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Thursday, September 29, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 29, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I welcome this morning the opportunity to report to my federal colleagues of this House on the international conference on population and development held in Cairo earlier this month, at which I had the privilege of being the leader of the Canadian delegation.

As head of that delegation I would like to express the government's sincere thanks to the very able Canadian negotiators who piloted through the program of action on Canada's behalf, a group of dedicated public servants who served our country with distinction.

I should also mention the work done by a multiplicity of support staff that worked long and hard from morning to evening in those discussions. Many times we forget that those are the officials who worked for several years leading up to this conference and sometimes at the conference it is the heads of the states or the leaders of the delegations who get the limelight or the credit as well as the blame when perhaps things do not go per course. I think it is important for all of us to signal to them our appreciation for the kind of public service they have rendered on our behalf.

Canada not only played a useful role as one of the many countries assembled in Cairo, but I would suggest Canada played a tremendous facilitating role. Canada was very much a builder of bridges among different countries that perhaps had different views and yes, some very hard concerns about certain aspects of the draft action plan.

(1005)

Canada did not try to seek the limelight and speak in the public arena every day but there was a lot of behind the scenes

work in trying to foster those rapports, in trying to keep channels open and also being respectful of the different opinions, whether they be political, whether they be cultural or whether they be religious. In terms of the Holy See, I think Canada among the western countries had probably one of the better pipelines that remained open with the Holy See and others. That is the kind of internationalism that Canada has made a very proud tradition for herself.

It was a truly rewarding experience as a participant to see such a remarkable degree of consensus on sensitive and controversial issues that strike at the very heart of the human condition.

[*Translation*]

There were over 180 delegations from far and wide representing various political systems, cultures and religions. They agreed on a comprehensive program of action.

[*English*]

As an international blueprint for change the program of action represents a springboard for advancement on both population and development. It brings together the approaches of the past which focused on demographics and development. In the seventies in Bucharest the answer was development. It was seen as the panacea in terms of trying to deal with both population on the one hand and between the nations that do the consumption. Yet that did not work.

In the eighties the whole question was the demographics, somehow arbitrary numbers brought down from thin air and probably forced upon people and nations the globe over. That did not work either.

In the 1990s as a result of Cairo we have seen the convergence of both family planning and development, both for the individual as well as for that country. It think it is through the convergence of those two forces that hopefully we will be able to unlock a number of problematic doors that have faced the international community.

Cairo also recognized the vital role of women in achieving social and economic goals. We mentioned in our speech from the platform, as Mahatma Gandhi once said, when you educate a man you educate an individual; when you educate a woman you educate an entire community and family. I think there is something to that. Some people get worried when we say empowerment of women.

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If we look at what that means the empowerment of women is also the empowerment of family. It is the woman in many families who is the centrepiece and the anchor. Therefore if we accentuate her role, her opportunities, her rights we clearly buoy up the entire family which many times she is responsible for.

Governments agreed not only to talk but to act, to take action on reducing mortality rates of mothers and infants, on ensuring equal education opportunities for girls, access to employment opportunities for women, and pay more attention to the reproductive health needs of adolescence and improving access and availability of basic health care.

At the end of the day when it came time to commit our fellow world citizens came to a degree of consensus which was unprecedented at similar population conferences in the past. I know that before going to Cairo there was controversy on various elements of the draft action plan. Yet that seemed to dominate the discussion, certainly the media attention and we forgot that as a complicated, complex diverse world this document enjoyed before the first gavel ever hit the desk 90 per cent agreement.

Why is 90 per cent agreement on a document such a bad thing? If I got 90 per cent at high school or university I would have been a rocket scientist. If one of our parties would have attained 90 per cent of the seats across the country we would have been superstars in terms of our political organization.

(1010)

Why is it that when a diverse world comes together and agrees on 90 per cent of the document somehow it has to be seen as a negative or a failure because we have the last ten yards to go and those are the toughest?

There was more that united this world in its action plan than divided it. One of the most important things to come out of that conference was that delegates took a new approach to population issues. Instead of looking strictly at demographic targets, just the numbers, they widened their focus in an important way. They recognize that social and economic development is central to achieving a balance between the number of people on earth and their demands in terms of food, shelter and other basic necessities of life.

It was a real coming together of north and south, east and west, rich and poor. No one was dictating to anyone. Those days are clearly over. There was very much a question of consensus rather than suggesting by force or implications.

It was also heartening that the international migration issue was treated in a truly comprehensive and balanced way for the first time in a forum of this kind. Governments recognized not only the negatives in terms of the mass of humanity that is on the move, some 150 million people strong, but also the positive

benefits of migration. We were also able to bring one of those positive messages.

Despite the challenges and difficulties that still confront us, we were also prepared to admit that the force of migration helped to build a country called Canada. That was something the international representatives, both NGOs and governments, had not heard enough of in terms of simply talking about the problems rather than also about the advantages.

Delegates also stressed the need for increased international co-operation to deal with the challenges that current migration trends present to all of us. We talked about prevention, protection and then integration of those migrants.

[Translation]

The Cairo program of action in international migration is the first to have been approved by this many nations.

[English]

It now provides a springboard for further progress on the international political level and on the daily operational level. Cairo has given Canada a relevant and practical tool for advancing its international migration agenda.

We need more bilaterals, more of a regime between and among countries if we are to deal competently with that movement of humanity. One country cannot do it alone. Canada should not be expected to do it alone. No country has the answers to that kind of dilemma.

If we put regimes together, if more countries keep their front doors open a little, it will make life not only easier and more bearable for those individuals seeking a home, it will also make life easier and more bearable for those countries that have done their share.

No one is responsible for the entire problem. Rather, we are each responsible for our share of that situation. We as members of the global community met in Cairo with a daunting task before us. There were many who predicted we would dissolve into disagreement, discord and disarray. We proved them wrong and we proved there is consensus and commitment in the world community to tackle global problems not only effectively but together.

The last message Canada brought on the closing days was that while the agreement provides us with that road map and that consensus, the agreement is only as good as its implementation. That too is a uniquely practical Canadian application of not simply being happy about an agreement but really rolling up our shirt sleeves making sure that individual member states follow up on the commitments we tied together in Cairo. Only then can we say that truly Cairo was a success. It clearly started as that and we in this country in co-operation with the United Nations will ensure that the individuals for whom this plan is intended will certainly see the fruits of our labour.

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(1015)

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec): Madam Speaker, the impressions we have brought back from the International Conference on Population in Cairo are too many to sum up in just a few minutes. But I would say that the two words that describe them the best are openness and progress.

I am glad that the minister shared with us this morning his thoughts about this international conference. It makes us realize the importance of such gatherings because when cultures and deep differences that shape nations come in contact, we can subscribe to the idea that discussion promotes openness, and openness promotes progress and the furtherance of ideas.

For us, Cairo was above all an occasion to voice major concerns that much not only be discussed in international fora but also in our target communities as well as in our parliamentary institutions.

I would like to emphasize an aspect of the conference that distressed me deeply as a parliamentarian and a woman, and that is the status of women. It remains a stumbling block, the central area in which progress needs to be made if our civilization is to embark upon the quest for the well-being of our people.

Suffering can affect both body and soul. Just think of the plight of millions of young women around the world who are subjected to what we call excision or infibulation.

In a world in which technology and science keep turning everything upside down on a daily basis in the way we live and think, two thirds of the 960 million illiterate persons on this planet are women.

Considering that life expectancy in Zimbabwe is 44 years for women and 40 for men, the tragic reality behind these figures shows strikingly the major imbalance between developing countries and industrialized countries. This geopolitical reality was palpable during discussions at the conference. The international community is faced with this implacable reality that concerns us all.

The attitude change in people world-wide on issues such as family planning, health and education, is a sign of modest progress in the status of women, although much remains to be done. I noticed how widespread were the concerns expressed by women about abortion legislation. I also noticed how government leaders can make overcautious statements on this issue, statements that do nothing to help women in their everyday lives. To avert a potential disaster for mankind, it is imperative that every woman in the world be given equal opportunity and the chance to achieve her potential. That is the message from Cairo, the message that must be sent out.

It must also be heard in this House. We must look at what has been accomplished in Canada in concrete term and how much progress remains to be done. I suggest to you that, while being ahead of many other countries on the issue of women status, Canada still has quite a long way to go.

Economic equality for women is still far from a sure thing. Women working for the federal government continue to be paid less than their male counterparts. Yet, we know that to further the cause of women and the state of the children requires that women and men be treated as equals.

It is also imperative that our government provide protection to women from foreign cultures by making illegal practices that adversely affect their basic rights. In fact, I would suggest that the government support the bill on the mutilation of feminine genitalia that I will be introducing today in this House, the purpose of which is precisely to protect a fair number of our Canadian women.

I would also ask the government to take all necessary steps to fight child poverty and to take action immediately.

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I also want to commend the public servants who worked on this program. I know a number of people in foreign affairs put in a lot of time on this.

Without really reviewing the conference and what happened, I would like to highlight a few facts where I think there would be agreement among all of us. Certainly over population is a threat and the world's sustainability is certainly dependent on us bringing this problem under control.

However, demographers and researchers have done an awful lot of work on this. It is a topic for study in universities. I am not sure that a conference of this magnitude would be necessary to discuss the fact that there is a problem.

(1020)

Second, the empowerment of women, giving them greater control over their lives through increased access to education, health care, and increasing their economic contribution in developing countries should be strongly supported and would have our utmost support.

Uncontrolled migration is another major problem. We have seen what has happened in Rwanda and it is something that we must deal with. Making things better at home is one way to help uncontrolled migration.

It is rather a motherhood issue to say we would support the essentials of life, such as water, food and shelter. Certainly the preservation of basic human needs is vital and we are all concerned about that.

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The spread of disease is another major issue that we must look at when we talk about populations. We have seen the spread of AIDS, how it started in Africa and what has happened since. We now have the plague in India and we see how quickly it has become a global problem.

We would like to emphasize the importance of the NGOs. They are on the spot, and in many cases understand the issues much better than governments do. Therefore, the promotion of the NGO community, helping with their funding as opposed to government to government grants is certainly commendable.

If we agree on all of these things then what do we find is the problem with the Cairo conference? What kinds of questions do we have to ask? Most obviously Canadians want to know if this was the best way to achieve the goals desirable in this world. One has to wonder just how much further we have come as a result of this conference and what will come out of it. What new and innovative matters were learned at this conference that we did not know before? Was a timetable established? Will that timetable be kept? Will there be action instead of just words?

Reference was made to the fact that a large part of the conference was the discussion of abortion. Both sides struggled to try to gain control of the conference. From a Reform Party standpoint we believe that abortion is up to the individual and not up to international bureaucrats.

Everyone agrees that increased wealth in countries leads to smaller families. Talks aimed at promoting open markets and economic diversification were really not discussed at this conference. While certain aspects of the economy were mentioned that did not seem to be leading to any concrete action.

We have to ask, was this a good expenditure of our funds? Canada sent a huge 28 person delegation to Cairo, including nine MPs. I was in Cairo last June. The tourism was great but we have to ask, did those 28 people have to go and what did they accomplish?

The estimated cost that we could find at this point was approximately \$235,000 paid for by foreign affairs. In addition in preparatory arrangements about \$2 million was spent on this conference. Canadians are asking questions about the cost. Why did we send that many people? Could this money have been spent more wisely in other ways? Was this conference simply a recipe for big government? The suggestion that more agencies should tell people what to do is the traditional western approach to global problems.

The Government of Canada should not be exporting political-correct agendas. The best way to help developing countries would be to promote open markets, economic diversification and development, and even more important, help improve educational opportunities for everyone around the world.

(1025)

*[Translation]***CRIMINAL CODE**

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-277, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (circumcision of female persons).

She said: Madam Speaker, this morning I am tabling my bill on the circumcision of female persons.

It is very important that the government give its support to this bill. We are all well aware that there is a movement in the world concerned with the issue of genital mutilation of females. That is why I encourage the government to support my bill.

We are well aware that this practice is carried on in Canada by immigrants to this country. The Cairo conference raised this important problem, one that is recognized by Egypt's population minister, who would like to see such a bill studied in the people's assembly of Egypt. I therefore hope that here in Canada, where we pride ourselves on our progressive stance in the area of legislation, we will move ahead, and that my bill will be debated and passed in this House.

(The motions are deemed adopted, the bill is read the first time and ordered to be printed.)

* * *

*[English]***PETITIONS**

HUMAN RIGHTS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present some petitions this morning on behalf of several people who live in and around the Edmonton area.

The petitioners state that a majority of Canadians believe that the privileges which society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships.

They pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships and also not include the term, which is as yet undefined, sexual orientation in the human rights code.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, I am presenting two more petitions today bringing the total to six petitions that I have presented this week on the subject of gun control.

An increasing number of Canadians are concerned the government has not recognized that we have a crime problem in this country and not a gun problem.

The petitions are coming into my office on a daily basis and the petitioners ask for strict enforcement of existing statutes governing the use of firearms in the commission of an offence, with particular emphasis on the rigorous use of section 85 of the Criminal Code.

The petitioners oppose further legislation on firearms acquisition and possession, and I agree with my petitioners.

[Translation]

RAILWAY TRANSPORT

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, I am tabling a petition containing the signatures of 1,500 Quebecers opposed to the closing of the VIA rail line between Montreal and Jonquière.

The petitioners are asking Parliament for a one-year moratorium on the anticipated reductions in service. They are also asking the Canadian government to hold public hearings so that those affected by losses of service can make known their disagreement with this decision.

As a representative of a remote area in Quebec experiencing serious economic problems, I support the action undertaken by the coalition to save the Montreal-Jonquière passenger train. I am opposed to the systematic dismantling of our rail infrastructures under the pretext that rail travel is an outmoded, antiquated form of transportation too expensive to maintain.

(1030)

Without the railway, Quebec is deprived of an infrastructure that could be important to its economic development in the years to come.

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present a petition from Canadian citizens, most of whom are from my constituency.

These petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the human rights act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality, including amendment to the human rights code to include prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I have six petitions to present this morning, two of which are petitions where the petitioners pray and request

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

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, in two petitions the petitioners are praying that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

EUTHANASIA

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Finally, Madam Speaker, I have two petitions in which the petitioners do not want Parliament to rescind an act of Parliament or the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on the right to die, on euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to rise to present seven petitions on behalf of my constituents from Yellowhead. Three of these petitions come from the communities of Neerlandia and Barrhead, two from the town of Hinton and one petition each from Onoway and Drayton Valley.

These petitioners ask that Parliament do the following: that Parliament not indicate societal approval of same sex relationships; that Parliament amend the Criminal Code to extend protection to unborn human beings; and that Parliament not sanction the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): 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.

Supply

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
ACTIVITIES

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse) moved:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

He said: Madam Speaker, one word was omitted from the text of the motion. I would ask for my colleagues' consent for this word to be deemed included in the motion. The word "alleged" should appear before "illegal activities" so that the motion would read as follows:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the alleged illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to amend his motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Langlois: Madam Speaker, today the Official Opposition moves the following motion:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the alleged illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

(1035)

This motion has become necessary following the allegations made about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in recent months and the events revealed and corroborated during the same period.

In addition, the many obstacles encountered by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on National Security chaired by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River make it even more imperative to set up a royal commission of inquiry responsible for investigating the alleged actions of CSIS.

CSIS has become a state within a state as it is answerable only to the Security Intelligence Review Committee, commonly known as SIRC, which reports to the Solicitor General himself who, in turn, discloses to the House only some of the few elements he deems relevant.

Although the enabling legal provisions give SIRC very wide powers of investigation, the fact remains that it controls only the elements voluntarily submitted by CSIS.

The very composition of the SIRC greatly undermines our trust in this institution. In fact, of its five members, three were appointed on the recommendation of the Progressive Conserva-

tive Party of Canada and one on the recommendation of the New Democratic Party of Canada. These two parties no longer enjoy official status in the current Parliament.

Without enforcement legislation, a simple sense of ethics would dictate that the people appointed on the recommendation of political parties no longer recognized in this House should resign so that the Review Committee can reflect the current membership of this House as elected by the people last October 25.

The Official Opposition, the Bloc Québécois, and the second opposition party, the Reform Party, could then be represented on the review committee. However, this would only be a provisional measure until the act is amended to abolish the Review Committee and restrict to parliamentarians the power to control and monitor CSIS.

What could be more normal and healthy in a democracy than putting this function under the exclusive jurisdiction of elected officials? Our American neighbours have shown us the way by demonstrating for many decades that such a system of parliamentary control is the only one acceptable in a free and democratic society.

The royal commission whose creation we are calling for today is in no way intended to compete with the Sub-Committee on National Security. All the Official Opposition is asking for is to obtain the most results in the least amount of time.

We fully recognize the legitimacy and authority of the Sub-Committee on National Security and we also acknowledge that Parliament never abdicated its powers to CSIS or its Review Committee. Nevertheless, given the present situation and the composition of the review committee, we must expect parliamentary guerrilla war with the members of SIRC instead of full and total co-operation from them.

Creating a royal commission would keep members of the review committee from using delaying tactics to avoid being accountable.

Last week, the Solicitor General, in answer to a question from the Official Opposition, refused to set up a royal commission, on the pretext that SIRC's internal verification was sufficient.

(1040)

You need only see how the meeting of the Sub-Committee on National Security went on September 13 to realize that SIRC members are past masters in the art of subterfuge, rather than in investigation. The minister should definitely review what happened at that meeting. He would see that clearly the Sub-Committee on National Security will not obtain from the members of SIRC the full and entire co-operation which it is entitled to expect.

Supply

He should find grounds for reviewing his position and establishing a royal commission of inquiry without delay. We cannot remain in the dark where SIRC is keeping us, when serious charges have been leveled against CSIS. Let us see what these charges are. First, CSIS is accused of having used people like a certain Grant Bristow to set up or infiltrate the Heritage Front, a Canadian neo-Nazi organization based in Toronto which advocates white supremacy. The purpose of this organization is directly contrary to the values of Quebec and Canada, as proclaimed many times in our most important laws.

Grant Bristow reportedly continued his work or was recycled as a bodyguard of the leader of the Reform Party of Canada in the last election campaign. This Reform "volunteer" was allegedly well paid by CSIS for doing this infiltration work. We are entitled to know whether the Reform Party of Canada, which has no other ambition than to take power through the normal democratic channels, was infiltrated on CSIS's orders or with its knowledge or if some ill-intentioned individual, following written or verbal instructions, or with CSIS's guilty silence, penetrated the inner circle of the Reform Party leader.

Was the Reform Party of Canada at any time considered a threat to Canada by CSIS or by the Conservative government? We have eloquent proof in this House that the Reform Party was a real threat to the Progressive Conservative Party, but surely not to Canadian democratic institutions.

It is possible that CSIS, either at the request of the Conservative government or on its own initiative, decided to infiltrate the Reform Party, knowing that it was acting with complete impunity, since its review committee was controlled by a majority of people appointed by the Conservatives who, by virtue of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, were directly accountable to the Solicitor General of that same Conservative government.

If the Reform Party of Canada was indeed infiltrated and considered, at one time or another, to be a threat to Canada, what was the attitude of these people towards other opposition parties, including the Bloc Québécois, whose ultimate political *raison d'être* is to help Quebec become a sovereign state?

We want to know how CSIS was able to resist the temptation of finding out a little more about the Quebec sovereignist movement. Let us not forget that, in the seventies, the RCMP stole the list of Parti Québécois members, burned barns and also stole dynamite.

(1045)

Is it possible that CSIS may have decided to pursue similar activities? A royal commission of inquiry would, in all likelihood, provide the answer.

The Official Opposition is not the only one requesting that all the facts be known. The chairman of the Sub-committee on

National Security, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, also asked for some explanations, as reported by the media on September 13.

Another allegation was made against CSIS. Indeed, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation may have come under surveillance by CSIS after reporting that it was conducting an investigation into possible links between Heritage Front and some Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia. Given the behaviour of some soldiers in Somalia, the existence of such links is plausible.

Are Grant Bristow and other agents part of a plot by CSIS to spy on the CBC?

Another allegation made is to the effect that CSIS, Grant Bristow or other individuals who may or may not be related to the neo-Nazi group Heritage Front have targetted the Canadian Jewish Congress, by leaking information on Canadian Jewish organizations to violent American racists, by promoting the use of violence by members of Heritage Front and by organizing a campaign to harass anti-racist leaders by telephone.

According to another allegation made, CSIS apparently followed every step of French secret service agents interested in the Quebec sovereignist movement. Consequently, even if CSIS did not directly investigate Quebec sovereignist forces, which have been called "the enemy within" in this House by the member for Beaver River, it may have indirectly obtained privileged information through its contacts with the French foreign security services, the DGSE.

According to a Canadian Press dispatch published in *Le Journal de Québec* on Friday, September 9, 1994, CSIS is said to have infiltrated the Canadian Union of Postal Workers during a labour conflict to provide useful information to Canada Post management. The same newspaper also reported that other documents confirmed the existence of a link between CSIS and some foreign secret service organizations, including Mossad in Israel and the secret services in Italy and Jamaica.

Finally, some light should be shed regarding claims made by Brian McInnis, an advisor to former Solicitor General Doug Lewis, who admitted violating the law by giving a confidential note to the *Toronto Star*. Mr. McInnis added that CSIS also violated the law by infiltrating the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, because that network was inquiring into possible links between the racist organization Heritage Front and Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia. Following these allegations, the RCMP arrested Mr. McInnis and thoroughly searched his home.

