause non-federalists in a particular party or province to form a party, such as what happened in Quebec.

My discussions with the Bloc Quebecois suggested that its biggest issues are the financial ruin of this country and its desire not to go down with the ship and the need for a province, the Bloc's, to have more say over policies and issues that affect it in a different way than it does other provinces.

Had the federal government addressed these genuine concerns which affect all provinces and the people in them, the Bloc may never have emerged. As members can see, it is not hard to create an environment in which the emergence of a single interest or regional party can happen.

There is another aspect to this bill that must also be examined. If passed, this bill would tend to ensure that no new parties ever got started again.

(1830)

Given that the emergence of the Reform Party wiped out one old line party of the past and threatens to continue the existence of the one remaining party of the past, it is not too difficult to see the real reason for this bill. That is neither fair nor democratic. At any time if the party of the day loses touch with the people it is supposed to be serving, the capability of the system to give birth to a new political movement to replace outdated ones must not be suppressed.

There is yet another flaw in the drafting of this bill. The requirements for registration of a party include the number of provinces in which the party must nominate candidates, seven, and the need for those provinces to comprise at least 50 per cent of the Canadian population. It would be possible for a party to run in Ontario and east, including one of the territories, without any representation in any of the four western provinces. If that did not create regional alienation I do not know what would.

The hon. member from the government side of the House would be better to withdraw this bill. He should concentrate instead on getting his government to get on with addressing the real reasons for regional alienation and general dissatisfaction with the way the old line parties of the past have run this country into the ground.

The governments should deal with the pressing issues of runaway spending, out of touch immigration policies, an out of control criminal justice system, and social programs that are facing financial ruin. If it does not know how to do this, we do, and you know who we are. We are the party that started off as a regional party and grew to our current national status because the other regions were fed up with the old line parties just as the west was.

If the real needs and desires of the people of Canada were met there would be no reason for this bill to be discussed.

**Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris-Moose Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pay special tribute to my colleague from Don Valley North. I commend him in this House where we have members opposite with simplistic answers to some very difficult questions.

I hear the proposals they put forward, that there is no vision. The people of Canada spoke in the last election and they elected 175 Liberals. They asked us on behalf of all of Canada to come forth with a vision.

This private member's bill is there specifically to deal with the problem that has arisen in this House. Never in the history of Canada have we ever had the arrangement where the Leader of the Opposition did not want to be Prime Minister of this country.

We are reviewing this bill today, a bill that puts forth a challenge to our democratic process. However it does not challenge the definition of what constitutes a party in a federal election and the obligation that party carries to all Canadians.

Members opposite may say to be careful of regionalism. I say that perhaps we should challenge the definition of a party in a federal election. After all the taxpayers carry a heavy burden for the election and the benefits the official parties are allowed.

Presently the system allocates a spending level for parties which directly relates to the number of candidates in the field in any given election. If that party spends more than 10 per cent of its spending limit it is entitled to 22 per cent return.

Should the taxpayers pay for parties which either fail or refuse to represent themselves on a national scale? How can we ask the entire country to support a party that has no desire to represent the views of Canadians from coast to coast? Our Parliament assembled here in the House today strives to achieve the best for all Canadians, or at least that is how it is supposed to work.

It leads us to ask the question: What is an effective Parliament? Does an effective Parliament have an opposition that fails to effectively scrutinize the government's actions in the interests of the majority of Canadians? I would say no, no indeed. There is an important role to be played by the opposition to any government. The government needs to be asked tough questions and be made to answer them.

(1835)

However what happens when the questions being asked are continually only for the benefit of one interest group and not in the interests of all Canadians? In that scenario I do not think the Canadian people get a fair bang for their buck.



*Private Member's Business*

In this proposed amendment a party or an individual can certainly enter into the political process, which was mentioned a minute ago as not being the case. The fact is that they can, but they must be obliged to offer up their ideas to a majority of Canadians if they wish to be supported by the taxpayers' money as well as receive all the benefits of the House of Commons.

This bill proposes that if a group applies for party status in an election and cannot fulfil the requirements as stipulated under the amendment, then that said group cannot enter into the House of Commons as an official party and subsequently will not receive the rights and privileges normally ascribed to official parties. That does not preclude the fact that parties can begin.

In summary, we have to ask: Can regional parties be permitted to dominate a national Parliament? Can our country remain united if the presence of single issue parties grows in size and consequently further hinders the chance for effective consensus? Finally, can the government continue to afford the money it provides through political taxation deductions to those parties which fail to provide a national platform?

I am glad to have had the opportunity to speak in favour of this bill. I believe these are changes that will benefit our national process and better the value of government to the people of Canada.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current-Maple Creek-Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I am rather amazed at some of the commentary I have heard today and the great naivety of some of the members opposite when they talk about starting off with a full-blown political party that can go out and do battle from sea yea unto shining sea.

I worked for seven years trying to build a party. We started with a few hundred members and pulled it up to 120,000. If we had the type of legislation that is proposed in this bill, the Reform Party would not exist. It is just absolutely impossible. It is not physically within the realm of possibility to do this.

I am also a little surprised at the rather tenuous grip on Canadian history which is held by members opposite. All of the parties in this country, save the two old parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, grew out of small beginnings, usually because people felt disenfranchised and angry in small areas of the country.

I could cite first the Progressive Party, which was at one time by the way the official opposition here and was founded under those principles. There are also the CCF, Social Credit and of course Reform. None of this could ever possibly have happened if this bill had been in place 40, 50, 60 years ago, depending on the particular political movement we are looking at. It is absolutely out of the question.

Finally, I am sorry that the hon. member for Souris-Moose Mountain has left because I did want to comment specifically-

(1840)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I want to remind colleagues of the practice of not mentioning the absence of members. Each one of us recognizes the demands on our time, of course, whether here on duty or from interest.

Given all the other demands on our time, we do not reflect or make mention of the absence of members. I want to make sure we are all cognizant of that.

**Mr. Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, I assure you there was no pejorative intent. It is just that I wanted to speak to my opponent, if you will.

One of the justifications for this bill, if I understand correctly, is that taxpayers' money is handed out to officially recognized political parties and candidates of officially recognized political parties.

To me, the solution is quite obvious and quite simple. We do not kill the democratic process. We do not do away with the parties. We do away with the grants. We do not have to use federal money to support politicians. Let each support his own. Let 10,000 flowers bloom, if you will, but if a political party does not have the stature to get people, to give them money to pay for their election expenses, then it does not deserve to exist.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Not seeing other members wishing to speak there has been an indication from the mover of this private member's bill that he wishes to speak. I recognize him to close off debate.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to respond to some of the questions and points put forward by the opposition members.

First of all, the member from the Bloc Quebecois says the bill is not democratic. I do not understand what his definition of democracy means. If he means democracy is decided by 25 per cent of the population, certainly he is right. Democracy for me means the majority of the population.

He also accuses this bill of being Draconian. I wonder which is more Draconian, the bill itself or the intention of the opposition party here today to separate Quebec from Canada. The answer is very simple. All you have to do is walk around the country and find out how Canadians feel.

My colleague from the Reform Party said that the bill restricts individuals from running for any political office. That is not true. You can run for a political party or a political office, whatever you want. Nobody can take that away from you. That is in the charter. What I am saying in this bill is you cannot be recognized as an official party during the campaign.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I never said the nation's capital must be in Ontario. I said this nation has one capital. That capital happens to be Ottawa. Ottawa happens to be in Ontario. So I invite the federal parties to join us and other parties by bringing their headquarters to Ottawa.

Recently there was a property for sale. The NDP was selling its national headquarters. I hope one of the parties will take advantage of that and purchase the property so it could be here.

I have one more point. If anybody is worried about our representation to this House, we won election in October 1993 by 41 or 42 per cent. Today we are 60 per cent. Obviously we are doing something right. People in the west, people in the east and in central Canada approve of our position. We are very happy for it. We thank them and will continue to provide the best government we have ever had in the last 127 years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** We have closed debate on this private members' bill. If there should be any doubt or questions in your mind, we followed Standing Order 44(2) and (3) giving the final word or the final reply to the mover of the motion. Consequently the order is dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

(1845)

[Translation]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan):** Mr. Speaker, on January 14, I denounced the fact that more than 300 employees in my riding were locked out by a mining company which was deliberately using overlapping federal and provincial jurisdiction in Quebec on the issue of anti-scab legislation.