As you can see, some serious accusations have been made and too many questions remain unanswered. Even though the Sub-Committee on National Security will look into this issue, the Official Opposition remains convinced that only a royal commission of inquiry with a very wide mandate can inform Quebecers and Canadians on CSIS activities.

Supply

(1050)

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this issue. I am a bit surprised by the fascination of members of the Bloc with this case. They appear to be very disappointed that they were not the organization or the political party with which CSIS was involved. It seems to be a clear case of CSIS envy.

The attitude of the Bloc must be questioned. The original motion shows an inclination to condemn the government for the refusal to initiate a royal commission on the illegal activities of CSIS rather than the allegation. I think the Bloc gets ahead of itself in this particular matter.

I have often listened to the Bloc accuse the Reform Party of using wild west justice and of being awfully tough on crime, but at least we believe people are innocent until they are proven guilty. The Bloc seems already to be assuming the guilt of CSIS before in fact it has been proven as such.

There are a number of allegations out there and I have made more than a few of them myself, but I am not aware at this time of any evidence that CSIS was involved in illegal activities.

There is a significant amount of evidence however that someone was involved in wrongdoing. But was it CSIS that was responsible for this wrongdoing, or was it Grant Bristow who was responsible, or was it the previous government?

How can the Bloc accuse CSIS of committing illegal activities when the investigations are presently being conducted? I am not the biggest fan of the Security Intelligence Review Committee and that is quite obvious. I am prepared to give them the benefit of the doubt until the report is tabled.

SIRC is actively investigating the role of CSIS in this issue. I know because I sat in on a SIRC interview. I know it is looking into it. I know it has spoken to a number of officials within the Reform Party. I know it has spoken to a number of people who have pertinent information about this case.

There is no reason to doubt the efficiency of the SIRC investigation. However, once the investigation is over we will get the report. At that time the pressure will be on committee members as to whether or not their report is accurate and whether their report is enough. Their integrity will be at stake at that time.

If there is evidence of wrongdoing by the previous government, will the Conservative members of SIRC enthusiastically pursue this information in their report? As the saying goes, only time will tell. I am encourage, however, that SIRC members have said they want the report to be as public as possible.

I am still concerned about what definition SIRC uses for national security and the reasons for national security. I will explain why I am concerned. On May 10, SIRC appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. When discussing the role of CSIS in technology transfer it mentioned it was limited to eight key sectors. When asked to identify those eight key sectors, the response was: "We are not at liberty to identify those eight key sectors".

Exactly one week earlier the director of CSIS, Mr. Ray Protti, had appeared before the same justice committee. He too chose to talk about technology transfer. He stated that the investigation was: "in those high technology areas like aerospace, nuclear, biochemical and telecommunications".

Here is an example of where the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was being more open than its review body. This certainly does not bode well for a truly open and public report. However we must give SIRC the opportunity to come up with the report. Its report will then go to the Solicitor General who I understand will determine what will be released.

(1055)

The Solicitor General has assured the House that it is his objective: "to make as much as possible the report public". He went on to state that he would seek legal advice to help him make up his mind on how much he could make public.

I would like to give him a little advice now. Everything should be released except the information about CSIS sources other than Grant Bristow. There is no reason why the entire issue cannot be discussed openly.

While no one has ever accused members of the Heritage Front of being Rhodes Scholars, it is safe to assume even they have figured out that CSIS was investigating them. Likewise I think it is a safe bet to assume they now think Grant Bristow was a source. There really is nothing left to hid. Why would we even try?

If the SIRC report that the Solicitor General releases to the public is not complete then the credibility of CSIS, of SIRC, of the minister and of the government will all suffer. Yes, CSIS needs a certain amount of secrecy to operate efficiently, but it cannot operate without the confidence of the Canadian people.

The release of the report is all about confidence. If it is thorough and completely public, confidence in CSIS will be there even if CSIS is guilty of some minor indiscretions. However, if the report is heavily censored in the interest of national security there will be little public confidence even if CSIS is vindicated. Any evidence of any significant censoring of SIRC's report will automatically be viewed as a cover-up. If this is the case, not only will the Reform Party be joining the Bloc in a call for a royal commission; we will be leading the demand.

Supply

The accusations that have been made are extremely serious, striking at the very heart of the democratic process. To us in Reform the most important question that must be answered is: Did the previous government use CSIS for partisan political purposes? At the very least we have a Conservative Solicitor General who was aware of the efforts of the Heritage Front to infiltrate the Reform Party and he chose not to advise the Reform Party of such.

Some may ask if he should have. I asked somebody who should know. I asked Jean-Jacques Blais, a former Liberal Solicitor General and one of the first members of SIRC. Mr. Blais replied that if he had the information when he was Solicitor General he would have notified someone in the Reform Party. When asked why Mr. Lewis did not, Mr. Blais said he could not answer for the previous government.

It will be interesting when the former Solicitor General appears before the subcommittee on national security in October to answer this question himself. However there are questions that CSIS must answer itself.

Who made the final decision permitting Bristow to attend the Reform Party meetings? I cannot imagine the source handler himself making this type of decision. Just the mere fact that Bristow, publicly known to be a member of a white supremacist neo-Nazi organization, showed up at a Reform Party rally had a detrimental effect on the party. CSIS officials must have known that his mere presence could have a negative effect on the party.

Since he would not have been sent there without high level approval, we need to know who approved his attendance and why. We need to know why Grant Bristow urged Heritage Front members to take out Reform Party memberships. We need to know why Grant Bristow even paid the \$10 membership fee for some of these Heritage Front members. We need to know why Grant Bristow was so intent on getting Heritage Front members into the Reform Party when he refused to take out a membership himself.

(1100)

We also need to know if any of this had to do with Bristow's allegiance to the Progressive Conservative Party as indicated by his work on the Hon. Otto Jelinek's 1988 campaign.

These are the types of answers that we are expecting in the SIRC report and we will not be satisfied unless these questions are definitively answered. We will also want the answers to some questions like why did Wolfgang Droege frequently show up at Reform Party meetings after he had been expelled from the party? Why did he just come and sit at these meetings without trying to say anything, without trying to distribute any of his literature and without trying to make any contacts with people in the crowd? Why did he usually have a local Toronto television

crew there to film him sitting in the audience at these Reform Party meetings? Most important, why did Wolfgang Droege appear to have some money on him when he was attending all of these meetings?

Let us not stop with Bristow or Droege. Less than two weeks ago another Heritage Front member, Max French, announced that he was running for mayor of Scarborough. At his press conference he proudly announced he was a member of both the Heritage Front and the Reform Party; a proud member of the Heritage Front, yes, but he certainly was not a proud member of the Reform Party.

After the expulsion of other Heritage Front members from the Reform Party, Max French stated that Reformers were race traitors and would be lined up against the wall with the rest of them when the revolution came. He does not sound like an enthusiastic member of any party when those kinds of statements are made. Why did he keep his Reform membership?

It is answers to these questions that SIRC must provide. The Solicitor General must release these answers if it is to maintain any credibility.

I mentioned earlier that what is at stake here is the entire democratic system. Let me explain to the House why I say that. I have talked to a number of Reform candidates from southern Ontario. They advised that they had great difficulty overcoming the smear campaign that Reformers were racist. This campaign was led by the Conservative Party. In four ridings, none of which had a sitting Liberal MP, the Reform Party finished second by less than 5,000 votes. If just 10 voters per poll in those ridings had voted Reform instead of Liberal but did not because they were worried about the racist smears we would be sitting in a very different House today.

The consequences of the racist smear campaign on Reformers are enormous and questions must be answered. With regard to the investigation into CSIS, we are prepared to wait for SIRC to complete its investigations and to make its report. We are prepared to wait for this report to be filed with the minister. We are also prepared to wait until the minister makes his report public. However, what we are not prepared to do is to wait for a cover-up.

If the SIRC report that is made public does not answer our questions we will then be more than happy to join with the member from Bellechasse in calling for a royal commission.

There are a number of other issues that do not fall under SIRC's responsibilities. There are a number of other issues in this controversy that have to be brought to light. Those issues are the handling of documents by ministers' aides within the former Solicitor General's office, an antiquated Official Secrets Act and the way it is enforced. The way that government information is classified leaves a lot of room for discussion.

Supply

These issues can and will be examined by the subcommittee on national security. While we have similar concerns as the Bloc about the political make-up of SIRC, the make-up of the subcommittee does reflect the current Parliament. It is the subcommittee on national security that should first deal with these issues of classifying information, of handling high security documents and of reviewing the Official Secrets Act.

(1105)

If the subcommittee cannot resolve these issues in this House then another royal commission into Canada's security intelligence service would be warranted.

First this House must make every effort to get to the bottom of this to avert the additional cost to the Canadian taxpayers of a royal commission. We have the vehicles in place. We have CSIS doing an internal investigation. We have SIRC doing a watchdog report and we have the national security subcommittee to investigate it.

What we do need is to have the will to be fully accountable to the Canadian people, for only in being fully accountable will we maintain the support and the confidence of the Canadian people in the job that we are trying to do.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Madam Speaker, there are problems, to say the least, with the Bloc's motion.

One of these problems has been identified by the Bloc itself when the proposer of the motion conceded there was the unfortunate absence in it of a key word, allegation. The motion originally spoke about illegal activities of CSIS as if it had been proven that such activities had in fact occurred.

As I have said in this House and outside the House the many allegations made recently about CSIS activities are so far just that, allegations. By the way, it is important to stress that these allegations relate to a period well before this government took office and before I assumed the responsibilities of Solicitor General.

To conclude that CSIS acted illegally requires analysis and conclusions based on solid evidence, that is based on definite facts, related to the legal framework created by this Parliament for the operations of CSIS and other relevant laws as well.

That is why I believe that Canadians should await the conclusion of the work, the investigation of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, into what I repeat are so far only allegations.

The requirement for the creation of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC, when Parliament passed the legislation creating the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in 1984 was designed to provide Parliament, Canadians generally and

the Solicitor General with an independent review of CSIS activities.

This body has over the years provided important insight and analysis for ministers, Parliament and the public regarding the operations of CSIS and has made recommendations to ensure that CSIS continues to operate as Parliament intended when it adopted the CSIS act.

A reading of successive SIRC reports over the years, and I am talking about reports available to the public, shows that the SIRC as a permanent body at arm's length both from CSIS and the government has found areas for improvement since CSIS was created over 10 years ago. It has also found reason to confirm the value of the work of CSIS in the interests of all Canadians.

(1110)

The point is that the SIRC was created exactly for the task that the Official Opposition in its motion says we need a royal commission to perform.

The SIRC exists to provide the review of all CSIS duties and functions. More specifically, under section 54 of the act the SIRC can investigate any matter that relates to the performance by CSIS of its duties and functions, and then provide the Solicitor General with a special report of this investigation.

A review of any such matter and the production of a special report is precisely what the SIRC has undertaken to do in response to the recent allegations. It has also stated that it intends to have a report as soon as possible. It has said that it intends to have a report available, in other words in the coming month of October.

SIRC has built up a body of expertise and experience that I think will prove extremely valuable to this present investigation.

The Official Opposition in its motion calls for the creation of a royal commission. What is a royal commission? It is an individual or a group of individuals independent of government, appointed by order in council, that is by the cabinet, with wide powers to look into a matter or matters of public concern.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee is a body of individuals appointed by order in council, by the cabinet, under the CSIS legislation to look into and report on an important matter or matters involving the activities of CSIS.

Like an ordinary royal commission it is independent of government. It is independent and at arm's length from CSIS and the minister. It has wide powers to carry out its mandate. That is why I say that in my view it is in effect like a permanent royal commission with the mandate of keeping under review the activities of CSIS and carrying out special inquiries into these activities, either of its own accord or at the request of the minister.

Supply

We have in effect already in place what the Bloc is calling for in its motion. The spokesperson for the Reform Party made the important point that since CSIS is already carrying out this work, there is no need for the creation of another body that, looking at what the history of royal commissions indicates, would involve considerable additional expense for the taxpayer.

[*Translation*]

Parliament created SIRC precisely to ensure that so-called wrongdoings such as the ones which are being raised in this House today undergo objective investigation.

Moreover, SIRC was given important statutory powers to carry out its mandate. SIRC is authorized to obtain from CSIS all necessary information to fulfil its responsibilities, including documents, reports and explanations. Obviously, SIRC has the abilities and the powers required to investigate the allegations being made.

The Official Opposition was unable to prove that we should set up another review agency to do exactly what SIRC is authorized and able to do.

[*English*]

As I have said, it is my intention, my objective, to make as much of the CSIS report into the recent allegations as public as possible, subject of course to the requirements of any relevant legislation. In fact if the legislation permits me to do so I certainly would like to make the entire report public. Mind you the spokesperson for the Official Opposition herself has pointed out there may be some justifiable reasons for some of a report of this nature not to be made public and her views should be taken into account.

(1115)

I believe the SIRC investigation and the preparation of its report should continue. While it should take the time it needs to do the job properly, as I have said SIRC has already indicated it wants to complete that work as soon as possible. It expects to have a report available in October.

I should also mention that the CSIS act provides for an Inspector General to report to the minister about CSIS. The Inspector General has been quoted publicly as saying that he himself is undertaking reviews with regard to policies and procedures governing the use of human sources by CSIS and the handling of CSIS documents. These reports will be another valuable source of information and analysis for me to use as a basis for seeing if action should be taken with regard to what has been alleged over the past weeks and months.

I want to stress as I have done before that I will not hesitate to have corrective action taken where such action is in fact necessary on the basis of real proof that there are definite problems to be corrected with regard to the work of CSIS.

However, I do not think it is fair or reasonable to make judgments in advance, as the Bloc has done in its motion, as to the value or the quality of the work of SIRC in this matter before that work is even completed.

To conclude, I submit that what the Bloc's motion calls for is not in fact necessary since Parliament in passing the law creating a framework for the operation of CSIS created an oversight mechanism for it. This involved the creation of SIRC, which I have said I look on as being very much like a permanent royal commission with a specific mandate for the ongoing review of the work of CSIS.

I believe we should allow this body to complete its work on the recent allegations. Then we should make use of the report which as I have said I intend to make public as much as is possible in the light of the requirements of the relevant legislation. Then decisions can be made on what action may be necessary to take in the light of definite proof, if there is any, with respect to problems regarding the work of CSIS.

However I submit that at this time the motion presented by the Bloc calls for action that is not necessary. It duplicates the work of a body created by Parliament which is like a royal commission. We should allow SIRC to complete its work so that its report can be completed and we can have access to it and take any action necessitated by that report.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I was pleased to hear the hon. Solicitor General acknowledge that he will take into consideration my comments about how much of the report should be made public. I hope he notes that the only exclusions I made were the names of additional sources other than Grant Bristow. I feel all else should be made public.

My concern is that some of the legislation he may be looking at to see how much flexibility he has is outdated. I would like some assurance from the hon. minister that he will use some flexibility in the interpretation of these outdated pieces of legislation so that he is not restricted and bound by classifications of material that do not apply in this case.

I would like some assurance from the hon. minister that he will be open minded in the interpretation of this legislation to allow a more open process.

(1120)

While I have the opportunity I would also like to ask for the minister's assurance that he will support the efforts of the subcommittee on national security to further investigate this issue beyond that which SIRC can do. I hope the minister will give full co-operation to and persuade government members of this House to support the subcommittee in its efforts to get to the bottom of this.

Supply

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's comments. I want to make clear that the legal advice I will seek cannot be limited to those comments, no matter how useful or well-intended.

The hon. member says that certain legislation is outdated. I suppose she is talking about the Official Secrets Act. That may be the case but since that legislation is passed by Parliament I cannot ignore it, whatever my personal views about the relevance of the legislation today.

That is why I have to seek appropriate legal advice from law officers of the crown with respect to how far I can go in releasing the SIRC report and with respect to responding to any relevant legislation. I want to be very open minded and forthcoming, but as I said I am not in a position to ignore the relevant laws on this matter as adopted by Parliament.

Certainly the work of the subcommittee can be very useful. I cannot say what the committee should be doing but perhaps at some point it may want to carry out a review of the relevance of the current provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

However, all of us in this House are still bound by the relevant legislation on this matter which has been passed by this House and Parliament as a whole. All of us have to take that into account in our activities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, I think the Solicitor General does not understand the object of the request made by the Official Opposition. The request for a royal commission of inquiry in this case is not just a whim.

If you look back over past events, you see that so far we have had the McDonald Commission and the MacKenzie Commission, which were both Royal Commissions of Inquiry. Meanwhile, some joint committees have examined the issue of national security. But the only reports Parliament has followed up on are those of the McDonald and the MacKenzie Royal Commissions. Parliament has always ignored the reports tabled by the joint committees, except to implement two or three minor and watered-down recommendations to amend the legislation.

A royal commission of inquiry would help us to clarify the whole situation and might even prove to be in the interest of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, which is increasingly losing its credibility in the mind of the Canadian taxpayers.

As Solicitor General, you seem to trust SIRC completely. Then, tell me why SIRC is not aware of the allegations recently published in the newspapers, as you put it? Because these allegations relate to events which happened during 1990 and 1991. We are now in 1994—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but he undoubtedly knows that

questions must be put to the Chair. Members cannot directly ask questions to the minister concerned. The minister may answer the question.

[*English*]

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, the McDonald royal commission was created to do its work at a time when there was no equivalent of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The security service of the RCMP did not operate within a specific legal framework as does the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and there was no mechanism for oversight or review. At that time something had to be set up to carry out the kind of work that SIRC is now mandated to do under the relevant legislation. It was a very different situation.

Now we have a civilian security service that was created specifically by Parliament and which has a specific mandate and authority. It has limitations. For example it cannot look into matters involving lawful dissent; it cannot look into lawful advocacy, protest or dissent. This is clearly set out in the law.

(1125)

We are dealing with a very different situation today. The experience of the McDonald commission is not relevant. As I said, it related to a time when there was no civilian security service operating in a specific legal framework with an oversight system as we have now.

Finally, the hon. member asked me whether SIRC was seized with certain allegations. Since SIRC is a body independent from me, I am not in a position to comment.

I conclude by saying I am continuously amazed by the interest of Bloc members in anything with the word royal connected to it and in having a royal body set up. Perhaps they should check with Mr. Parizeau who could possibly be very upset to see the interest of the Bloc in this House in relying on and calling for a royal commission.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on the motion put forward by the Bloc Québécois today because I think that it is imperative that we have such a debate. The question we must ask ourselves is why we are now requesting a royal commission of inquiry on the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I use the term royal commission of inquiry not because I am a royalist, but because I have to use the tools made available to us by this Parliament. Moreover, I would like you, Madam Speaker, to assure the Solicitor General that in an independent Quebec, we will not call such a body a royal commission of inquiry, but rather a state commission, a commission of inquiry of the sovereign state of Quebec.

Supply

Some hon. members: Right on!

Mr. Bellehumeur: That being said, it may be necessary to look at the origin of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act to be able to understand the whole problem. You will see that it goes back to the commission of inquiry concerning certain activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, better known as the McDonald Commission, which published its report in 1981. The commission had been established in 1977 in the wake of a series of illegal acts and practices by the former security service of the RCMP.

The McDonald Commission had the mandate to look into illegal activities on the part of a supposedly reputable institution respected by the majority of English Canadians, and I am talking about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, better known under the acronym RCMP. It is important to go back to the 70s to really understand the history of the secret service in Canada, but first, let us look at the act by which the Canadian secret service was created.

In 1966, the RCMP became the responsibility of the Solicitor General when it was given the status of a government department. Before that, the police force was under the authority of the Minister of Justice. The reorganization that took place in 1970 was the result of another royal commission of inquiry, the MacKenzie Commission, which published its report in 1969. The commission's main recommendation was to create a civilian security service. The commission considered it inappropriate to leave security functions to the ordinary police services, and the special operations branch did not have the complexity or the analysis expertise deemed necessary to play its role in security matters.

It also recommended that a bill be passed to authorize investigation methods like undercover operations, and to improve the security screening process, including the addition of an appeal procedure. Accordingly, a security intelligence service was established under a civilian director. Until then, you could tell RCMP agents by their red uniform, but security agents became less easily identifiable and then, I am sure you agree, unrecognizable.

Let us go back to the 1970s period when things went awry. Uniformed officers, unlike civilians, all had positions of power. At the end of the 1970s, for example, not a single civilian had a position above that of an officer in a planning or operations sub-branch. RCMP employees, therefore, wielded absolute power. Not only did they have police powers, but they were also had considerable leeway with the structure. Civilians knew almost nothing of what was going on in that section of the RCMP.

(1130)

Ironically, the same thing is happening in 1994 with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, but this time, Parliament itself and the general public in Canada and Quebec are kept

in the dark concerning our intelligence service. Questions are asked, but there are no real answers. The fact that elected representatives could not get near or watch the RCMP in those days led to wrongdoings. And believe me, there were a lot of wrongdoings.

The October crisis stunned everybody, both the Quebec population and the government. The then Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, did not know, when he invoked the War Measures Act, that he was unleashing a mad dog. I hope, and I would like to believe, that he was not aware of that.

The government realized that it knew very little about the sovereignty philosophy in Quebec. Therefore, it asked the RCMP to adopt an active strategy on that issue and to get all the information it could on the bad separatists.

In several cases and in various contexts, members of the security service committed extremely illegal acts and I think it is worth mentioning again some of the actions taken by the RCMP during those days. They set fire to a barn in order to prevent the so-called separatists or sovereignists from holding a meeting. They broke into the offices of a leftist news agency in Montreal, stole and destroyed files, broke into the offices of the Parti Quebecois, a legitimate political party, and even stole lists of members of that democratically recognized party.

When I think about those days, I still shiver with rage. It is a pitiful page in the history of Canada, especially when you see that one of the people involved, Mr. Normand Chamberland, who was accused of stealing dynamite at the time, has been promoted within the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and is now the Deputy Commissioner for Quebec, no less.

It seems that those responsible for enforcing the law can break it once in a while and even get rewarded for it. It is also important to note that the RCMP did not commit that kind of abuse only in the 1970s and only against separatists. The McDonald Commission indicated that other illegal activities had occurred, such as opening of mail, illegal access to supposedly confidential government information, planned prostitution, blackmail and other actions of that type which had been taking place for a long time with regard to various aspects of national security, from spying and counter-intelligence to subversion.

The main recommendation of the McDonald Report advocated the creation of a totally independent intelligence service of a civil nature and it did so for the same reasons as the MacKenzie Commission did, that is the need to restructure the agency with a view to collecting and analyzing data instead of using mainly deterrence and repression. Therefore, the mandate of the proposed new agency would be defined by legislation and the law would state clearly which threats to Canada's security the agency would be authorized to investigate. The definition would cover four areas: first, espionage and sabotage; second, foreign interference; third, political violence and terrorism; and

Supply

finally, subversive activities aimed at destroying the democratic system.

The report also recommended that the new agency be prohibited from investigating legitimate advocacy, protest or dissent, and that it not have the power to implement security measures.

All this led to the McDonald report published in 1981. The government indicated that it would accept the principal recommendation to create a civilian security intelligence service. Subsequently, a special transition group was set up at the Department of the Solicitor General to prepare legislation to that end.

In 1983, Bill C-157 was tabled in the House of Commons to create the Canadian Security Intelligence Service or CSIS, along the lines recommended by the McDonald Commission but with some major changes and additions.

As a result of severe criticism from the public that the service's mandate was too broad, the bill died on the Order Paper. During the second session of the 32nd Parliament, a new bill was tabled in the House. This was Bill C-9 which, for all intents and purposes, incorporated all the recommendations of the commission. Parliament adopted the bill, with very few changes, in 1984.

(1135)

The legislation was intended to restrict the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and create monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service did not exceed its mandate.

Central to the bill is the definition of the expression "threats to the security of Canada," which determines the general parameters of CSIS. The definition also specifies that lawful advocacy, protest or dissent are not included. If we consider this definition and the allegations published in the media, especially about spying on a democratically recognized party—we have seen that happen before—and investigating the CBC and certain leaders of the Canadian Jewish Congress, there are some very real problems.

CSIS members seem to have trouble with the definition of lawful advocacy. In any case, if the past is any indication of what the future holds, we can assume that members of CSIS have the same attitude as the former RCMP intelligence section, which does not augur well for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We have the right to know, and we have the right to call for a royal commission of inquiry.

As far as the basic duties of the service are concerned, these are set forth in section 12: to collect by investigation, and analyse and retain, information and intelligence respecting threats to security. According to section 13 of the Act, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service may provide security

assessments on future government employees. Finally, under section 16, CSIS may assist in the collection of information relating to defence and national affairs, by investigating and conducting surveillance of any persons, other than Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

As we consider the history of intelligence services in Canada and their questionable activities, which always raise a number of questions in my mind and in the minds of many taxpayers in Canada and Quebec, there is one question we have every right to ask: "Who watches the intelligence agency that is watching us?"

One would expect that in 1994, our institutions would be monitored by people elected through the democratic process as the legitimate representatives of the present Parliament of Canada. Not at all, that is not the way it works in Canada, in 1994. Legislation was enacted to establish the office of the Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee, better known by its acronym, SIRC, as we said earlier.

The Inspector General is appointed by the Governor in Council and his duties are to review the operational activities of CSIS and to report to the Solicitor General and SIRC, as well as to monitor the legality and relevance of these activities.

SIRC is made up of five members maximum, chosen from Privy Council members, appointed by the Governor in Council after consultation between the Prime Minister and the leaders of recognized opposition parties in the House of commons. We will see that it is not always the case. Its role is to review CSIS operations and to report to the minister and Parliament.

When it comes to reporting to Parliament, MPs are certainly not overwhelmed with information. As parliamentarians we know virtually nothing of what goes on within the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. This department spends millions of dollars, but Parliament, the supreme authority, knows almost nothing.

Those who watch over CSIS were never elected to the job. They are political appointees, and MPs are deliberately excluded.

Do you think I am reassured by the fact that the deeds, or alleged acts, committed under the Conservative government are being investigated by a group with a Conservative majority? Certainly not, it rather worries me. Who are these valiant watchdogs, that some journalists humorously call lapdogs? Three of them are personal friends of the former Prime Minister of Canada, and very, very close to the Conservative Party. Another comes from the ranks of the Liberal Party of Canada; he is a former president of the party. You know him, he is the lawyer who is getting \$250,000 to do some kind of inquiry with some native representatives. As a hobby, he sits on the review committee. Quite a review he must do.

Supply

(1140)

The last member was appointed from among the ranks of the NDP. Ever since I have been sitting on the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and on the Sub-Committee on National Security—I have not seen the latter yet and I wonder whether it is really interested in meeting with us or even in doing its job—I have doubts about the kind of report all of them will be able to produce.

Where are the members representing the current Official Opposition? Where is the member supposed to represent the other opposition party in this House? They are nowhere to be found. We are asked to trust five individuals, appointed by our predecessors, who are looking into extremely important activities which have an impact on their own political party.

The main objective in creating CSIS was probably to have some control or to check into allegations but in reality this has not happened.

As crazy as it may seem, when the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was in the planning stages, some members and certain opposition parties said that there was no need to create a civilian body and that all that was needed was a piece of legislation clearly setting out the RCMP's frame of reference so that it would not go overboard.

For someone from Quebec who has lived through the 1970s, which were a turning point in the history of the province, this seems rather strange. I am not referring to myself as I was still quite young in those days. It is somewhat ridiculous to trust this agency once more, but again some people thought that the RCMP could still do the job.

The only thing I find reassuring is that when the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was created, there were those who thought that its mandate was too broad. I could not agree more with them and history has proven them right.

Similarly, the definition of the word "threat" is very controversial. And again I agree with those who thought at the time that it was so vague that it could encompass a variety of activities not even closely related to real security. Current events have borne this out.

The government is of the opinion that the definition should be interpreted in the context of, on one hand, the provisions protecting legitimate dissidence and limiting the agency's authority to what is strictly necessary and, on the other, the new monitoring and surveillance system. According to the government, within such a context, the definition is a reasonable one.

When I look more closely at the investigative power of SIRC and its access to information, I get scared. I get very, very scared.

Another concern of mine is the range of the SIRC mandate that allows it to use any investigation technique. The two most serious issues have to do with how this organization is being monitored: first, the office of the Inspector General must have access to information, and second, so must SIRC.

We must acknowledge that, before the Sub-Committee on National Security, I was told that SIRC has access to every document possible. Indeed, it has access to all this documentation, but only if the Canadian Security Intelligence Service agrees to hand it out. And that is not how things work out in reality.

SIRC does not have access to Cabinet documents, either. Yet, as we have learned recently, an assistant of a former Solicitor General of Canada can walk out with two cases of documents, with no questions asked, while SIRC is not even aware of the existence of such documentation. This really belongs in the realm of fiction.

Why can we not grant this investigative power to people who have a vested interest in the truth and are able to reassure the public? In fact, this issue was raised when Bill C-157 was debated. We examined the possibility of implementing some kind of parliamentary review, as recommended by the McDonald Commission. At the time, both Opposition parties and some government members supported the creation of a special Parliamentary committee which would have had access to information regarding CSIS to ensure that it does not overstep its mandate.

Madam Speaker, you are indicating that my time is almost up, yet I could go on and on.

I want the government to know that there is no way we can get definite answers to our questions if we leave it to SIRC. I have sat and I still sit on the Sub-Committee on National Security. When an elected member of Parliament, a legitimate representative of the people is told by witnesses that they do not have to answer either yes or no, we have a problem. A very serious problem indeed. The system is sick. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service has become a monster that no one can control, not even Parliamentarians, and this is totally unacceptable in 1994.

(1145)

That is why only a royal commission of inquiry can get to the bottom of this issue. Taxpayers would then get satisfactory answers to questions they have been asking ever since the creation of CSIS in 1984.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I did indeed listen carefully to the comments made by my hon. colleague from the Opposition. First, the hon. member referred to events that occurred in 1970, which I think is a rather sensitive period, but we are not here to go through that again, since this was already covered by the McDonald Commission, which led to the creation of SIRC and CSIS.

Supply

Moreover, I find rather strange that when abuses are discussed, those which happened in the 1950s are never mentioned. The hon. member did not mention the Padlock Act passed by the Union Nationale. They went after the Asbestos workers in 1949. They went after my constituents in Murdochville. I find it passing strange that nothing is said about abuses done either at the federal level or especially at the provincial level.

I am not here to criticize the province or the country, but I would like nevertheless to indicate to the hon. member that SIRC was created to ensure the presence of a civilian body operating at arms length both from CSIS and the government itself. We are looking forward to the report SIRC should present in the next few weeks, and I am sure it will be to everyone's satisfaction, or at least I hope so. We will see what we will be able to discuss here with the Opposition members.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I think that the hon. member did not ask a direct question but made some questionable allegations, which is even worse.

He said that I referred to the events of 1970. Yes, I did. I do not think that we have to go back to 1950 to dig up provincial problems, when the RCMP is exclusively under federal jurisdiction. We are here to prevent more overlapping, to see that the present Constitution and set-up are respected. Later on, when Quebec has decided on its future, it will be different story.

I must say to the hon. member that if we consider what happened in the 1970s and the information released by the CBC on CSIS's investigation of some members of the Jewish Congress in Toronto, the possibility that CSIS financed or helped found the Heritage Front, the employment of Bristow, a member of Heritage Front, as a bodyguard of the leader of a recognized party, I think that we can make comparisons between 1970 and 1994. There are still reasons today to demand a royal commission of inquiry, just as there were when the McDonald Commission started its hearings in 1977. All we want is to get answers to the questions we have been asking since that time. We never got any answers.

Just by looking at the Harlequin reports published once a year by the SIRC for the past two or three years, it is obvious that we will not be able to get answers even though we, as parliamentarians, were democratically elected by the people of Canada to oversee and monitor public expenditures. These little documents published by the SIRC from time to time will not shed much light on these activities. We need a royal commission of inquiry and I think we have enough allegations to warrant the setting up of such a commission. If there is nothing serious in these allegations, why is the Inspector General of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service looking into the matter? Why is the SIRC looking into the matter and why were its people so nervous when they approved before the Sub-Committee on National Security of which I am a member?

(1150)

Why is it that parliamentarians felt the need to create this Sub-Committee on National Security to study these allegations? Because they had good grounds for doing so. But, despite all that, we will not get any answers unless we set up a royal commission of inquiry to look into the matter. Then our questions would be answered.

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague from the Bloc why he is not prepared to give SIRC an opportunity to prove it is incompetent of coming up with a report that is satisfactory to us.

The hon. member and probably most other members in the House know how I feel about the make-up of the Security Intelligence Review Committee. It is not a make-up of which I approve. It is not a process of which I approve. However I feel we should allow it to do its job and then judge whether or not the report is adequate and fulfils the needs of the Canadian public to know the facts.

Why is the hon. member unprepared and unwilling to let SIRC complete the report, then sit in judgment and ask for a further commission to be established because the committee has not done its job rather than accusing it of not doing its job when it is not given the chance to do it.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to answer that question from my hon. colleague whom I admire and for whom I have a liking since we once worked together. There is something else I admire about her, her naivety.

When the SIRC came before the Sub-Committee on National Security, we could see that we would not get answers to our questions. To questions as simple as: "On what date did Mr. So-and-So contact Mr. Such-and-Such?" the Service member's answer was: "I cannot answer you, Mr. Bellehumeur".

When I asked other questions on facts not related to national security, I was told: "We cannot answer you, Mr. Bellehumeur. We will take note of that question and we will get an answer for you, but it will come from the Solicitor General of Canada, not from us".

What will we get from the SIRC? What answers will we get to our questions? Answers censored by the Solicitor General of Canada? That does not satisfy me. Nor does it satisfy the taxpayers I represent. We really need a royal commission of inquiry, where the principals will come face to face with us and will be compelled to give the commissioners answers to the questions we asked and to which we did not get answers from the SIRC.

Supply

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, does the hon. member realize that the review committee can enter any office or public institution and visit all the premises, examine every document, voucher, or file in that office or institution? I get the impression the hon. member did not quite understand when the Solicitor General said the review committee has the same powers as a royal commission of inquiry.

I do not see any purpose in having a royal commission. Since members opposite always complain about duplication, why should we have a royal commission? We already have a review committee, the SIRC. We all know that SIRC was created precisely to investigate allegations such as those made recently.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I thought that, after one year in Parliament, the hon. member would have lost some of the illusions he still seems to harbour.

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I object to that personal remark. I asked a question and I want to get an answer. Let us leave character out of this.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order. The hon. member knows that no reference to another member's character should be made in this House.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Madam Speaker, I apologize if I insulted the hon. member, but nevertheless, that is what I think.

(1155)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I believe that the hon. member knows what he is saying, since his words are very well chosen. I ask him to withdraw them.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Which ones? He made two objections. Does he want me to withdraw the expression "I think" or the comments that I made on him?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I consider that the member has withdrawn his words.

Mr. Gagnon: You know, Madam Speaker, the Opposition member is still a good devil. I rise today to speak on this motion.

Mr. Bellehumeur: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I believe that the member just attacked me by saying that I am a devil, whether a good or a bad one, but still a devil. I would ask the member to withdraw his words.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the parliamentary secretary withdraw his words?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I did not use them pejoratively.

Mr. Bellehumeur: I accept the hon. member's apologies.

Mr. Gagnon: As I was saying, I rise today to speak on this motion which, as the solicitor general mentioned, involves a certain number of problems and misunderstandings. It seems essential to me that the members of this House understand and fully appreciate the complex and sensitively ordered system of checks and balances that is part of our national system of security intelligence.

Also, that system is designed to ensure a balance between the protection of individual freedoms and the need to protect the Canadian public against threats to the security of their country. Most people will agree that we must protect Canada against threats to its security and that this protection requires a security intelligence agency.

There is no doubt in my mind that Canada needs a security intelligence service, as all other industrialized countries do. Let us take for example the threat that terrorism involves. Canadian democracy is based on a climate of freedom and political objectives are met through open discussions, debates or other legitimate activities toward lawful advocacy.

However, that climate, as well as public safety, is jeopardized when an individual or a group is trying to meet those political goals through violence or threat of violence.

In the 1980s, terrorism became a major concern for safety and the government gave CSIS the mandate to gather, on a priority basis, security information on terrorism. Our first line of defence must be information.

The other thing which is threatening us is espionage. Since the emergence of nation-states, espionage has become part of everyday life. Every nation is striving to improve its position within the international community. However, we have to admit that even if the political scene is better world-wide, some nations still resort to deceptive or clandestine activities for the purpose of enhancing their international position.

Canada must protect itself against such threats, whether they take the form of traditional espionage or of any other means of illegally obtaining the technological know-how of this country.

(1200)

Canada must also be able to identify and to thwart steps taken by foreign countries or agents seeking to secretly influence or harass our ethnic communities. Again, we must protect those who have elected to settle in Canada and make it their new homeland.

Here also, the gathering of good intelligence is at the very heart of our first line of defence. I am convinced that the CSIS Act is an efficient piece of legislation, enforced according to the wishes of Parliament set forth ten years ago. The CSIS Act provides a legislative framework likely to ensure the delicate balance between efficient national security and the respect of

Supply

individual rights and freedoms. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act defines the mandate of CSIS and gives it the necessary powers to fulfill it.

It provides a unique operational framework for CSIS. It defines the powers of the service and specifies its limits. These take the form of various control mechanisms: political controls, subject to ministerial accountability and responsibility; judicial controls and external controls by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, or SIRC.

The act also provides a mechanism allowing any person or group of persons to complain about any aspect of CSIS activities. Furthermore, the Security Offences Act, which was passed at the same time as the CSIS Act, confirms the RCMP's responsibility concerning security offences, as well as its responsibility in preventing such offences.

These two acts provide a legislative framework flexible enough to adapt efficiently to the circumstances of each case. Furthermore it should be emphasized that the political and judicial structure of these two acts is unique in the world. The government used policy directives to guide their interpretation and implementation.

The main stakeholders in the Canadian security intelligence system made sure that the legislation was practical and efficient. The service has developed and follows a strict and satisfactory investigation procedure. Since 1984, the Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee have played their role in an orderly and strict manner.

The Solicitor General relies a great deal on their work, especially on the reports of the Inspector General that enable him to make sure that the service is conforming to legislation and following departmental directives on orientations. The review committee's annual report that the Solicitor General tables in Parliament completes the annual cycle of public accountability.

Finally, the RCMP and CSIS have established measures and developed mechanisms for co-operation. This is how the legislation works today. Solid legislation, detailed government instructions and an efficient internal administration are the elements which allow the service to fulfil the mandate it received from Parliament ten years ago.

The government does not stop there. I wish to remind everyone that this government is constantly trying to find means to improve the quality of the service. As the minister responsible for CSIS the Solicitor General must make sure that in its daily operations the service maintains a fair balance between national security requirements and the rights and freedoms of Canadians. The minister does that by using his authority to approve and to

give directions and also by relying on the reports of the Inspector General and the review committee.

Therefore, his task is to exercise a ministerial control. He answers for the CSIS to cabinet and to Parliament. Two main processes allow the minister to fulfil that responsibility. The first one is his approval or concurring authority.

(1205)

In keeping with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, the Solicitor General must personally approve all investigation warrant requests, all agreements concluded between CSIS and other organizations, departments, provinces and foreign countries, and all requests for data collection in Canada by CSIS on behalf of foreign countries.

Now, let us examine the other act, passed in 1994, the Security Offences Act. This act confirms the RCMP's overriding responsibility in investigating certain security offences. Intelligence gathering, protection and enforcement are the three pillars of our security system.

The RCMP and CSIS have complementary functions. Each service assumes a distinct role within the wider framework of our national security system. CSIS is responsible for gathering intelligence concerning threats to security and giving warning about such threats. The RCMP is responsible for investigating into offences, either planned or committed and, above all, for crime prevention.

In order to facilitate CSIS's task, the CSIS Act contains detailed definitions of possible threats to the security of Canada.

This enables CSIS to rapidly adapt to circumstances in our constantly evolving world and to ensuing threats, as was Parliament's wish ten years ago. For example, the CSIS Act has allowed this organization to adapt to political and economic upheavals in the world during the last ten years.

Although areas of concern are not the same, we can still feel very strongly that hostile intelligence services threaten our national security. In matters of terrorism, new threats to the security of Canada have evolved as a consequence of foreign conflicts being unfortunately introduced into Canada. Terrorism is a scourge that spares no nation on Earth. Unfortunately it does not seem to be receding, quite the contrary.

Ever since its creation in 1984, CSIS has been able to evolve considerably thanks to the flexibility provided by the act and to ministerial directives. The act continues to give us the necessary means to face any subversive action. Naturally, because of its very nature, a security intelligence service must remain secret. This is particularly necessary in some cases, when the right of someone to privacy is to be protected.

Secrecy is also required to protect certain operational activities like staff distribution, modes of operation and sources of information. Everybody recognizes that secrecy as an end in itself does not serve anyone.

I have touched on the kind of security intelligence system that Parliament wanted to meet the needs of democracy, and I have touched on some of the real threats that make such a system a necessity in a democracy.

I am only echoing the words of the Solicitor General when I say that we do not need to set up a royal commission of inquiry, because we already have in place systems like the SIRC, that have the wide powers necessary to conduct an in-depth inquiry.

Therefore, before deciding on anything, let us wait until the Security Intelligence Review Committee has completed its job and submitted its report to the Solicitor General. This should be done shortly. Once the report has been submitted, as parliamentarians we will be able to take the necessary steps.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for his very enlightening speech. I also want to congratulate him on making his remarks entirely in French, from beginning to end, which is a first in this House for him.

If I understood the member correctly, the Solicitor General rubber-stamps special mandates, and one must trust that everything is in order since the agency publishes a new annual report every year.

(1210)

I read the report made public in 1993. It is a ten-page document, with each page only half full to make room for some very interesting graphics. It is not with such a report, that would hardly meet grade 12 standards, that we are going to reassure the population regarding certain allegations.

The Bloc Québécois has never questioned the need for such an agency. I believe that any self-respecting nation ought to have this kind of agency; there is no doubt about that. The point we raised is that allegations were made and if the Solicitor General approves everything, this means that he knew that someone was spying on the Reform Party from within. This is intolerable.

That is why, in case of allegations, one must go beyond the annual report. Do you know how difficult it is to get into CSIS? It takes about one hour to get all the doors unlocked. If they see you coming, they obviously have the time to put any file they do not want you to see in false-bottom drawers. There is no guarantee that an investigation can get all the facts. If something is secret, top secret, or top, top, top secret, obviously you will not find it lying on a table. It will be securely locked up in a file drawer nobody has access to.