Quebec law forbids the use of strikebreakers, but federal law does not cover this very important aspect of collective bargaining and allows companies to hire strikebreakers to do the work done by those with whom the companies do not want to negotiate.

I have already referred to my statement on January 14. However, on April 21, I asked the Prime Minister in this House whether he agreed that the lack of federal anti-scab legislation was the reason negotiations with the companies were deteriorating, in particular with QNS & L at the time, which was negotiating with the union in my riding. On April 21, I did not get an answer.

However, on May 5, concerning the same question, the parliamentary secretary responsible for the issue was kind enough to answer me, but in his answer he said that more than 90 per cent of collective bargaining negotiations are settled without a work stoppage, so a law was not really necessary.

An anti-scab law is not made for the 90 per cent of cases where things go well but for the 10 per cent where things break down and the danger in the negotiations rises enormously.

On April 29, the President of the Public Service Alliance, Mr. Bean, wrote to me that he agreed. According to Mr. Bean, the Public Service Alliance of Canada recognizes the importance of this kind of legislation, and as it found in Quebec, which has some people experienced in this area, it feels this bill will have a beneficial impact on labour management relations in the federal public service. That is quite a testimonial.

On June 17 at a regional meeting of the Steelworkers Union in Sept-Îles, delegates demanded anti-strikebreaking provisions that would apply to federal jobs. Regional co-ordinator Jean-Claude Degrasse said that the harsh conflict to which his members were exposed following the lock-out at QNS&L-I referred to this in my first example, January 14 in Sept-Îles-demonstrates the urgent need for anti-strikebreaking legislation. The company's use of strikebreakers disturbed the industrial peace that had lasted for 16 years, since 1978. The union's demand is supported by the entire population of Sept-Îles.

Quebecers working under federal jurisdiction and all Canadian workers are affected by this serious gap in the labour code. The government has a national responsibility to provide for healthy labour relations. It is in the regulations.

On June 21, I presented a petition signed by many people who asked for the introduction of anti-strikebreaking legislation at the federal level, in order to do something about labour relations in the case of the 10 per cent where things do not always work out.

Today, I repeat my question because I feel I was not given a satisfactory answer. I hope to get one, however, and my question is this: Does the minister intend to introduce in this House amendments to the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act that will bring employees under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and introduce anti-strikebreaking provisions at all federal levels, in order to improve labour relations which are so important to the well-being of this country.

[English]

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development):** Mr. Speaker, the question of restricting the use of replacement workers during legal work stoppages raises a number of complex issues, including the need to ensure that necessary services are provided to the Canadian public.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Protecting the public interest is of particular relevance in the federal jurisdiction, as the Canada Labour Code governs many industries which are essentially public interest in nature. Although the code does not prohibit the use of replacement workers, it does provide protection for workers engaged in legal work stoppages. The code prohibits an employer from disciplining an employee for engaging in a legal work stoppage. As well, an employer cannot discipline an employee for refusing to perform the duties of another employee who is involved in a legal work stoppage.

Once a work stoppage is terminated, employees are entitled to return to their employment in preference to any persons hired to replace them.

The existing system generally works as intended. Most collective bargaining negotiations are settled by the parties in direct negotiations. Of those that do require conciliation officer assistance, more than 90 per cent are settled without a work stoppage.

This said, the minister is currently reviewing all aspects of the Canada Labour Code, including the issue of replacement workers, with a view of modernizing and improving it so it can better reflect today's realities. There are also ongoing consultations with employee and employer groups to seek their views.

With reference to the dispute between ADM Agri Industry Limited, formerly Ogilvy Flour Mills Limited and the Syndicat national des employés des minoteries Ogilvie Ltée, the minister recently gave his consent for the union to file a complaint with the Canada Labour Relations Board alleging that the company has failed to bargain in good faith.

The minister also met last week with union representatives from the company and will continue to closely monitor the dispute so it can be resolved as quickly as possible.

The union and the company recently agreed to meet with the assistance of the mediator on October 12 and 13, 1994. The minister is encouraging both parties to take advantage of that opportunity to settle their differences.

*[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.53 p.m.)

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