Supply

How can we guarantee that an investigation will get to the bottom of things? That is what we are wondering. This is the reason why we say that it is all nice and dandy to wait for the report, but the allegations are too serious. We are just about to enter very difficult times in Canada. We are no fools, but we want to make sure that what happened in 1970 will not happen again. We do not want to see history repeat itself. We want to go through this difficult transition as adults and in accordance with democratic principles, not with a top secret service which is going to plant bombs whenever it pleases.

So I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General how can he guarantee that we are protected from such an occurrence?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, first of all, the allegations made before CIRC about CSIS will be examined. This is not an annual report, but rather a report that will examine the issues and the allegations that have been made against the intelligence service by the opposition. I must conclude, however, that there are members on this side of the House who are on the sub-committee looking at allegations about our security intelligence service.

I can also tell you that, in answer to the member for Rimouski—Témiscouata, one of the things we have recognized, particularly with respect to the CIRC and CSIS, is that it is unacceptable that such a group be asked to spy on a legitimate political party. I think that everyone in this House recognizes that this is not the goal of this government and that if it has already been done—I was not there then—but I can tell you this: I know these are difficult times, but I am nevertheless happy to hear that the hon. member recognizes the importance of having an intelligence service with a mandate to ensure Canada's integrity, particularly in light of the industrial and technological espionage that we see nowadays.

I can assure the member that it is not the goal of the service to spy on political groups.

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Madam Speaker, I would like to react to comments made by the hon. member from the Bloc who said that she is afraid these secrets are in hidden boxes, locked in drawers and cabinets. I think the reality is that these secret documents are passed around by staffers. They are taken home. They are left in open boxes in basements. We should be concerned about the lack of security of classified documents.

My question for the Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada is this. Is the hon. member aware of how these documents are classified?

Supply

(1215)

The hon. member made a comment that he does not want secrets for secret's sake. How are highly classified documents labelled as such? Does the hon. member know?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, actually I do not know and that is the idea of the inquest being held by SIRC. It is to look into these various allegations. The hon. member also brought forward before the committee a number of questions. I am told there are more than 130.

I am sure that we will have to answer many of those questions and surely others put forward by the Bloc members as well as members on this side. I can assure the hon. member that I hope we will be able to answer a lot of them.

Again, it will be up to the Solicitor General to make sure that the information made public will not undermine the national security interests of Canada. I am convinced that a lot of these questions will be answered to the satisfaction of the opposition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford): Madam Speaker, I would have a question for the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General. I listened carefully to his speech and I must tell you that it sounded to me like he had a lot of good to say about the previous administration. To listen to him, I wonder why he did not run for the Conservative Party in the last elections if everything was going so well.

Considering that we have a democratic system and that nothing is more sacred than democracy in this country, in Canada and Quebec, does he not agree that it would be interesting from time to time to have a commission, whether royal or not—I say royal commission because that is how they are called in Canada—to have a high-level commission investigate, especially when officials of the SIRC appearing before a sub-committee refuse to answer certain questions?

They did not answer all the questions. Would it not be time to have a commission investigate and shed light on this so that the people of Canada know exactly what is happening?

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, unlike the hon. member's leader and Leader of the Opposition, I never ran for the Conservative Party. But I can you tell you this: for one thing, let us allow let the process to run its course.

First of all, the SIRC was established specifically to answer questions raised by the member opposite as well as by interest groups. So, based on the facts or evidence submitted to us concerning the allegations made against CSIS, I trust we will be able to make an informed decision regarding this service. I think we should let the organization do its job. I am convinced that the

hon. member opposite and our colleague from the Reform Party will have ample opportunity to scrutinize the report in October.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Before resuming debate, I would like to read a quote from Beaudesne's sixth edition, citation 478. This morning a couple of times I hesitated to interrupt speakers but citation 478 states:

The proceedings of a committee may not be referred to in debate before they have been laid upon the Table.

I would just ask hon. members to be aware of this rule.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan): Madam Speaker, I want to begin my speech with a brief historical overview. In 1946, with the RCMP's increased responsibilities for security, the personnel assigned to security tasks as, for the first time, separated organizationally from the Investigations Directorate and grouped in the Special "I" Branch.

In 1956, the Special "I" Branch was made a directorate within the RCMP, under the command of a deputy commissioner.

(1220)

In 1969, the Royal Commission on Security recommended the establishment of a civilian security agency. The government rejected this recommendation but announced its intention to give the Special "I" Branch a separate status and to increase its civilian personnel.

Between 1971 and 1974, especially but not exclusively in Quebec, the security service mounted a series of operations, many of which were apparently illegal, in order to neutralize radical and separatist groups.

On March 27, 1975, the federal Cabinet produced a directive governing the security service's activities; this directive remained secret until 1978.

In 1976, a year later, Corporal Samson was tried following an incident unrelated to this affair, but revealed his participation in Operation Bricole in 1972. This operation involved breaking and entering and stealing files, especially on politics in Quebec.

Various events occurred over the years, but let us go to November 29, 1984. The members of SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, were appointed. The chairman was Ronald Atkey, a former Conservative Cabinet minister, as if by chance.

In February 1985, the federal government's budget estimates showed that CSIS, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, had a meagre budget of about \$115 million; I say meagre because today its budget exceeds \$200 million. This still represents, in the midst of an economic crisis, a considerable amount.

Supply

Despite this huge amount coming from the pockets of Canadian and Quebec taxpayers, Parliament only plays a minor role in monitoring the review of CSIS activities. Even reviewing the budget only skims the surface as the CSIS budget amounts, in fact, to a single line in the 1994–95 Estimates. I know from experience that when Mr. Elcock, a senior director of CSIS, appeared before the justice committee I was on, we asked him, to no avail, how these millions of dollars spent on national security were used. We never at any time—the evidence is all around us—received anything even remotely resembling an answer. That is not really surprising since Mr. Elcock has a reputation that probably always precede him.

In this regard, Richard Cléroux, a writer and former reporter with the Toronto-based daily newspaper the *Globe and Mail*, thinks that Mr. Elcock is very intelligent and plays political hardball. He sees him more as a Jesuit than an Oblate and thinks that he would make a formidable opponent of the independency movement.

What is most important is not that he refuses to answer our questions despite being accountable to taxpayers but that he leads an organization that seems to be above government control, that costs over \$200 million a year and whose activities we cannot find out anything about, let alone check. That an organization with millions of dollars at its disposal is beyond our control is rather disquieting. It is troubling for taxpayers and from a national security standpoint. How far can we go in letting our people put our money to work and for what reasons?

Talking about CSIS, opinions vary, according to experts. One of the questions we must ask ourselves is this: Could the organizations responsible for our national security with so little monitoring engage in illegal activities? It happened in the past. Let us just say that by asking the question, we are begging the answer to it.

(1225)

Money can do anything, really. But considering the economic situation, our present state of affairs, and the demographics and the geography of our vast country, could this really happen? Well, yes, it could, but is it likely? Personally, I would say that not only is it likely, it is very likely.

Mr. Jean-Paul Brodeur, a criminology professor at the Université de Montréal, who specializes in intelligence services, among other things, even mentions that the Americans are sometimes taken for a ride, even though they have a much tighter control system than we do, in the form of committees with wide-ranging powers in both houses of Congress.

Who has forgotten the famous Oliver North, who was taking orders from above and literally thumbed his nose at everything else?

Mrs. Lorraine Lagacé, the former Quebec delegate in Ottawa, under Mr. René Lévesque, has some thoughts on this matter. She says that most English Canadians are not interested in looking at legal mechanisms, that what really counts for them is democracy, but that if they must choose between democratic rules and a united Canada, they will always opt for a united Canada.

That is precisely how they see this issue, so, no matter what the RCMP or CSIS says, the mandate of secret services will always be to save Canada before anything else.

CSIS employees, whom we pay more than \$200 million per year, are not accountable. These people only have to table some kind of report before a pseudo-monitoring committee made up of political appointees. In fact, that review committee must phone CSIS before going to its offices to look into files, and they do not have access to all files. This is what you call transparency!

The public does have the right to know and we, elected representatives, have the basic duty of providing the information. What is happening with the more than \$200 million paid in taxes? CSIS is a monster that nobody can control, not even the government. Consequently, you can imagine what is happening! This is why the Bloc Québécois is asking for a royal commission of inquiry.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I realize that the hon. member stopped after ten minutes. Am I to understand that you are sharing your allotted time with a colleague?

Mr. St-Laurent: Indeed, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Fine. Questions and comments. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned again that we have no way of monitoring CSIS activities and referred to events dating back to 1970. We have been through this before. Today, all we want to do is ensure that SIRC can report on the allegations made either by the opposition or people whose rights have supposedly been, shall we say, impinged upon by CSIS.

I wonder if the hon. member would acknowledge that we now have in 1994 a service and a control committee which did not exist earlier on. I understand that this monitoring committee is made up of people tied to the previous government, but the hon. member should recognize that, if a seat at SIRC becomes vacant, we have the obligation to consult the opposition leaders.

(1230)

So, I would like to know if the hon. member recognizes the existence of provisions in the act setting up SIRC which stipulate that we need to consult the opposition before appointing anyone to this committee?

Supply

Mr. St-Laurent: Madam Speaker, of course, we must take certain guidelines into account, and this is provided for in this context.

However, the question raised here today is that we believe it is particularly absurd to see the lack of control by the House of Commons over an institution to which it pays so many millions dollars every year and from which it really cannot get answers. On the contrary, people are asked to answer questions simply.

They do not have to give exact details on individuals in particular with specific dates and amounts; these things are not asked, especially when we are in committee. We ask people to tell us how it works and what happens internally. We talk about different aspects which have something to do with the way our tax dollars are spent.

We give \$200 million dollars a year to CSIS, Madam Speaker, but I cannot explain to my constituents how the money is spent. I can only say to them that I do not have the slightest idea of how CSIS spends this money. I know that it hires people, of course. But what do they do exactly?

The people from across the way do not seem to be interested in speaking about what happened before, but we must not forget that it did happen. It is part of our history, and it must not be forgotten. We must not be afraid of repeating that the taxpayers' money was used for terrorist acts specially directed at some Quebecers accused of separatist activities.

With this in mind, we are justified in asking this question: will the taxpayers' money be used again for terrorist activities? This is the question we are asking today. It is a monster gone out of control.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, it is false to claim that activities of this kind take place in Canada. I believe that the hon. member has the privilege of sitting here in the House of Commons, the right to express his opinions and the privilege of sitting on the Sub-Committee on National Security. He has the privilege of asking questions about the performance of SIRC and the estimates tabled in the House every year.

I think it is not a matter of money but of realizing that we have the mechanisms to ensure our security. In fact, according to a number of international experts, this mechanism does not exist in any other country. You know, in France when you get off the subway, you often see French policemen doing ID checks. That is not the kind of society we have here in Canada. We have a free, liberal and generous society with great respect for the freedom of the individual.

It is not my purpose to defend our past performances, because I was not there. I have to admit I was not around at the beginning and the end of the sixties. But today, we have the mechanisms we need to ensure there is no abuse of power with respect to legitimate organizations, including political parties.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Before we continue this debate, I wish to inform the hon. member that he may use the 30 seconds he has left.

Mr. St-Laurent: Madam Speaker, I will do that, but instead of a lengthy reply, I just want to make a brief comment.

The hon. member opposite said that I had the privilege to do this and the privilege to do that. I also have the right.

Mr. Gagnon: Of course.

Mr. St-Laurent: I have that right, because I was duly elected by people who pay their taxes, whom I represent here in the House. I am now exercising the right I was given by the electorate.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Manicouagan for sharing ten minutes of his speaking time with me. Allow me to add my voice to that of my Bloc Québécois colleagues and ask this House to blame the government for refusing to set up a royal commission of inquiry on illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

(1235)

Let me remind you that CSIS was allotted a budget of about \$205 million for fiscal year 1994-95. From a strictly accounting point of view, it is obvious that this House has not only the right but indeed the duty to look into the activities of this agency.

But we are not here to talk about accounting today. This debate is about the very activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, nothing less.

I should point out that this agency was established out of concern for transparency, to follow up on the recommendations of the McDonald Commission, which had uncovered a disgraceful set of unacceptable, if not downright illegal, practices and actions by the RCMP's very own security service.

Although the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was established with transparency in mind, there are nonetheless two major problems with CSIS. First, it does not have to account to Parliament for its budget, which it receives from Parliament. What this means is that we, who represent the people we were elected by, have no way of knowing how our tax money is spent. That is absurd!

The second problem with the accountability of CSIS to this Parliament relates to its intelligence gathering activities. Some may quickly answer back that the annual report CSIS tables every year is public and that a monitoring committee, commonly known as SIRC, reviews all its activities. Unfortunately, the reports tabled in this House in that respect are rather laconic, they do not say much. They are the epitome of the lack of transparency.

Supply

That is why the Bloc Québécois considers that a royal commission of inquiry would give the people of Canada and Quebec a chance to determine whether their tax money is used properly and, more importantly, to check if CSIS has infiltrated and is trying to destabilize one or several political parties or other legitimate organizations. This is a serious matter. After all, an agency above suspicion, namely the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, did engage in such activities in the past.

We are justified in fearing that history will repeat itself. The *Toronto Star* recently uncovered a confidential note from an assistant to former Conservative Solicitor General Doug Lewis. According to this note, CSIS used an informant to obtain information on a report on the CBC television program "The Fifth Estate".

CSIS used and paid an informant by the name of Grant Bristow, who is one of the founders of Heritage Front, an extreme right-wing group dedicated to the unacceptable promotion of white supremacy. It has even been maintained that this individual tried to spy on the Canadian Jewish Congress. Worse yet, it was revealed that this mole, namely Mr. Bristow, found himself in the entourage of the Reform Party leader at least twice as a security guard.

Mr. Parrot, the president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, believes that CSIS also spied on his union.

Tell me, is CSIS under control or has it lost its marbles? Is this a simple mishap or, on the contrary, just the tip of the iceberg?

(1240)

There is no way to know. In parliamentary committee, officials clearly avoided and even refused to answer the legitimate questions asked by members of this House. The Liberal government tells us that the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC for short, is checking out these allegations and will report to the Solicitor General within a month.

That is not good enough. The people must know that on September 13, when the Review Committee itself appeared before the House Standing Sub-Committee on National Security, committee members were bold enough to tell members that they could not reveal their findings and that only the Solicitor General could decide what should be made public. We are not naive.

The report or rather what will be left of it will obviously not tell us the whole truth. What about transparency, Madam Speaker? The Bloc Québécois is not alone in demanding a public inquiry. Several very respectable organizations have called for a royal commission of inquiry. If I may, I would like to quote from an article published on September 10 in the Quebec City newspaper *Le Soleil*: "More and more groups are calling for an independent investigation into the allegations against CSIS. The

Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Simon Wisenthal Centre all argue that the government should set up a mini-commission based on the McDonald Commission which investigated the former RCMP security service in the 1970s. To ensure public confidence, someone should take a fresh look at this whole affair, said Mr. Borovoy, head of the Civil Liberties Association".

The Government of Canada also finances other intelligence agencies. In addition to CSIS, with its \$205-million budget, there is the RCMP's Criminal Intelligence Directorate, with a budget of around \$5 million, the Security and Intelligence Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs, with a budget of around \$10 million, and finally the top secret Communications Security Establishment of National Defence.

This famous establishment, the CSE, is governed by no law specifying its mandate or its powers, nor is it subject to any control mechanism. It is not even required to answer to Parliament. In spite of that, the CSE spends between \$200 and \$300 million in the greatest secrecy, without having to account for it, because it is so secret that it does not even exist in legislation. According to our information, this establishment has two mandates: the first is called INFOSEC, whereby the CSE gives the government technical advice, reports and assistance on the security of the telecommunications of federal departments. The second is code-named SIGINT; under this heading, information is collected on the activities, intentions and capabilities of foreign governments and on individuals and companies in various fields.

We are not being paranoid, but when we see an organization like CSIS, which is covered by legislation and faces serious charges of infiltrating a political party and spying on other legitimate organizations, I am very inclined to suspect that other secret services which are not governed by legislation can do even more and much worse.

As we just saw, these intelligence agencies have a combined budget of half a billion dollars and members of this House are unable to tell taxpayers if this money is spent in the best interest of the public and, most important, in accordance with the laws of the land.

Given this flagrant lack of openness, this flagrant lack of accountability to parliamentarians and citizens, this flagrant lack of control over the activities of Canadian intelligence agencies, especially CSIS, it is imperative to review the process by which these agencies report to Parliament, to review the CSIS Act, to review the process of appointing members to the Review Committee, and in so doing, members of this Parliament can ensure that the interests and rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Canada and of Quebec are respected.

Supply

(1245)

It would have been very simple to let members be informed openly, but since they are denied access to the truth, only one solution remains: the people must now be informed through a royal commission of inquiry on CSIS.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, the Security Intelligence Review Committee was set up ten years ago precisely to ensure greater transparency regarding the activities of CSIS. Let us not forget, and I hope the hon. member will agree, that we have a duty to protect industrial interests in Canada.

All kinds of rumours are circulating in the Greater Montreal to the effect that some Quebec industries are the target of foreign interests or industrial espionage. I think the media reported several cases of Canadian companies losing contracts or being robbed of some technology by a foreign government. In my opinion, the primary objective is to protect the technological advances of our industries, including the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries, which are very important in Quebec and also elsewhere in Canada.

Does the hon. member recognize that we must protect our interests against increasing and disturbing competition from certain countries?

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is full of good intentions. I notice that he is the only one on the Liberal side to defend that cause. In fact, some other Liberal members were making very different statements not that long ago.

On March 19, 1992, when he was in opposition, the Liberal member for Scarborough West, said this regarding this issue: "We call upon CSIS and the minister to ensure, now that they can crawl, that future annual statements and reports contain more information, as promised by the minister himself, so that Canadians can have an informed public debate, be aware of the national security issues which face our nation, consider the major national security issues which face our country from year to year and how we are to handle them". The hon. member for Scarborough West was right on then, but the fact is that two years later Canadians, and even MPs in this House, still do not have the information requested.

Where are the Liberal members who were then asking for what we are asking for today? They keep silent. There is only one spokesperson for the Liberals and he has not been here long enough to realize that the problem has already persisted for too long and should have been resolved by now.

Mr. Gagnon: Madam Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that, as the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, I will always be first in line to protect individual

freedoms. I will never accept the fact that legitimate organizations and political parties are being spied upon. I think that my party, and the government I have the privilege to be part of, have always sought first and foremost to protect individual liberties.

The hon. member referred to our committee. There is a sub-committee, made up of Liberals, Reform members and representatives of the Bloc Québécois, which has been set up to undertake a review parallel to that of SIRC on allegations made against our security intelligence services. I believe we have shown some openness. I am very proud to see that even members on this side of the House are asking relevant questions that need to be answered. SIRC was created precisely to investigate allegations that can, at times, be legitimately made by the opposition or members on this side of the House.

(1250)

Let me reassure the hon. member by saying that we follow our proud tradition and always try to protect the underprivileged in Canada, who are unfortunately going through some tough times. I am proud to be part of this government and of a party which is concerned about the less-privileged in Canada.

Mr. de Savoye: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague opposite say that they want to shed some light on actions by CSIS.

Let me remind the House that, on April 1, 1993, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River pointed out that Parliament's five-year review involved 117 recommendations and said: "While it certainly was not our belief that the government would immediately adopt all 117 recommendations, all of us who participated in the committee were disappointed that at the end of the day only one or two recommendations were actually formally adopted".

Mr. Asselin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine referred to this side of the House when speaking about the government, I noticed that only a few members were interested. I call for a quorum count.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I will ask the Clerk to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I see a quorum. Resuming debate.

[English]

Mr. Duncan: Madam Speaker, is not a Reform member the next speaker?

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Barnes): My list shows the member for Durham. We have just heard from one side and we are alternating government and opposition and we now have the government speaker.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham): Madam Speaker, a clever motion has been put to the House that evokes a memory of transgressions from a bygone day. If approved, it would not serve the interest of Canadians or the lawful process that legislators designed to ensure their national security.

There are a large number of Canadians who are unclear about the role of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. These are serious people. If they are confused it is because they have been brought up on the myths about what an intelligence organization does.

I want to dispel some of these myths. Today I want to talk about what CSIS does and what it does not do.

(1255)

There is the issue of law, of accountability and of democracy. The point I want to make is that CSIS exists because of those things, not despite them.

Nearly 50 years ago Canadians discovered, courtesy of Igor Gouzenko, that the Soviet Union was operating an espionage network here. The RCMP was asked to counter it and for decades it did. It became clear over time that police work and intelligence work were different. Police work involved enforcing the law, catching criminals and prosecuting them. Intelligence work involved warning governments and protecting people from acts by foreigners or by Canadians who threaten the security of our country.

The role of warner is very different from the role of enforcer. By its nature good warning requires good information. There are many ways to get information and some of them can conflict with civil liberties and the law. For that reason, among others, the Mackenzie commission of the late 1960s followed by the McDonald commission in the late 1970s both recommended that Canada's intelligence service be civilian in nature and that it be governed by a strict regime of law and accountability of review.

Simply put, CSIS exists because the government found that the rights of Canadians had not been adequately protected. In other words, the purpose of CSIS is to protect rights, to work within the law to be accountable to the elected Government of Canada.

There is probably no intelligence organization in the world that functions with a law that is so strict and comprehensive and as clear. The legislation governing some intelligence organizations elsewhere is often a few general paragraphs in length. Sometimes legislation does not even exist. The CSIS act is 29 pages long. Nine of those pages are devoted to outlining how what CSIS does is to be monitored, reviewed and approved by

others outside. No other part of the federal bureaucracy is subject to such strict rules.

CSIS is under direct ministerial control and direction responsible to cabinet and responsible to Parliament. When CSIS engages in surveillance activities that are intrusive, such as electronic techniques, the director has to be personally satisfied in each case that the use of such techniques is necessary, that all other avenues have been exhausted and that the use of that technology is both lawful and within the mandate of the service. If it is not it does not happen. Even if the director thinks an action is justified, that is not good enough. The CSIS act requires him to secure the approval of the minister, the Solicitor General. If he does not approve, it does not happen. If he does, it does not end there. The case must be put to a judge on the Federal Court of Canada. There are no exceptions.

In addition, the law establishes two review agencies. One agency is internal with an independent auditor called the inspector general, with his own staff to report to the minister directly. He has complete access to literally everything that the service does.

The second review agency is external. We know it as the Security Intelligence Review Committee or, as some have mentioned, SIRC. It is independent both of CSIS and of government. SIRC also has its own staff. It has access to absolutely everything. It reports to Parliament annually. Its role, as it has described it, is to ensure that CSIS does things right and does the right things.

When CSIS was first created, SIRC found fault with some of what was done. It still does, but it stated in its 1991-92 report much has changed: "In the early years of this committee's mandate CSIS acted to a great extent as if it were simply a continuation of the RCMP security service. Despite public assertions to the contrary, SIRC felt that most CSIS targets, policies and procedures were virtually unchanged from those of a security service and that the CSIS preferred source of recruits was still the RCMP. It took over three years for this state of affairs to change significantly. CSIS is now virtually a new organization, hardly recognizable any more as the direct descendant of the security service of the RCMP. The number and type of CSIS targets, the rigorous justification required before anyone or any group is designated as a target, the lucidity, logic and balance of warrant affidavits submitted to the Federal Court, and the tone and content of reports by intelligence officers on target files have all changed significantly for the better. We still have criticisms to make, but our criticisms are no longer based upon strong and fundamental disagreement with the CSIS view of the world".

(1300)

CSIS is a better organization because of that review process, but the mechanism of review and reporting have extended well beyond the work of that committee.

Supply

In 1987 Gordon Osbaldeston who had been clerk of the Privy Council was asked to look at CSIS. He recommended changes to the services top level organization, a new approach to training, development, and an improved infrastructure for CSIS. Those changes were made.

In 1989 Parliament reviewed the CSIS act, five years after it was created, and found that an organization to counter terrorism and espionage and to provide intelligence to the government was still needed in Canada.

In 1991 the then government responded to that parliamentary review. The best summary of its conclusions in terms of the service and the act of Parliament that governs it is provided by the title of the report, "On Course".

The third review since 1984 was done in the winter of 1992–93. The Solicitor General asked the director at that time to conduct a full review of the service and how it should change to take account of the end of the cold war and present and future threats to Canadian security. Today's service reflects the changed reality.

CSIS was created to enhance accountability, not evade it. CSIS was created to observe the rights and liberties of all Canadians. The law that governs CSIS is clear. The review that governs CSIS is comprehensive. The accountability of CSIS to the government is complete and the process of change and reform has been constant.

CSIS reflects our cultural diversity and many more women are part of the operation. Two out of three employees have been hired since 1984. The service has expanded dramatically its capacity for research and analysis including in depth long term studies of global security problems of relevance to Canada.

Hundreds of graduates in business administration, in history, in economics and in social sciences have been brought in. These people are not spies as some would prefer to believe. Many of them are analysts. Most are not sitting in some attic with a wire in their ear; they are at a desk reading. Much of what they analyse is open source material or information received from friends and allies.

The CIA estimates that 55 per cent of its finished intelligence product comes from open sources, in some areas 80 per cent. That makes two points. First, the other 20 per cent is also crucial. It is the stuff the guys they are trying to understand do not want them to know. It is what makes intelligence work differently and hopefully sometimes better than work produced internally from open sources. Second, the value added more often than not comes from brains, not bugging.

CSIS is not in the business of collecting information for collection sake. It is in the business of taking information, analysing it, integrating it, understanding it and then passing it on to the government. What CSIS does would be of no use if it kept the information for itself. It does not. Its role is to pass it

on, to inform the government, to warn it and to reassure it. So the people are different and the focus is changing partly because old threats have disappeared and partly because new threats have emerged.

(1305)

Security and intelligence was not the invention of the cold war. In Canada that function has been performed since the mid-nineteenth century when Sir John A. Macdonald asked the western frontier constabulary to patrol the borders of Upper Canada and to report on American Civil War activities that might affect Canada's security. The intelligence function was performed and continued until the cold war commenced. The beginning of the cold war was not the beginning of the need for intelligence, and the end of the cold war does not mean the end of that is near. Indeed some challenges have been made worse by the collapse of the Berlin wall.

There are two types of threats that CSIS is responsible for meeting. The first is public safety. The second is national security. I will deal with public safety first. Simply put, public safety involves protecting Canadians against violence. Violence can come from abroad through terrorism. Violence can be fostered here through extremism or the support of terrorism elsewhere. Warning of that potential violence and its prevention is called counterterrorism. That was not a worry for Canada for most of the forties, fifties and sixties, but with the explosion of terrorist groups and the incidents of the seventies it became a serious concern.

It became clear that Canada was not immune with the 1982 assassination of a Turkish diplomat in Ottawa. So too the takeover of the Turkish embassy in 1985 and the shocking tragedy that same year with Air India in which 329 Canadians died. CSIS shifted its responses and its resources to match the new threat.

In 1984 when CSIS was created only 20 per cent of its resources were devoted to counterterrorism and 80 per cent was devoted to counterintelligence. By 1992 the picture was dramatically different: a full 56 per cent of the operational resources were devoted by then to counterterrorism.

Public safety or the protection of Canadian lives is the number one priority. It is also the number one difficulty. The sources of terrorism geographically are diverse. Groups come and groups go. The inventions, activities, movements and targets of individuals and governments are almost impossible to predict. Their methods are by definition extreme. Their reach is global and the consequences of failure are severe.

The challenge of Canada's security service is to ensure this country is not the place where people are killed. That is not the only challenge. There are four others. We do not want to be the country where terrorism is planned. We do not want to be the country in which money for terrorism is raised. We do not want to be the country where the material to commit the act is bought.

We do not want to be the place where the terrorists hide after the deed is done.

In a sense dealing with the cold war was much easier. It was fairly obvious what countries the spies came from. Opposing intelligence specialists were extremely familiar with each other's habits. There was almost a code of conduct. It was all somewhat predictable, almost choreographed. That predictability, that order, is not there with terrorism.

The terrorist threat is not diminishing. The technology of terrorism is becoming more accessible, more convenient. The sources of terrorism remain strong: nationalism, religious and political extremism and state sponsored terrorism. There is a correlation between the proliferation of terrorism and the proliferation of regional conflict. Regional conflict continues. There is also a correlation between ethnic unrest and hatred and the proliferation of terrorism.

Looking at Asia, the former Soviet Union, eastern Europe, Africa and even Northern Ireland, it is clear that unrest will continue. Unfortunately Canadians will always be vulnerable. Our borders are open and long. We are a wealthy industrial society, a good target for extremists, a good place to secure equipment, technology and funds. Links of family, emotion, ideology and culture exist among millions of Canadians and societies abroad. When conflicts grip those countries the echoes can be felt here.

(1310)

The concerns of Canada's security intelligence service are several: first, to prevent the spread of homeland conflicts to Canada; second, to prevent the exploitation of immigrant countries for fund raising to support those conflicts; and, third, to prevent terrorism or support for terrorism that originates here in relation to conflicts abroad.

The job of CSIS is early warning. It passes that information on to the government. Each year hundreds of threat assessments are prepared for the government by CSIS. The vast majority of them dealt with terrorism. Much of what it does involves dampening concerns rather than increasing them.

Let me now turn to the second major priority of CSIS, national security. Simply put, this is about spying. Its job is to counter that. That is why it is called counterintelligence. The focus is on the activities of the organization that are the creatures of foreign governments.

CSIS is concerned about countries that are one or more of the following: potential enemies equipped with weapons of mass destruction capable of striking Canada; countries that seek to develop such weapons through threat and theft of technology;

Supply

countries that violate our sovereignty by meddling in our ethnic communities; countries that try to exercise repressive control over their citizens in Canada who are here on visitor exchanges; and countries that seek to prejudice our economic security by covertly gaining access to our leading edge technologies.

Throughout the cold war much of CSIS activity was devoted to countering those activities, but that was before the Berlin wall fell. What about the new world order? Unfortunately some of the new world order is not new. Arms control agreements have been negotiated and are substantially reducing the nuclear threat that is still there.

Other countries continue to conduct espionage operations here because the reasons for spying remain strong. Communists did not invent spying; the desire for national advantage did. Spying is a cheap way to acquire weapons technology whether conventional or weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation problem is getting worse, not better. We have much of that technology here. It is at our nuclear, chemical and pharmaceutical industries; in our electronic sector; and in our machine tool capacities. As long as we are an open and wealthy country with a leading economy, countries will come here to spy and not simply for weapons. Developing countries eager to catch up with the rest of world find espionage a highly efficient way to modernize their economies. Former communist countries may begin to resort to intelligence gathering for the same reason. Everyone is after the competitive edge.

In conclusion, the motion admonishes the government for not having set up a royal commission. I have already mentioned the Security Intelligence Review Committee. In addition we have established a parliamentary committee to further examine specific aspects of CSIS.

This is not to detract from what may well have been useful exercises, but I have here summaries of various costs of royal commissions: aboriginal peoples, \$13 million over nine months; national passenger transportation, \$23 million over three months; Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future, \$23 million over eight months; and reproductive technologies, \$25 million over three years. The list goes on.

Members of the Bloc have accused the government of creating deficits on the backs of Quebecers. Here is a clear case of the Bloc proposing the wasting of taxpayers' money on more studies that benefit no one. More interesting is the fact that the Bloc members, through their own representation on parliamentary committees, are saying they are so inept to carry out investigative powers the electorate has bestowed on them that we have to pay outside experts to do their jobs.

Supply

(1315)

I do not think the taxpayers of Canada and especially those in Quebec will be pleased to learn of that. This motion is an insult to all people of Canada who are so concerned about controlling government spending and getting our economic house in order.

[*Translation*]

M. André Caron (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the excellent speech on CSIS made by my hon. colleague from Durham. It is no doubt necessary, in a modern state, to take special measures in order to ascertain that activities related to espionage, foreign interference and revolutionary subversion are not carried out within a state's territory. I think the member has explained very clearly why there is a need for an organization to monitor these kinds of activities. However, the opposition motion before us today deals with a somewhat different subject.

I am a little sensitive to these questions because my name was on the list of members of the Parti Québécois that was stolen by members of the RCMP's security service in the 1970s. When I had the honour of being elected by the people of Jonquière to represent them in the House of Commons, some of my friends warned me, because I am a known sovereigntist, a separatist as many of our colleagues opposite like to say. I was a separatist in the 1960s, and it looks like I am still a separatist in the 1990s.

Mr. Milliken: Yes, and next week you will be a federalist.

Mr. Caron: You may rest assured, my dear colleague from Kingston and the Islands, that I will be a sovereigntist for the referendum.

When my friends saw that I was going to Ottawa as a member of Parliament, they told me that I would be under surveillance by the RCMP. I told them that I was not particularly worried because we are in a state governed by the rule of law and I did not think such a threat was real.

When I look at the issue before us today, I realize that CSIS seems to have taken questionable measures. But I am not supposed to worry because we have a review committee. I do not want to know what is going on in CSIS, but I want to rest assured that it is well supervised and monitored. However, present members of the review committee have been appointed by the previous government, and parties then represented in this House had their say in those appointments. There are three Conservatives, on Liberal and one New Democrat sitting on this committee. I imagine they are all good federalists, and people with a certain vision of Canada.

I do not trust those members. Sad to say, I do not trust them to see to it that my rights as a Canadian and a Quebecer are respected by CSIS. I am not sure they will do it. The Reform

Party was infiltrated by CSIS, and I am not sure the same thing did not happen with the Bloc Québécois.

Those issues are important. People are sceptical and the present review committee cannot set their minds at peace. Does my hon. colleague think it would be important, for the sake of democracy, to have a royal commission of inquiry even if there are costs involved? I think that in view of the present membership of the review committee, we should spend whatever money is needed. Would the hon. member for Durham agree that a royal commission should go to the bottom of those allegations made in the media about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service?

(1320)

[*English*]

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Speaker, the essence of the hon. member's question is whether CSIS is accountable. I went through the process and CSIS seems to be just as accountable as every other government department through Parliament. That is a fundamental of our democratic system.

It is a ludicrous assumption to me if we are saying that a royal commission is needed every time something has to be investigated, whether it has to do with CSIS, the Department of Industry or anything else. What would be the purpose of Parliament if we resorted to a royal commission every time a problem arose? We have made too much use of royal commissions and studies. The Library of Parliament is full of them, many of which are just collecting dust. What we are saying is that to move away from that process is a total disregard of our parliamentary traditions.

More important is the cost. Clearly, the cost would be justifiable if there was an invasion of civil liberties, but the reality is that we have the functions here. There are all kinds of systems which scrutinize CSIS. Why spend the extra money? With the deficit running at billions of dollars it seems totally ludicrous that we would even think about a royal commission on something that already has tremendous investigative advantages.

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. member to clarify a couple of points in relation to the actual function of CSIS. I thank him for the overview.

It is my understanding from his presentation that CSIS was actually born from the RCMP out of a need to counteract Russian spying at that time. Since the cold war has ended and the Berlin wall has dropped the need which originally called for the start up of CSIS is gone.

When the cold war existed 80 per cent of CSIS activity was in counterintelligence which falls under the national security point of the two points outlined. Considering there is now no cold war tends to imply that the public safety component of CSIS should probably go back to the RCMP. It seems to be an early warning system and once it is identified is referred to the appropriate

sources to carry out in any event. Under national security I believe the counterintelligence involvement is now 56 per cent. I am wondering if the role of CSIS is becoming unnecessary. Maybe we should be looking at some other component.

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Speaker, the essence of the hon. member's question is whether it go back to the RCMP. The hon. member wonders why the RCMP cannot carry out those functions.

My dissertation tried to point out the significant difference between law enforcement and intelligence gathering. It appears the birth of CSIS and indeed other intelligence gathering organizations like the CIA were predicated on the assumption that they had a unique role.

The second part of the hon. member's question was whether there is a need for that today. It does not take much reading of our local newspapers to see that terrorism still exists around the world. We have been treated to the terrors of Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina and other areas. These do have attachments to Canada; people who live here have relatives in those countries and so forth.

The answer is yes, it appears there is a need. In fact due to the globalization and technology there may well be a greater need today than there ever was before.

(1325)

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Crowfoot.

It is a pleasure to rise today to contribute to the debate on the security of our country. I am aware that by its very nature and its inception in 1984, CSIS and much of its work must be kept secret. The lives of individuals involved in CSIS work, contacts and ultimately all Canadians would be at risk if the wrong information got into the wrong hands. However this does not and should not preclude parliamentarians on behalf of all Canadians from discussing this secret agency, its work, mandate, activities, and the manner in which we review the scope of activity, namely through the Security Intelligence Review Committee otherwise known as SIRC.

The work of CSIS in protecting the interests and security of Canadians is not in question. Canada being such an open society must be as vigilant as ever to the threat of subversive action. We must be conscious and sensitive to Canada becoming a proxy battlefield between immigrant groups who want to continue their hostilities on our soil. Remembering that Canada has the highest rate of immigration in the western world and therefore has extra exposure in that regard, we must be vigilant.

Supply

While it is important to acknowledge these potential threats and reaffirm our support for CSIS, it does not mean that CSIS is ultra vires or some untouchable CIA type derivative. Accountability still remains the hallmark of the nature of this country, its public servants, politicians and those on the public payroll.

Canada is one of the few western democracies to give its security service an explicit statutory charter. It provides a defined mandate for the operations of the agency. It interposes a system of judicially defined authorized warrants in the agency's use of intrusive investigation techniques. It establishes monitoring and review bodies. These purport to ensure that the agency does not indeed act outside the limits of its mandate.

Therefore the question is: Is it doing so? It became obvious during the four years of existence of the McDonald commission in the late 1970s that illegalities and improprieties were rampant in the security service branch of the RCMP. The principal recommendations of that report called for an entirely civilian security agency. This agency was to be politically accountable and subject to strict review. The report concluded that law enforcement and security work are incompatible.

Accordingly, Bill C-157 which was introduced in May 1983 was put into effect in order to form this new security agency. However, it died on the order paper after much debate, committee review and public criticism. During the next session of the 32nd Parliament Bill C-9 was introduced and incorporated virtually all of the proposed changes and amendments as prescribed during the Bill C-157 debate. This was proclaimed in August 1984.

The act assigns the management and control of CSIS to the director, a cabinet appointee. The Solicitor General is given an active supervisory role. Originally the bill had adopted a model similar to Australian legislation which would not have given the minister any operational role whatsoever. This was ostensibly to ensure that CSIS could not be used for partisan purposes. The act now provides that the minister has an override and must approve all warrant applications. The act also establishes the office of Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The Inspector General is to monitor CSIS operations and to report to the deputy Solicitor General and to SIRC on the legality and propriety of these operations.

(1330)

SIRC is a committee composed of five Privy Councillors appointed after consultation by the Prime Minister with opposition leaders in the House of Commons. It is to conduct a review of CSIS operations and to report to the minister and Parliament on them. It also has a variety of investigative duties; deals with complaints and acts as an appeal board with respect to security assessments and security influenced decisions under the Citizenship and Immigration Act.

Supply

During its 10 years CSIS has had growing pains. The House of Commons set up a special committee in 1989 to review the CSIS act and the Security Offences Act. The committee had 117 recommendations. Its report called "In Flux but not in Crisis" generally concluded that the system was sound and any reform should be based on the continuance and extension of already established institutions.

The government's response set out its belief that legislative changes in the CSIS act and the Security Offences Act were not needed. Further it was unwilling to contemplate structural changes.

In February 1991 a debate was held on an opposition motion that the House of Commons concur in the committee's report which recommended a parliamentary subcommittee on national security. The subcommittee held its first meeting in June 1991.

On May 3, 1994 this same standing committee on justice and legal affairs re-established the subcommittee on national security which is the committee currently looking into the Bristow affair. The motion was a close vote and almost did not happen.

Let me now turn to the formation of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, euphemistically known as SIRC. In 1984 the then newly installed Tory government announced the initial membership of SIRC. In order to meet the requirements as prescribed in the act as a condition to sit on SIRC, two individuals had to be sworn in as Privy Councillors on the day of their appointments. The politics had begun, the die was cast and suspicions were raised. Naturally, due to the Privy Council appointment requirements, four of the first five appointees were ex-cabinet ministers and the fifth a well placed Quebec City lawyer.

Today we have five politically appointed partisan individuals on the review committee; three from the Tories, one from the Liberals and one from the NDP. This was a Mulroneyism.

What is its function? The security committee is to act as the eyes and ears of the public and Parliament on CSIS. The committee is intended to be independent of the government and its operations but responsible to the Parliament of Canada. The CSIS act provides that its members are appointed by the Governor General in Council after consultation with the leaders of all parties having more than 12 members in the House of Commons.

Is it independent? Is it another politically charged patronage agency made up primarily of Tory cronies? Is it conducting constructive and an apolitical review of CSIS and its activities? We need to know and perhaps the only way is to investigate the investigators.

We do not want to emulate the travesties perpetrated by our neighbours who have created monsters in the form of the CIA. If

we are not vigilant and take the time to review agencies like CSIS after 10 years of work, it is easy to lose control of their function and scope of activity.

(1335)

Under the legislation SIRC does not have access to cabinet documents. For this reason I suggest that the requirement that members of SIRC have Privy Council designation or past cabinet experience is unnecessary and should be abolished. Instead have individuals cleared by the RCMP and if they meet the top security clearance available they fit.

Why would one require a PC designation when one does not have access to cabinet documents? This change would lend itself to appointing independent members and not has been cabinet members.

I would also like to recommend changes to the length of appointments to SIRC. Currently the five-year appointment allows a former administration to protect itself from a new administration. At the present time we have the first of the Tory appointments to SIRC expiring in December 1996 and the latest one in 1998. All may survive this administration, assuming the next election is held before December 1996. Four or five will survive if the election is held before November 1997.

At the same time the Liberal committee appointee, Michel Robert, the same individual who worked Saturdays and has a non-tendered \$249,000 contract from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, ensures that the current administration has one of its cronies who can keep track of things. It is a joke and nothing more than political patronage that surely does not lend itself to independent review of CSIS operations.

What we need is legislative permanence being granted the parliamentary subcommittee on security and legislative authority as well. This will at least meet the original recommendation of the 1991 review of national security and give us a body whose investigative powers include the ability to investigate cabinet, which SIRC cannot.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the very thorough job my colleague opposite has done in preparing and delivering this speech. It was refreshing to hear recalled some items of recent history.

I appreciated the relatively thorough research that he obviously did in relation to the mechanism for appointing members to the Security Intelligence Review Committee. He has articulated a concern in relation to those appointments, i.e., the method by which consultation is or is not done with leaders of the parties in the House of Commons before such appointments are made. This is a point that I raised in the House in the last Parliament.

Supply

At that time, as an individual member, I appeared not to have been heard by the then Prime Minister, who is solely responsible for those appointments, so the hon. member's remarks are refreshing.

I would like to ask him if he could elaborate on what process would be used in relation to a possible parliamentary subcommittee that would be different from what exists now in Parliament, where there is a subcommittee whose mandate includes the general area of oversight of the security intelligence envelope.

Could he elaborate or provide more particulars as to how he would change what is there now in relation to parliamentary committee operations?

Mr. Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the very important role that the member opposite has played in establishing that subcommittee. He has been the driving force. I must say I have had a crash course in CSIS since notification that this motion was coming forward.

(1340)

I would like to see permanence of that standing subcommittee through legislative authority. I would also like to see the standing subcommittee have a very real role in the appointments to SIRC. In other words they should have a vetting role as opposed to just an interview role.

I would certainly be open to any other constructive suggestions the member might have.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, the overriding question that must be answered regarding the Brian McInnis-Grant Bristow affair is whether CSIS and other institutions of government were politicized by the Brian Mulroney government and whether the McInnis-Bristow incident was the premeditated extension of that politicization.

Rod Stampler, a former assistant commissioner of the RCMP has indicated clearly, not only in Paul Palango's book *Above the Law*, but in open line radio programs across the country that the RCMP was politicized by the Mulroney government and that it was denied a free hand in the investigation of political and other corruption in Canada.

When we look for evidence of this very serious allegation we see several disturbing incidents. We see the accusation of Shelly Ann Clark about deception and deceit in the Canada-U.S. free trade deal and her continuous complaint that her concerns were never fully investigated by the RCMP.

We see the accusation of Glen Kealy of kickback schemes run by members of the Mulroney government and in particular the case of Roch LaSalle which has never been finalized in court. We also see the case of Alan Eagleson, a close friend of the former Prime Minister, where detailed evidence of wrongdoing was placed in the hands of the RCMP, the Metro Toronto Police

and the Law Society of Upper Canada and absolutely nothing of consequence was done.

Yet the U.S. justice department, after looking at the very same evidence, have laid 34 indictments against Mr. Eagleson, issued a warrant for his arrest, have frozen his American bank account and have initiated extradition proceedings to have him stand trial in the United States.

These incidents strongly support the allegations of Mr. Stampler that there has been political interference in the administration of the RCMP and in the administration of justice, that politicization of the RCMP under the Mulroney government did occur and that evidence of wrongdoing by government members and friends of government was not, and has not, been properly investigated.

I have been advised by individuals close to the situation that it would be much easier to politicize the Canadian Security Intelligence Service than to politicize the RCMP. When I asked my sources to explain this I was told that the Solicitor General has the power under the federal statutes to demand secret and classified information, including complete files and names of informants from CSIS.

This is supported by the fact that at least eight boxes of secret and highly classified documents seized from Brian McInnis's residence came directly from the Solicitor General's office. Why does the Solicitor General have to have possession of such highly secret documents? Why does he have to have possession of CSIS documents at all?

This is evidence that Doug Lewis, the former Solicitor General, was directly involved in the operation of CSIS. This was not an arm's length relationship. Mr. Lewis was directly involved.

(1345)

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act grants the Solicitor General full knowledge and power of direction over the policies, operations and management of CSIS. As well, the assistant deputy Solicitor General sits on the CSIS target approval and review committee and has direct input into what groups and individuals are targeted by CSIS.

The question is to what extent, if any, did the former Solicitor General politicize CSIS either through the assistant deputy Solicitor General who sat on the committee that determined who and what CSIS was to target or his own direct involvement or both? This question must be answered.

In the speech the Solicitor General gave in the House today he attempted to negate the Bloc's request for a royal commission hearing into this matter by claiming that SIRC has a mandate to do the same work. This is not true. SIRC advised the subcommittee looking into this matter that it could not investigate matters once they reached the Solicitor General's office. This means that SIRC has no power whatsoever to determine whether the former Solicitor General politicized CSIS. This is a central question

Supply

beyond the mandate of SIRC. Was CSIS used for political purposes under the direction of Doug Lewis?

(1350)

Therefore, there is a need to look not just at this matter but to look at the whole question of the politicizing of our federal institutions by the Mulroney government, including CSIS and the RCMP.

There is the clear suggestion that there has been a deliberate dismantling of the division of power between those who create the law and those who administer and enforce the law. This is the much broader and more serious question raised by this whole McInnis-Bristow issue and that is has the rule of law been destroyed or harmed in this country?

Therefore I reject the submission made in this House today by the present Solicitor General that SIRC can do the job. It is obvious SIRC cannot look into misuse and abuse of political powers within the office of the former Solicitor General or any other institution of government. Therefore its mandate is inadequate.

Our hopes must rest with the subcommittee. If the subcommittee fails to get to the bottom of the issue and answer all relevant questions, the demand for a full scale inquiry will be justified at that point.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Madam Speaker, I must admit that it was with some surprise that I took note last night of the opposition motion that a royal commission be invoked to deal with a number of allegations that have been put in the media of late, over the last month or two, in relation to both the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the security of documentation that emanates from CSIS and as it might make its way to the minister who reports to this House for CSIS which is the Solicitor General.

These events out of which the allegations arose took place two, three, four years ago. In any event, the opposition has made its motion. Before dealing with the substance of the motion I would take note, as others perhaps have done before me, that the use of the word illegal in the motion might be construed as unparliamentary. That word has been found to be unparliamentary in the past. I recognize the courtesy of the opposition in changing the wording of the motion earlier today to allegations of illegal activities.

I would have preferred to see the words allegations of improper activities because no one has been very particular about what illegality there might have been.

Any illegality there might have been would surely have been related to the mandate of CSIS. To draw an analogy, if someone in the department of agriculture decides they are going to do something involving the Department of Health that is surely not a matter of illegality per se.

In any event, I will abandon the technical issues and attempt to speak to the motion.

Other colleagues in the House have noted appropriately the work of CSIS on behalf of Canadians. CSIS has for 10 years been carrying on this type of work which involves gathering and analysis of intelligence and preparation of security clearances, providing security reports and analysis to other departments of government.

The member who just spoke referred to a security clearance by the RCMP. The RCMP does not do security clearances. This is the job carried out for Canadians by CSIS.

The work of CSIS focuses primarily around what are called threats to the security of Canada and these defined threats are outlined in section 2 of the CSIS act and they include espionage and foreign influenced activities. Sometimes CSIS activity is described under the category of counter intelligence. Some of that work includes the so-called spying which occurs in Canada on the part of some operations of other governments.

There is the area of counter terrorism. Terrorism may or may not involve a foreign government and there is also a category of threat to Canada which we call subversion but in relation to which the service does not carry on any investigative activity without the expressed consent of the Solicitor General. The last time we checked here on the parliamentary side we did not find any ongoing CSIS operations in relation to subversion.

Most of what CSIS does, most of the good work it does, never gets reported. Because of the nature of the work it does not prepare press releases every Friday afternoon for consumption by the media or for that matter consumption by anyone. Most of its good work is done quietly at desks using paper and computers and good common sense. That work carries on both in making security assessments and in the gathering of data mostly from open source. Most of the data it gathers come from open sources and it also has data that come from other non-open sources which it gathers using appropriate and legal methods.

It assists both the Government of Canada and generally the citizenry by keeping an eye on foreign government theft of industrial secrets and it also keeps an eye on what we would call foreign meddling, meddling in Canada by governments outside Canada using whatever means it wishes. That is probably a bit of a cat and mouse game that goes on in all countries of the world.

Why does the official opposition request a royal commission? We have in this country a statute that governs CSIS, a statute that by comparison to other countries in the world is relatively modern, up to date, effective.

(1355)

I am not one of those who takes the view that the CSIS statute is perfect. The record will show that I have attempted to make constructive comments both in the House and in the CSIS five year review on ways in which we could alter the CSIS statute. I point out that not all countries do have statutes that govern their security intelligence system.

As we speak today, I understand that the people of Great Britain are about to invoke a statute which was recently passed and codify a statute which oversees and regulates the work of the security agency known as MI5. That is quite a step for the people of Great Britain to take. They have never had a statute that governed the area that James Bond used to work in. They will then develop their statute as they see fit.

Australia has a foreign intelligence gathering agency which has no statute. I believe that everyone in the agency is employed by contract to one person and that person is employed by their government. A single person constitutes this particular agency. There is no statute that would confirm or deny even the existence of the operations which that agency carries out.

In addition to our statute which has a series of sections that oversees and monitors what CSIS does, we have the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC, whose job it is to review all of the work of CSIS, all of the work done under its mandate, to make sure that work is done within the law and efficaciously. There is a whole range of challenges there for the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

The Speaker: It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

DOMINIC CARDILLO

Mr. Janko Peric (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleagues from Kitchener and Waterloo in paying homage to Kitchener Mayor Dominic Cardillo.

Dominic Cardillo is being honoured today by the citizens of Kitchener for his tremendous contribution to their city. He was first elected as alderman in 1963 and has served as mayor of Kitchener for the last 11 years. Such longevity during a time when politicians are not very popular is a testament to Dom's integrity and hard work.

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Mayor Cardillo must be congratulated for his tireless promotion of the interests of Kitchener. During his tenure Kitchener has grown in population and has matured as a city. His greatest achievement is the new city hall which provides a strong, people oriented focus to the municipal government and downtown Kitchener.

Dom Cardillo has been a model civic leader whose dedication to the interests of his constituents will long be remembered.

* * *

[Translation]

DEFENCE CONVERSION

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, in the red book, the Liberal Party promised to support defence conversion. However, this promise applies only to the English-speaking provinces, as the CNTU revealed yesterday.

The Maritime provinces, which lost 3,000 jobs when military bases were closed, have now received \$20 million to help diversify their economy. Quebec lost nearly 1,000 jobs as a result of similar cuts and received a meagre \$200,000.

Furthermore, during the past four years, Quebec's defence industry lost 7,000 jobs and is still waiting for the federal government to adjust Defence Industry Productivity Program.

This is one more example of the injustice done to Quebec. The Prime Minister's only concern is how to put Quebec in its place, and he is doing a good job of it.

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[English]

YORKTON—MELVILLE

Mr. Garry Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report that this past week the 10th Annual Canadian Student Leadership Conference was held in my riding of Yorkton—Melville. This conference originated 10 years ago in Yorkton and has been growing ever since.

This year over 1,000 high school delegates and leaders came from every province and territory in Canada, and even some students from south of the border. It was an opportunity for them to share their experiences with other student leaders and to encourage one another in achieving their dreams.

At the same time as the student leadership conference, the first annual Canadian high school finals rodeo championship was held in Yorkton as well. This rodeo was also a highly successful event and I am proud to report that the best high school rodeo team is from Saskatchewan.

The top male high school champion was Jason Resch from Saskatchewan and the top female high school rodeo champion was *Kelly Rood, also from Saskatchewan. Let us tip our hats to our future leaders. Congratulations to all the organizers and participants.*

S. O. 31

By the way, the conference next year will be held in Bathurst, New Brunswick.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton): Mr. Speaker, last week I received letters on a very serious issue from the mayors of Brampton and Mississauga and the Coalition for the safety of our daughters.

Both Mississauga and Brampton have bylaws that prevent strip clubs from hiring persons under the age of 18. But many municipalities across Canada do not have such bylaws in place or do not have adequate resources to enforce them.

I join with the mayors of Brampton and Mississauga and with the coalition in calling upon the Minister of Justice to immediately amend the Criminal Code of Canada to provide for the prosecution of strip club owners who employ persons under the age of 18.

* * *

AUTUMN FAIRS

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, as the colours of the country's landscape begin to change and farmers begin to harvest their crops, the annual fall fairs are now in full swing. The fair is a longstanding tradition in Canadian communities where families, friends and neighbours come together to celebrate the autumn season.

In my riding of London—Middlesex I have had the opportunity to attend and participate in the Dorchester Fair; the Thorndale Fall Fair; the Lambeth Harvest Festival; the Iderton Fair; and southwestern Ontario's largest, the Western Fair.

Tremendous community spirit and long hours of hard work make these fairs memorable events enjoyed by both my rural and urban constituents alike.

Congratulations to all the dedicated people in London—Middlesex who worked so hard to make fairs the great success they are.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians are quite distressed by the attempt of some to distract us from the legitimate debate which must take place about guns in Canadian society.

A large majority of Canadians want tougher gun control because the presence of guns in our cities, our towns and our homes decreases the safety of all of us. I understand the need of hunters and farmers for long guns but gun ownership in this country is a privilege, not a right.

These are the basic facts: Guns kill people and handguns in particular have no other purpose. Registration of all weapons would only be a minor inconvenience for those who need long guns to hunt. Handguns and assault weapons are not needed for hunting or by farmers for pest control.

I respect the right of Canadians to choose their hobbies but hobbies should not dictate public policy. Demolition car drivers do not control highway policy. Sport shooters should not try to dictate gun policy.

I urge the government to ensure that public safety is paramount in our gun policies. All considerations are not equal in this debate. We must address the smuggling of weapons and the use of guns in the commission of an offence, but outlawing handguns and a registration system will contribute to a safer Canada.

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[*Translation*]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is determined to remain silent about any plans he may have to tax our RRSPs and refuses to make a formal commitment not to tax them.

The Minister of Finance turns a deaf ear to public opinion and is using current consultations to deflect any questions. Senior citizens have often saved for years to have a decent income in their old age.

What is the minister telling them today? That he cannot guarantee their incomes will not be further reduced.

(1405)

The government wants to change the rules in the middle of the game. Although the minister has been stalling for several days, he will have to make a decision. Seniors hope he will select the only fair option: no taxation of RRSPs.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, remember when you were a kid and your mother forced you to eat broccoli even though you despised it? It looks like good old mother corp is trying to force Canadians to swallow yet another concocted dish. This one tastes more like stale fish.

First, the government floated the idea of taxing theatre tickets and movie rentals to raise revenues for the floundering CBC. I guess giving it over one billion bucks per year just is not enough. Now CBC television wants cable companies across the country to carry a new French language all-news station. It seems the companies do not want to carry it so mother corp wants the CRTC to force them to run it, even if no one wants the service, and this with our national debt exploding at over \$530 billion.

S. O. 31

At least when mom forced us to eat our broccoli she had our best interests in mind and she did not charge us for it.

* * *

HUMANITARIAN AID

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in their actions are demonstrating our prowess as peacekeepers and as providers of humanitarian aid.

I think of a resident of Brant and a good friend of mine, Sidne Maddison, who one day in June received a phone call asking for her assistance in Rwanda with *Médecins sans frontières*. By the end of the day she had left her job and her family and left for Rwanda to act as a nurse.

On her return home she spoke of other Canadians who worked with her in her organization, in the Canadian Red Cross, and of course our armed forces personnel who daily risked their lives in the name of peace.

These people truly are ambassadors for Canada. I salute them for their courage, for their commitment to humanity, and for extending the good name of Canada across the world.

* * *

BRAVERY

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday a man was saved from drowning in Prospect Bay by two brave men. Gary and Richard Peddle of Whites Lake in my riding of Halifax West demonstrated great courage as they pulled 74-year old John Laverdure from the water.

Mr. Laverdure, a neighbour of the Peddle family, was more than a metre under when Gary plunged into the chilly waters of Prospect Bay and pulled back to the boat. District 4 volunteer firefighters are also to be commended for aiding Mr. Laverdure once back to the wharf.

I am pleased to inform the House that John Laverdure has been released from hospital and is very well, thanks to the efforts of Richard, Gary, and the entire Peddle family. It is indeed heart warming to know that such acts of selflessness and bravery still exist.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we celebrate National Translation Day. Many of us on Parliament Hill regularly take advantage of the exceptional services provided by interpreters, translators and terminologists who belong to the Canadian Union of Professional and Technical Employees.

[English]

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that translation is offered in both official languages and indeed in over 100 languages for the Government of Canada, its elected members and its civil service. We are fortunate to have such dedicated, efficient, capable personnel to provide us with these exceptional services.

I extend to them very sincere thanks on behalf of all of us in the House.

* * *

[Translation]

1992 REFERENDUM

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that he has found no indication of a commitment on the part of the previous government to pay Quebec for its expenses in the Charlottetown referendum and it is on that basis that the Prime Minister refuses to pay Quebec. However, in the case of Ginn Publishing, where there had been a verbal commitment, the Prime Minister did not hesitate one moment to honour that commitment, quite the contrary.

It is obvious that verbal commitments do not all have the same weight in Ottawa. The federal government prefers to honour a shameful, anonymous and unacceptable commitment rather than an honourable agreement between the Prime Minister and the Premier.

Quebecers are fed up with paying for such an expensive government system. They have had their fill of the federal excuses. You wanted proof, you have it. Now pay up.

* * *

(1410)

[English]

REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt stated that the Reform Party brass, not the grassroots, decide what policies would be debated at our assembly.

This is absolute nonsense. The membership of the Reform Party controls every step of the policy making process. Not only does its members decide what will be on the agenda; their votes at assembly actually establish party policy.

I am very pleased at the member's conversion to the principles of democracy. After all, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt was hand picked, or should I say anointed, by her party leader in the last election. Despite numerous protests from the riding association the Liberal Party elites refused to allow other candidates to contest the nomination.

S. O. 31

Liberals from Saskatoon—Humboldt were denied the most basic democratic right: to choose their own candidate. The Reform Party not only allows the grassroots to participate—

* * *

[Translation]

IRVING WHALE

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, last week the hon. member for Laurentides quite belatedly took up the issue of the *Irving Whale* wreck. I think it is now time to recall what this government and other members of Parliament have done to solve this 24-year old problem.

On the second and third of March, the Gagnon–Easter Committee held public meetings in Prince Edward Island and in the Magdalen Islands. On March 18, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Transport announced that the Government of Canada had decided to refloat that boat that has been lying in deep water for almost 8,600 days.

It took only 135 days for this government to remedy the situation. It should be stressed that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister of the Environment, had refused to intervene even if he was aware of the dangers of that time bomb and despite the recommendations of the study report on the security of tankers that he had commissioned.

Our public hearings and the environmental evaluation have confirmed that the refloating option was the best solution and the safest for the environment as well as for the local population.

The *Irving Whale* wreck will be refloated next summer, as the government has promised to do. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, on this issue, we have faced up to our responsibilities.

* * *

[English]

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, gun control is part of an important package of crime prevention measures the government is serious about embarking upon.

This week I met with members of the Burlington Rifle Club, an organization located in my riding with members from several area ridings. The club's safety director, several of its members and I had a terrific discussion about ways we could improve safety in our communities and measures gun owners and gun

vendors could take to help the government help our communities become safer for women, for children and for men.

The package of justice bills currently before the House, the new National Crime Prevention Council, the work of several of our ministers and more effective gun control will improve and protect the quality of life for all Canadians.

Let us all work together toward these objectives.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, with great anticipation I attended the CAVEAT convention in Hamilton, Ontario. I believed, in listening to various groups and individuals attending, I could get some new ideas and new procedures that would help address the problems in our justice system.

I heard many good suggestions, but I also heard that getting support for these good suggestions would be difficult because there are no funds to improve justice, victims' rights, restitution and safety for the citizens.

I mention this because no sooner did I hear the government had no funds for justice than I was told the government had \$12 million to build a commercial building in Edmonton that would house doctors, lawyers, private associations, a bank and a restaurant, all private enterprises that could fund their own working environment.

It seems the government can spend \$12 million to support associations, professions and private enterprise but has no funds to give to justice and give justice to Canadians.

We now know what is important to the government, and one thing is for sure: it is not justice.

* * *

BILL C-41

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs will eventually embark on an analysis of Bill C-41. Among other things the legislation proposes changes to section 745 of the Criminal Code.

I rise in the House today to encourage members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to give serious consideration to the elimination of section 745 of the Criminal Code. Clearly the time has come to revisit the appropriateness of a legal loophole that allows first degree murderers to apply for a reduction in their parole after serving only 15 years of a so-called life sentence without parole for 25 years.

Oral Questions

(1415)

Many of my constituents, community groups, organizations, people right across this great country have said enough is enough. The status quo is unacceptable.

The choice is clear. Section 745 of the Criminal Code must be eliminated.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD*[Translation]***REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS**

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The minister has been refusing for the past few days to rule out the possibility of taxing RRSPs in his next budget. Several analysts have come out against this retroactive tax penalizing middle-income taxpayers. Claude Picher, from *La Presse*, states that it would be very unwise of Ottawa to keep dipping into the taxpayers' pockets. He adds that it would be all the more objectionable since the first ones to be hit would be unorganized private sector employees.

Does the Minister of Finance not realize that, by hiding behind his pre-budget consultations to avoid undertaking not to tax RRSPs, he is the only one to blame for causing fear and worry amongst taxpayers in Quebec and Canada?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, as I told the hon. member, who ask the same question for the third time yesterday, he is the one causing worry. I can only repeat it again, in response to the question he has already asked four times this week.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue): All the Minister of Finance has to do, Mr. Speaker, to dispel worry is to say that he will not do it.

Does he not recognize that, by taxing RRSPs, he is changing the rules of the game in mid-game and taking actions which make his government seem to be cheating by completely changing the investment rules in planning—

The Speaker: Order! Perhaps the hon. member could be so good as to choose another word.

Mr. Brien: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance recognize that, by taxing RRSPs, he is changing the rules of the game in mid-game and that taking actions associated with an irresponsible government, by disrupting the financial planning of seniors who depend on the income from their RRSPs to ensure a comfortable retirement for themselves?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, it is the hon. member who is irresponsible when he tries to disrupt the pre-budget consultation process and in fact prevent it from taking place. I hope that he will raise these issues at the finance committee when it deals with this matter.

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*[English]***SOCIAL REFORM**

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, while the government and the Bloc are squabbling about who is going to pay \$47 million for the referendum I point out that the national debt is growing by \$47 million every nine hours. That is putting things in perspective.

The premier of Quebec says he will not play ball with the government's social review. We all know that the separatists have no interest in making a positive contribution to Canada. They just want out.

Will the Prime Minister commit to implementing social reform in spite of obstructive tactics of the separatists.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada intends to proceed constructively. I am sure that the members of the Bloc Quebecois when they see the basis for the social policy reforms will be working with the government to try to make positive changes for Canada.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Human Resources Development misrepresented the Reform position on spending reductions.

It is the government's own deficit target, your own deficit target, that calls for up to \$15 billion in total spending cuts.

Will the finance minister acknowledge that reaching his deficit target of about \$25 billion from a current deficit of about \$40 billion that the government will have to cut up to \$15 billion and is the minister going to cut spending or increase taxes?

(1420)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear that government is going to have to cut its spending. We look forward to the consultations with the finance committee in order to determine exactly where Canadians stand.

We are also looking forward to hearing from the Reform Party, which has talked so much about cutting spending, and seeing if they can come up with any constructive suggestions as to where.

Oral Questions

An hon. member: It is in the blue book, not the red book.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): On raising taxes or cutting spending?

The Minister of Human Resources Development has indicated that the major focus of his action plan will be child poverty. Can the Minister of Finance explain how the government can help anyone out of poverty when it is mortgaging our future by running up the deficit to the tune of \$1,500 for every man, for every woman and for every child in the country?

Your deficit spending is adding to their poverty, not solving it.

The Speaker: I know it is a small oversight but please address the Chair.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the nature of the problems facing the country is in no doubt because of the very large financial deficit. This country is heavily indebted and we have to come to grips with it. We did so in stage one, which was the last budget. We intend to do so very clearly in stage two, which is going to be the next budget.

The member opposite raises the question of child poverty. It is quite ironic that question is coming from a member of the Reform Party, which is prepared to acknowledge, as we do the very severe financial deficit in the country, but it has never once acknowledged the very severe human deficit which we in this side of the House intend to address.

* * *

[Translation]

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, in an interview shown on the “Téléjournal” on October 1, 1993, the Prime Minister promised not to raise taxes during the first two years of a Liberal government. The Minister of Finance, for his part, said yesterday that no option or suggestion should be ruled out in the pre-budget consultation process, including that of taxing RRSPs.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. How can the Minister of Finance leave the door open to taxing RRSPs, when the Prime Minister, his Prime Minister, promised during the election campaign not to raise taxes in the first two years of Liberal rule?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister said is that the tax burden of Canadians must not be increased. Besides, we stated very clearly in the red book that ultimately—that is one of the reasons we must reduce the deficit—any government has a responsibility to lower the level of taxation.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should read again the newspaper article in which the Prime Minister clearly said that taxes would not be raised in the first two years of a Liberal government. Not the tax burden but taxes themselves.

Does the Minister of Finance not think that he would be acting more responsibly if, instead of penalizing taxpayers by taxing RRSPs, he made a commitment right now in this House to reduce the Liberal government’s huge operating expenditures and to make his friends, the friends of the wealthiest Canadians, pay by eliminating the tax loopholes they enjoy?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had read the last budget, he would have seen that we eliminated many tax loopholes, like the \$100,000 capital gains exemption. We certainly eliminated corporate tax loopholes. Had he read the budget, he would have seen that we took very significant measures in the last budget and we intend to do the same thing in the next budget.

I hope that the hon. member—and I urge him to do so—will offer us constructive suggestions during sittings of the finance committee.

* * *

(1425)

[English]

RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, you will know that one of the most ancient and most basic rights of Parliament is the right of free speech. Furthermore we practise this extensively to the point of tolerating 54 members of Parliament who use it for the primary purpose of breaking up the country.

According to press reports it is now the policy of the government that this right cannot be exercised when it involves government members whose moral and religious views may conflict with government policy.

Can the government categorically deny these reports and assure the House that government members, and all members, have the right to object to government policy on moral and religious bases in the House and outside of the House, whether those views are the same as those of the Minister of Justice or not?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the resolutions that emanated for the table of the Reform Party conference coming up, I think the member would be well advised to look after the affairs of his own party as compared to the affairs of the Government of Canada.

Oral Questions

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, as we have come to expect, that answer was wonderfully irrelevant.

The supplementary question I have is on the issue of free votes. It has been the practice in the House and in most legislatures that on basic moral issues there are free votes. Even the NDP government in Ontario recently allowed free votes on issues related to sexual orientation.

Will the government remove the whips and allow free votes on issues of sexual orientation that pertain to government legislation?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it is the position of the Government of Canada to defend the policies of the Government of Canada. One of the policies of the Government of Canada is that sexual orientation should not be grounds for discrimination and we intend to so proceed with the Canadian Human Rights Act.

* * *

[Translation]

FORESTRY

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign, as a result of which we were elected, the government gave thousands of Quebecers in eastern Quebec to understand that the federal contribution to private forest development in Gaspé and the Lower St. Lawrence would be maintained until 1998. The Minister of Natural Resources said in the House that she did want the program to continue but that her colleague responsible for regional development in Quebec would have to release the funds required to finance it. The newspaper *Le Soleil* tells us today that her colleague is waiting for recommendations from the minister—

The Speaker: Order! I would ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if she was able to convince her colleague responsible for regional development in Quebec to extend the Eastern Plan? If not, can she explain to us the reasons for her failure?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me assure my hon. colleague that everyone on the government side understands and appreciates the economic importance of private woodlot owners to Quebec and in particular, the region of eastern Quebec and the Gaspé.

Let me also say that since February I have taken the opportunity to meet with private woodlot owners from Quebec and elsewhere on six separate occasions.

As the hon. member pointed out, my colleague, the minister responsible for regional development in Quebec, and I have made a commitment to meet with private woodlot owners in eastern Quebec. He and I will deliver on that commitment in an attempt to resolve this acknowledged important issue for the province of Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, the wood producers have had enough of committees on development in their area. However, the question is straightforward. Can the Minister of Natural Resources tell us whether or not the federal government is withdrawing from the Eastern Plan and thus abandoning the thousands of workers who depend on it?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me beseech, let me implore, my friend to suggest to his provincial counterparts that they send a political delegation next week to the ministers of forestry meeting in the province of New Brunswick, in Fredericton, where the issue of continued federal involvement in the forestry sector will be discussed.

As I say, I beseech him to encourage his provincial colleagues to be there at the political level to engage in this discussion. That is where resolution will take place.

* * *

(1430)

TRADE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, one of the Prime Minister's most important foreign affairs jobs is promoting Canadian exports outside of this country. This is what will provide jobs, jobs, jobs. We support this role and the Team Canada approach in China.

However I must ask: How is the Prime Minister going to handle the threat posed by Mr. Parizeau and Mr. Landry to sabotage the upcoming Canadian trade missions by using them as a forum to spread their separatist agenda?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear and open about the fact that it is important to involve the provinces in the job of Team Canada. He is very concerned in fact that the premier of Quebec should be there with Team Canada. The invitation is open to the premier.

The Prime Minister knows that the premier of Quebec was elected on an economic platform. We hope he joins the Prime Minister and all other first ministers in the job of selling Team Canada so that we can create Canadian jobs in every province, including Quebec.

Oral Questions

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, the jobs created by our export promotion missions are for Canadians, including Quebecers. Therefore any disruptions by the PQ will be costing the people of Quebec jobs. That is the point we have to make.

Is it not time for the Prime Minister to proceed and involve the Quebec business community in the trade mission and ignore the disruptive politicians if they continue?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec business community is very supportive of the Prime Minister's trip. I am sure members of the Quebec business community will be communicating to their premier how important it will be for him to be part of Team Canada.

* * *

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, it has been announced that a second north-south runway at Pearson International Airport will be completed as soon as possible. This runway has far reaching safety and economic implications.

Can the Minister of Transport assure the residents of Mississauga that the new runway will be used for landings only? Will he assure them that any discussion of further construction in the form of new east-west runways and all such decision making will not occur until the new Canadian airport authority is established to take over the operation of Pearson?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have announced that we will complete the work that has already begun on the north-south runway at Pearson. A lot of work has been done and we intend to complete it. It will be used relatively few times and only when it is required for weather and safety conditions.

With respect to the east-west runways, we now have all of the nominees from metropolitan Toronto for the Canadian airport authority at Pearson. The federal nominees have been chosen as well. I am awaiting a response from Premier Rae for the province of Ontario nominee. When that is done we will try to put in place a transitional team based on those appointments to assist us in making decisions with respect to the future of Pearson.

I want to assure the member and the citizens who would be affected by the construction of the east-west runways that absolutely no decision will be taken on that matter until the CAA is in place and functioning at Pearson International Airport.

[Translation]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup just pointed out, thousands of jobs depend on extending the Eastern Quebec Development Plan. The issue is not whether the Quebec government will be represented at a conference, but whether the minister responsible for regional development will extend the agreement to 1998, as he promised to do.

Considering that hundreds of jobs hinge on the extension of that plan in one of the most hard-hit regions in Quebec, will the minister pledge today to allocate the necessary funds requested by his colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources?

(1435)

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier we on the government side are fully aware of the importance of private woodlot owners to the economy of Quebec.

I have met with representatives of private woodlot owners in Quebec. My colleague the minister responsible for regional development and I will meet again with those individuals. We hope to resolve this important economic matter in the near future.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, if the government is really concerned about this issue, why did the minister responsible for regional development promise to meet all those involved in the region last summer and then go back on his word?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, let me say in defence of my colleague the minister responsible for regional development for Quebec that indeed a meeting was planned and due to my schedule that meeting had to be cancelled. We are in the process of organizing yet another meeting with the private woodlot owners.

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FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the *Victoria Times Colonist* is reporting that DFO is in a shambles and morale has never been lower. Not only that but a leaked DFO document given to me by Ernie Fedoruk of the *Times Colonist* blames the unprecedented levels of poaching of salmon on Vancouver Island directly on a shortage of enforcement officers.

Oral Questions

In light of the mounting evidence does the minister still have the audacity to stand up in this House and tell us what a fine job of protecting the resource his department is doing?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Delta for his question.

As the minister and I have indicated in this House before, there is an independent review going on which the hon. member stood up and asked for. Part of the mandate of that review is to look at enforcement.

Unlike the hon. member across the way, we will look at all facts and will not start making allegations or accusations without getting the facts. That is what the independent review board is all about. Once we have seen the facts this government will act as it has in the past, in a comprehensive, rational and pragmatic way, not in a knee jerking panicky way.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the minister fines fishermen in Newfoundland thousands of dollars for jigging a few cod for supper and looks the other way while thousands of fish are poached in B.C.

The leaked document and others indicate quite clearly that management problems at DFO extend beyond the Fraser River and beyond the professional capabilities of scientists appointed to the minister's review panel.

Will the minister disband his in-house collection of scientists and request a judicial inquiry into DFO's management of the west coast salmon fishery?

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton): Mr. Speaker, environmental assessment hearings surrounding low level test flights over Labrador started last week. The Innu Association of Labrador has chosen not to participate in the hearings because it feels the process has not been an open and fair one.

What assurances can the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Environment give us that the concerns of the Innu are being fairly addressed and that the process is a fair and open one?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as I reported in the House earlier this week I had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Innu community yesterday. We had some very broad discussions around the role of the panel. I assured them that if there is one shred of evidence that the panel is biased I will be the first to act to replace panel members.

Those discussions are continuing. In the absence of any evidence I am working with the Innu and urging them to come back to the table. If they want the environmental process on low level flying to work, their voices need to be heard and the process has to be a fair and open one. We are committed to that fair and open process and we want them to participate.

* * *

[Translation]

AIRPORTS

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

(1440)

Last July 13, in the middle of summer, when Canadians were on vacation, the Minister of Transport announced a national air transportation strategy. This strategy is patterned on the airport policy which will impact all regions of Quebec and Canada.

Does the minister have a contingency plan to keep airports open, should local airport authorities become unable to fulfill their management mandate?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member just mentioned, the implementation of a national airport policy was made public and three levels of airports were identified. I hope that, with the co-operation of all those concerned, we will succeed in implementing an efficient and safe system, as well as one which will reduce the taxpayers' burden.

We do not want to prejudge how things will go. We have two to five years to come up with final solutions based on problems experienced in each of the affected locations. I hope to be able to count on the hon. member's co-operation to arrive at the best possible solution. If things do not workout, we will review the situation. However, based on the results so far, I am very confident that the system announced last July will be a real success right across the country.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, before making his plan public, did the minister ensure that municipalities had the necessary financial resources to manage regional airports without any reduction in services?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that there are some 725 certified airports in Canada.

Transport Canada is involved in the management of only 150 of those airports, either as owner or operator. Already, in every province, there are airports operating very successfully, without federal involvement. The hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans and his colleagues from the opposition keep reminding us of the need to manage our operations efficiently and to reduce the deficit. This is precisely what we are trying to do.

Oral Questions

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal promise to restore trust and public confidence in the government has been broken. The Liberals criticized the Conservative government for the appointment of its political friends. They said they would appoint people only on the basis of competence. There are many very competent people who are not high level Liberals, yet once again yesterday or the day before we saw that this government has appointed one of its own.

My question is for the Prime Minister. I notice the Prime Minister is not here but it is directed to him.

The Speaker: I invite the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Schmidt: I stand corrected. My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

How can the public trust be restored when this government continues to blatantly make patronage appointments to reward their loyal Liberals?

The Speaker: The hon. member for Verchères.

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[Translation]

LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, while Canada has won all the binational panel reviews on the matter, the American government is now considering the possibility of paying back the 800 million dollars it owes to timber producers in Canada and Quebec. United States politicians and businessmen are furious against Canada and the very integrity of the Free Trade Agreement is threatened.

(1445)

Meanwhile, the Minister for International Trade can do no better than hope that a cheque will come in soon.

My question is for the Minister for International Trade. Why is he content with just waiting for the Americans to pay us back? Why does he not demand that this circus be stopped and that the sums owing be paid immediately? All we are asking is for the government to put its foot down on this issue.

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the United States is reimbursing the amounts collected after March of this year. With regard to the amounts collected prior to March, the process is under way for the full reimbursement of the outstanding amount plus interest.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, we would like this government to assume its responsibilities towards the timber producers. Can the government assure this House that it will take all the steps required in order to solve this problem before the end of the current year? The minister seems to forget that almost a billion dollars are at stake here.

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I fully share the member's eagerness to see this situation resolved. We have pursued our discussions with the United States administration at the highest level. We have received assurances that the amounts will be fully refunded.

* * *

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, a report on the funding of interest groups is scheduled to be completed by the Treasury Board tomorrow.

Will the President of the Treasury Board commit to immediate action and tell this House how soon we can expect big cuts to special interest groups, saving the taxpayers millions of dollars in wasted spending?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, there will be no announcement tomorrow if that is what is anticipated by the hon. member.

However, I will say that the staff of the Treasury Board has been working on guidelines. We will issue guidelines to the various departments with respect to dealing with the issue of special interest groups and their funding. We will be asking the different departments to address this issue in the framework of the program review.

I do anticipate, like all other aspects of the program review, that there will be cuts because we do need to have these cuts to get our spending in line and get the deficit down. Therefore, we will be issuing those guidelines to the various departments to examine their grants.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, we were led to believe that an announcement was coming tomorrow. There had been a study commissioned by the previous government that was produced last February. Here we are talking about more discussions and having more debate about when and where we are going to cut.

How soon will we get serious action on the cutting of funds to special interest groups so that the Minister of Finance can make some real cuts in the deficit which has to be addressed today?

Oral Questions

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, it will be part and parcel of the program review which is in turn part and parcel of the consultation process that the Minister of Finance will be engaging in. When the budget is out next February members will see those cuts and how they are going to be made.

* * *

[Translation]

PARTY FUNDRAISING

Mr. Jean-Guy Chretien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General and Leader of the Government in the House. During a recent debate in the House of Commons on the financing of political parties, many members from all political parties supported a motion to ensure democratic and popular financing of political parties, by putting a \$5000 ceiling on public contributions to federal political parties.

Since a dozen of his government colleagues supported that motion, does the Leader of the Government recognize the need for the democratization of the financing of political parties by using the Quebec model?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we already have a democratic system for collecting election funds, but we could conduct a study on this matter by using the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It is not my responsibility to take such a request to that committee, but I think it would be a useful matter for the committee to examine in due time.

(1450)

Mr. Jean-Guy Chretien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, must we understand from the response of the Leader of the Government in the House that he prefers unlimited financing by big corporations as opposed to ordinary citizens to ensure the operation of his party, the Liberal Party of Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think that the member got me wrong. All members in this House are interested in that matter and that is why I suggest that it be examined by the Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, although the motion was rejected by a majority in the House.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada approved silicon breast implants, many of them made by Dow Corning. Many women today are suffering because of that decision.

Now the health minister has commissioned a study to look at the effects. Who is financing that study?

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that I will have to take under advisement and ask the Minister of Health because I do not know of any such study at the moment.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, Dow Corning has just settled out of court in the U.S. for some \$4 billion. Who do you think is funding this study?

The Speaker: I take it the question is posed to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and not to me.

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the settlements that have been made in the United States are an entirely different matter from the hon. member's first question.

You know that the Government of Canada had applied to—

The Speaker: Order. I would ask all hon. members, please do not forget I am getting lonely up here again.

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is probably aware that during that settlement the Canadian government did intercede on behalf of Canadian women who were involved in the settlement by applying to become a friend of the court. We also have a 1-800 number for Canadian women to call with regard to this issue.

* * *

[Translation]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Yesterday I was very much surprised when the Prime Minister said he had not been informed of the commitment his predecessor made with respect to the referendum. I made inquiries, and I later found that before Question Period yesterday, the Prime Minister knew that his predecessor had promised the Government of Quebec he would submit to his government a request to compensate Quebec for referendum expenses.

I would like to know from the government why the Prime Minister did not give this information to the House of Commons yesterday?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, I think the present situation is quite clear and has been explained several times in the House. There is no evidence in our files that a commitment was finalized. In the past few days, the Prime Minister got in touch with the former Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, to find out whether there had been a definite commitment, and he asked him to indicate, in writing, what his position was. As soon as we know the former Prime Minister's

Oral Questions

position on whether he made a definite commitment, we will act accordingly.

(1455)

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, my question to the government is quite clear and it is this: Yesterday, the Prime Minister knew, because his predecessor had told him before Question Period, that he had made a commitment to submit Quebec's request to the government. I would like to know why yesterday in this House, the Prime Minister did not share that information with Parliament and why instead, he insinuated there had been some unlawful activity?

[English]

The Speaker: This question is, if I understand it, directly posed to the Prime Minister who is not in the Chamber at this time.

Is it to the Deputy Prime Minister?

[Translation]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made no insinuations whatsoever. Today, the only insinuation has come from the hon. member for Sherbrooke. Now, the Prime Minister is waiting for a letter from Brian Mulroney because a lot is said on the telephone. We want to see the truth in writing, and that is what we are waiting for. The Prime Minister said that as soon as he sees a commitment by the federal government in writing, he will act on that commitment. That is exactly what he said yesterday in the House.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Some Canadians have the wrong impression that immigrants take jobs and abuse our social security system. I have serious concerns about the growing backlash against immigrants and refugees.

What is the minister doing to address these concerns and to inform the Canadian public about the real and positive contributions that immigrants do make to Canadian society?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question which is a good question, because sometimes we allow mythology to wrap itself around this policy we call immigration. Rather than point to government, we should perhaps look at the study that was released by the Clarke

Institute this week, a study of 1,300 former Vietnamese boat people spanning some 10 years.

It found individuals who were a tremendous success story. One out of every five started a business; 99 per cent of them became Canadian citizens; 7.3 per cent used the social system rather than the 10 per cent of the rest of Canadians.

What this paints is a distinction between fact and fiction. Hopefully that lesson is not lost on these customers who continue to spin mythology around immigration.

* * *

[Translation]

1992 REFERENDUM

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Prime Minister was supposed to be in the House today. That is the information we were given. However, at the beginning of the sitting, we were advised he would be late and, with your consent, we agreed to wait with our questions. Since he is not here, I will have to put a question to the Deputy Prime Minister, following the answer she gave the hon. member for Sherbrooke. I realize we do not have enough time, so I will ask only one question. But do not worry, we will get you next time around!

(1500)

Am I to understand from the Deputy Prime Minister's reply to a question from the hon. member for Sherbrooke that the Prime Minister was aware, as a result of a telephone conversation he had with Mr. Mulroney, that the latter had promised to treat Quebec equitably and compensate it for its referendum expenses, and that the Prime Minister will not take Mr. Mulroney, who is an honourable man, at his word and wants to see this confirmed in writing?

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, when the Prime Minister spoke to Mr. Mulroney, they agreed that Mr. Mulroney would send him a reply in writing, stating his position on the existence of an agreement between the Government of Quebec and the federal government.

That is what the Prime Minister stated in the House, and the situation has not changed.

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[English]

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Oral Questions

I wish also to draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Geoff Smith, Minister for Lands, Queensland, Australia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Government House Leader to indicate what the business of the House will be for the next few days.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue with the Bloc opposition day. Tomorrow we will begin by returning to the debate on Bill C-22 regarding Pearson airport, followed by second reading of Bill C-52, the government services and public works reorganization bill.

On Monday we will begin with second reading of Bill C-53, the Canadian heritage reorganization bill, followed by Bill C-52 if that was not completed on Friday. We will follow this with Bill C-42, the miscellaneous amendments to the Criminal Code.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of next week the business will be in the following order. We will begin with second reading of Bill C-51, the Canada Grains Act, followed by second reading of Bill C-47, the foreign affairs reorganization bill.

If the House has not already completed Bills C-52 and C-42 we will then turn to them in the order mentioned. We will then return to other debates already begun but not completed in an order that we will consult on with the other parties.

On Thursday and Friday of next week we are proposing that a take note debate on the initiative of the government be held on the discussion paper on social security reform which is to be tabled, I believe, next Wednesday. This is to enable members to make their views known in this important, ongoing national discussion.

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[*Translation*]

POINT OF ORDER

PROCEDURE IN THE HOUSE

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order on two matters. I also want to mention, since it just happened, that after Question Period, you called the

usual Thursday question, but I always thought that after Question Period, Questions of Privilege and Points of Order were called first.

(1505)

I just mention this in passing. It is not a point of order but I think it is important to bring this up, because we have certain traditions and customs.

The Speaker: The Chair recognizes members as items are called. I did not see anyone else. If the hon. member is referring to himself, I did not see him, except when the hon. member for Roberval was speaking. That is why I got back to him, but I am very much aware of the Standing Orders of this House.

Mr. Charest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I realize it may sometimes be difficult to see this far, but it is all part of what we expect the Chair to be able to do. That is why I sent you a note, advising you that I wished to rise on a point of order.

I wanted to raise the following matter. During Question Period, you rose twice to ask to whom members were directing their questions. To my knowledge—and my memory is not infallible—when a member of the opposition puts a question, it is necessarily directed to the government. He addresses the Chair, in other words, he must address the government through the Chair. As for the particular person to whom the question is directed, that person is indicated only as a matter of courtesy.

I am merely pointing out what I assume to be the usual custom in this House, since the government is perfectly free to reply through any member of Cabinet.

The Speaker: The hon. member is absolutely right. There is no doubt about that. The second time was indeed a mistake and I apologize. If that was the purpose of your point of order, you are absolutely right that when a question is put by a member, that question is directed to the government. I agree with that, if that was the purpose of your point of order.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may finish my comments, since there was another matter I wished to raise. You may have noticed that my question was directed to the Prime Minister. Like other members in this House, I had understood the Prime Minister was to be present during Question Period. That is why I directed my question to him. Subsequently, you said that the Prime Minister was not in the House.

I must admit this bothers me, and I will explain. We also have a Standing Order that is well-known in this House, which prohibits anyone from drawing attention to the absence of other members. A Standing Order that is usually observed.

The Speaker: Dear colleague, you are absolutely right. I was at fault and I apologize. It will not happen again, and I accept your comments in the spirit in which they were intended.

Supply

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, my discourse was interrupted by Question Period. I will attempt to pick up roughly where we left off.

We were describing before we broke for Question Period the request of the Official Opposition for a royal commission and it was my view at that time, and it still is, that is an ill advised request.

(1510)

We were discussing that in Canada we have statute law that oversees and creates CSIS. We have the Security Intelligence Review Committee that reviews the work of CSIS. We have a justice committee and a subcommittee on security and intelligence which looks at the same area. We also have the Solicitor General who stands in this House, responsible to Parliament and to the people of Canada for all of the matters under his ministry, including CSIS.

Why do we need a fourth or a fifth level of scrutiny or inquiry? Why do we need a royal commission? This House through its justice committee in the last Parliament in reviewing the CSIS act made 117 recommendations. Only two of the 117 recommendations were adopted by the government at that time. That was regrettable.

Thank heaven for small mercies. Two were adopted. One which was not accepted by government was the creation of a committee or subcommittee that would work in this area of security and intelligence. The government basically said to Parliament it does not want one. The justice committee said beg your pardon, excuse us, but there will be one.

All of the parties on the justice committee unanimously agreed to create the subcommittee on national security. That particular subcommittee was reborn in this Parliament. That provides Parliament with a particularly precise window with the ability to look into this area, the subject of debate today.

One of the reasons we believed the subcommittee was necessary was that although the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC, works for Parliament and for Canadians on their behalf, the linkages between SIRC and Parliament were not strong. SIRC makes one annual report each year and can make section 54 reports to the Solicitor General whenever it is deemed appropriate.

Those section 54 reports do not come directly to Parliament. I think I am correct in saying the reports do not ever get to Parliament. The procedures have not been live and green. As a result there needs to be a better linkage between SIRC and Parliament.

That is one of the reasons we have created the subcommittee, to provide that linkage, that relationship, between the oversight or review mechanism that SIRC is and Parliament with its general oversight mechanism for all of government.

I want to discuss the issue of potential cost of royal commissions. I think it was adequately addressed by one or two colleagues in the House. Some of the more recent royal commissions have cost between \$9 million and \$25 million per item. That is a lot of toast.

From my perspective the existing mechanisms of the statute of the Solicitor General, of SIRC and the subcommittee are able to cover the field and adequately address the questions that have been raised. If I am wrong then someone might be able to make a case for a royal commission, but at the moment I do not believe I am wrong. Time will tell. The next year or six months will tell. We will see how well SIRC, the subcommittee, the justice committee and members in this House deal with this particular set of issues.

Let us deal with the justice committee and the subcommittee on national security. For members here and for Canadians I want to acknowledge the resources that will be used as an alternative to a royal commission are already bought and paid for by the taxpayers. We are adequately resourced. We have research capability and we have the power to compel attendance. We have a subcommittee which is working in a relatively non-partisan fashion and a justice committee which is working in a relatively non-partisan fashion. I believe that we can do the job that Parliament has set out for us in the standing orders.

(1515)

As I say, we have the resources. We have the power to compel. The wording of that power is called the power to call for persons and papers. That is basically the power to compel attendance and to require an answer. It is part of the law of Parliament. The law of Parliament has been here ever since this House was built and this country was formed. The law of Parliament began developing back when the barons forced King John, in the Magna Carta of 1215, to submit to a people's Parliament. They took some authority from the king. The Bill of Rights of 1689 is another large slice of authority for Parliament derived from the king.

We have the power to compel attendance. The power has been described with some derogation as an absolute power. I will not get into details on that now but it is an effective power.

We in the House want Canadians to know that we will not hesitate to use the authority that Canadian citizens have given us if we need to use them. I can point respectfully to the mace that sits on the table which is, as a symbol, the repository of every one of the powers and authorities that Canadians have given all of us in the House.

What are the allegations that the Official Opposition would like to see investigated? There are two categories. First is the allegation that an alleged informant of CSIS had involved himself in some fashion in intelligence gathering or other with a CBC journalist, in another instance with some activities of the Reform Party of Canada, in another instance in an attempt to obtain an address list of members of the Canadian Jewish Congress and in another instance, potentially some intelligence gathering in relation to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Those are four categorized items for which allegations are being investigated as we speak by the Security Intelligence Review Committee which has three staff permanently working on them.

The second issue has to do with security of classified documents. Essentially put the question is: How did a box of allegedly classified documents make its way out of a secure environment and into the basement of a residence somewhere in Ottawa and on to the pages of a major newspaper? That is a very reasonable question. That particular question is not one that the Security Intelligence Review Committee would ordinarily be able to look at, but it is one that the parliamentary subcommittee can and will look at.

There are other related questions, hypothetical allegations, what ifs. Those questions have been asked publicly and the subcommittee will do its job as will SIRC. The subcommittee will consult with SIRC as it goes about its job and vice versa. My colleagues on the subcommittee will inquire into all of these questions over the next few weeks.

Finally, in my view a royal commission at this point is absolutely unnecessary, ridiculously expensive and procedurally redundant in the extreme. I want to assure members in the House and Canadians that colleagues who are on the subcommittee will deal with the issues in a responsible way, in a rational way, in a manner that does not duplicate and waste resources and in a way that we hope will continue the faith of Canadians in the way Parliament works and in the way CSIS and SIRC operate.

(1520)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, we have been told that the cost of a royal commission of inquiry would be in the order of \$9 to \$25 million. We are a government striving to limit costs and I

Supply

believe that the people have demonstrated, again and again, that they want better control of spending.

Since a royal commission of inquiry like the one proposed by the opposition would cost between \$9 and \$25 million, I am curious to find out the real cost of the sub-committee chaired by my colleague, and I would like to know whether this sub-committee can exercise substantially the same authority as a royal commission?

[*English*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

On the question of cost, as Canadians know and members know, every member of Parliament is paid a salary. Each committee and subcommittee will have a clerk, a researcher and such other staff as the committee may need but within a budget that comes from the House of Commons, all of which is relatively closely controlled these days.

The cost of the members of Parliament, the cost of the offices, the cost of the office space—we are not going to go out and lease a floor of an office building somewhere in Ottawa. We already have committee rooms that will be put to use—are being absorbed almost exclusively at this point in the existing budgets of the House of Commons.

In terms of the powers and the mandate of the subcommittee, or any committee of the House for that matter, those mandates are primarily set out in the standing orders of the House, but they are very general. The mandate of the subcommittee in this instance is more than adequate to cover the subject area that we are dealing with.

As I stated earlier, the power to compel attendance, the power to require disclosure are virtually absolute. I will not say they are absolute because there are very few absolutes left any more in law and politics. They are virtually and precisely as great or as small as the members of the House will them to be in their work, in committee or on the floor of the House.

There is plenty of opportunity, mandate, power and resources to do the job.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to tell the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River that I share his views regarding the powers of the sub-committee he is chairing and the authority of Parliament to review all decisions made by government agencies.

The problem is neither with the Sub-committee on National Security nor with the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, the problem is with the people who make up the review committee, SIRC, who, when they appeared before the sub-committee on September 13, hid behind a particular interpretation of section 54 of the act when refusing to answer the questions of members duly elected to this House.

Supply

This is the problem, a problem which will last as long as this Parliament: How to get answers from these people? This is why a royal commission of inquiry seems appropriate. Looking at what goes on in the United States before parliamentary commissions reviewing national agencies, we can probably say that if American witnesses were to behave the way our witnesses behaved before the sub-committee, they would be sent away for a while to think about it.

(1525)

[English]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I suppose it is fair to say that my colleagues in putting the matter the way he has, makes a point. I cannot disagree that the Security Intelligence Review Committee appears to be less than forthcoming when it comes to the subcommittee's needs.

I hope he will acknowledge that there is a certain amount of bridge building and educating going on, both with respect to the goals and powers of the subcommittee.

I would not expect that everybody who comes in the front door of a committee room is going to know right away the extent of the powers that committees may have from time to time, especially in light of the history of this place.

These powers have not been used effectively or clearly over the last several decades. As a result not only do ordinary Canadians not realize the under utilization, but in my view looking in other areas it appears that the courts themselves are not fully aware of parliamentary law and of the implications of sections 4 and 5 of the Parliament of Canada Act. It is not their fault. This is perhaps the fault of Parliament itself, which may have over the last few decades, maybe the last 50 years or so, failed to develop in the modern context. This is a challenge for all of us now. I hope the current exercise will play a part in that development.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Could the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup tell the Chair whether he is going to share his time with his colleague? Ten minutes followed by five minutes for questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be sharing our time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Fine.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, let there be no doubt about it, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is a good thing per se. We are not questioning the fact that we need such an agency. The problem is that somehow CSIS is the offspring of the RCMP. If the past is any indication of the future, there is trouble ahead. This is the reason why we want to make sure the agency is properly monitored.

There are many examples illustrating the fact that with this kind of agency, it is important to have appropriate safeguards to differentiate between a security mandate and the mandate to defend a particular government or party.

In the past, on several occasions, the RCMP interfered with the democratic activities of political parties, which resulted in the creation of CSIS. When the membership list of the Parti Québécois was stolen in 1973, I was probably on it together with a number of members of this House. It was totally illegal and irrelevant.

Following that, CSIS was created, but it seems that history repeats itself. We now have a critical situation in which a well-known political party, an opposition party, the Reform Party, is being spied on and we do not seem to be able to shed light on the whole thing. This is not due to bad faith on the part of parliamentarians or the committee members, but rather because not enough light is being shed.

When we ask for a royal commission, the argument regarding its costs is no more valid than in the case of the Canadian justice system. You could say that it would be easier to solve problems by chopping off people's heads and hands than by bringing them to court and allowing them to present their defence. You could easily say that. Similarly, you could say that a royal commission is not worth it because it costs too much. Some principles are not a matter of cost and, in all fairness, it has to be mentioned.

(1530)

For example, in the present case, if someone acting for CSIS has infiltrated the Reform Party and in so doing ultimately influenced the election results, even if only in a limited way, it is casting doubt on the very basis of our system and I believe it warrants a thorough examination. We must ensure there is no unacceptable situation casting a shadow on our democratic system.

There is another reason for ensuring that members of Parliament are able to verify more directly and specifically if agencies like the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service abide by their mandate. Let me read a few excerpts from the agency's 1993 public report. We can see that, sometimes, members of agencies such as this one share opinions that are very close to being partisan or akin to a particular vision about the country's evolution. Those who do not think the same way are outlawed. They can no longer be full members of society.

For instance, we can read that "more important is the fact that the increase in the number of independent power centres in the world brings forth an increase in the number of potential threats". In other words, everything would be fine if there was only one country in the world and if everyone was alike. It would be so much easier to administer, but that is not the way it is. There is a value judgment about a society's future in that kind of statement. I think that if, on the one hand, an agency like the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is going to adopt such

an attitude, we, on the other hand, should make sure that a good eye is kept on it and that changes be made if need be.

There is another excerpt that makes me wonder and, in my view, argues for monitoring. It says that, while the RCMP is responsible for enforcing the law, CSIS collects information and provides operational or tactical advice on individuals, groups or activities that may constitute threats to the security of Canada to enable the government and police authorities to act.

It would be important to know what they mean in that kind of agency by "groups or activities that can constitute threats to the security of Canada". I could be of the personal view that what constitutes the greatest threat to the security of Canada is the way the country is run, a view the government would certainly not share. The agency may consider that such or such political party constitutes a threat to Canada, as seems to have been the case. That too is unacceptable.

So, based on the experience of past abuses by the RCMP and the attempt to remedy the problem by establishing CSIS, one critical step remains to be taken: we must get to the bottom of the matter and know everything there is to know about the agency, its mandate, the way it carries it out and all this information must be made available to the people in whom the public has placed its confidence, that is, the elected members of Parliament.

Some may say that reports are made to the Solicitor General CSIS activities, but these reports are confidential. We can understand that certain aspects must remain confidential, that certain matters must not be debated publicly, but reports could be submitted in camera to a parliamentary committee responsible for ensuring that things are done according to the law and depending on the circumstances.

I will give you examples of reports filed by the SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which are classified secret or top secret. That is how they are classified. They deal with security screening on university campuses. It is rather important to know why this kind of agency is involved in security screening on campus. Is there another witch hunt on? Is what happened in the United States 30 or 35 years ago going to happen here now? What makes one person on campus a threat to the security of Canada and not another? There may be very clear-cut cases as well as abuse. We need to make sure appropriate control is exercised over all this.

(1535)

There is another study whose title in itself is so ambiguous, it would be worthwhile to look into it. I am talking about the CSIS regional studies. What do they need regional studies for? Did they find that the people living in a region where the unemployment rate reaches 20, 25 per cent are more dangerous than the residents of a community with an unemployment rate of 10 or 12

Supply

per cent? What is in these studies? These are things we should be able to look into.

There is another document I would like to mention, namely the review by SIRC of CSIS activities involving Aboriginal Canadians. Why should Aboriginal Canadians be the subject of separate investigations? Why are such investigations being conducted? When they told us the titles of these studies and said they received studies on this, they suggested that there were specific reasons for investigating these groups, that is, university campuses, Aboriginal Canadians and various other groups, although there is no evidence that the report eventually submitted contains any accusations. All we know is that there was an investigation.

It is a little like when someone is accused of something in a newspaper, only to be acquitted three months later. The acquittal headline is one inch high while the accusation is announced in two-inch-high letters but the effect is the same. The decision has already had a negative effect, which I think is quite unacceptable.

I would like to give you another quote from the public report which outlines what we should expect in the future. It says that in general, the world has become less predictable and the power, more diffuse. It means that our society is undergoing all kinds of changes so that the people monitoring them must follow global developments closely and be able to understand exactly what they mean.

Without judging the quality of SIRC's current membership, it can be said that the current situation is rather hard to accept because some of these people have been appointed on the recommendation of parties sitting in the House of Commons during the last Parliament. No Bloc or Reform member was involved in appointing these people. SIRC members have very few links with the current Parliament, even with the Liberals, because most of them were appointed from the Tories' list.

For all these reasons, I think that the government should agree to the opposition's request so that we can meet the goal set when CSIS was founded, namely to achieve the most appropriate level of transparency in the delicate field of security and prevent past excesses from occurring again in the future, especially now that Canada faces major political challenges. The democratic debate must in no way be undermined by institutions exceeding their mandates.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I find it very strange that reference is again made to history being a guide to what will happen in the future. To be sure, the United States had the McCarthy affair and the Rosenbergs. France was involved in sinking Greenpeace's ship, the *Rainbow Warrior*. We have seen all sorts of abuses in other countries but nothing like that has happened here.

Supply

Certainly, if someone wants to make a comment—and this is getting to the question which I would like to ask the hon. member—last night, Bernard Landry was on the CBC talking about Quebec's delegates general abroad and he wanted to know if they were true sovereignists. I think he threatened them with dismissal if they were not.

This is another demonstration of intolerance towards the opinions of all Quebecers, if their opinions do not suit the party in power. But I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker; at least we set up a committee of inquiry, a sub-committee, chaired by one of our own people, but also with members of the Bloc Québécois and Reform Party represented, which will shed light on this matter. Nevertheless, I would like to remind the hon. member that some of his colleagues in Quebec want to investigate good Quebecers whom they do not think are true Quebecers.

(1540)

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, what the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine says makes me even more suspicious, because there is a very big difference between that and saying publicly: "We will ensure that appointees conform to our objective as a government, which the people gave us; our objective is to make Quebec sovereign and we will give ourselves the democratic means to achieve this result."

This is very different from giving a mandate to an agency whose composition you do not control that will investigate subjects that you do not know—you do not know what they are investigating or how they will do it. Between these two ways of governing, I have just found another reason to make Quebec a very different country from Canada.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I find these comments very regrettable. Canada is a tolerant society, but it is not right, now that there has been a change of government, to point a finger at people who have served in the Quebec government, who have tried to promote Quebec's development outside that province and who have convinced foreign investors to come here. There is a lack of continuity and, unfortunately, I think all this is beginning to sound like McCarthyism: you are not true Americans, you are not real capitalists, etc.

It is unfortunate. This is what makes that argument a dangerous one. This is the reason why the government seeks to promote tolerance and welcomes opposition members and stakeholders to come and voice their concern and views on how to manage CSIS.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine is comparing apples and oranges. We are talking here about a dramatic situation. We are not talking, as I said earlier, about people who have been mandated by the public and who form a proper and transparent organization.

We are talking about situations such as investigating the CBC, a national broadcasting network, or Mr. Bristow having infiltrated the Reform Party. In my opinion, CSIS is an organization which, in a way, chooses its own clientele. In the seventies barns and farms had to be set on fire before investigators were hired to set up the security intelligence service. Nowadays, they try to influence recognized political parties, enough to warrant investigation.

There is a true lack of transparency which must be corrected. Indeed, in a society, it is important to know what is going on, otherwise perceptions from the past will persist in the future.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I would like to preface my speech by pointing out that a review committee was set up in 1990 precisely to reform the CSIS Act. The committee members were astonished to find out about another organization called the Communications Security Establishment, commonly known as CSE, and the extent of its powers.

CSE comes directly under the Department of National Defence. It is a collateral organization similar to CSIS. According to the sub-committee's estimates, CSE has a supposedly secret budget of about \$200 million, even though the House of Commons or any of its committees or sub-committees has no say in CSE's activities.

As I said, CSE's budget is buried away in the overall budget of the Department of National Defence so that we cannot come up with an exact figure. Using estimates, the sub-committee reckoned at the time that CSE had a budget of about \$200 million over which we have no control.

Even worse, the members of this 1990 review committee reported that even SIRC had no say in CSE's intelligence activities. In 1990, this committee made 117 specific recommendations.

(1545)

Since then, only two or three of these recommendations have been adopted, and by the previous government at that. Why? Because the committee recommended that the Communications Security Establishment be formally set up by a piece of legislation that we could oversee, examine and review.

The committee also wanted SIRC to ensure that CSE's activities were carried out in accordance with the law and to report to Parliament.

Why were the members of the 1990 review committee so concerned, and what exactly is CSE? In an article published last May, the daily newspaper *Le Droit* explained a little bit what could be learned about CSE and I quote: "The Communications Security Establishment carries out its activities in total secrecy, resorting to electronic surveillance to pick up messages from many areas of the world. This high-tech equipment, which is worth tens of millions of dollars—and is apparently among the most sophisticated in the world—can pick up messages to

troops stationed in Siberia or even listen to your own private telephone conversations with friends overseas." All that in the name of security.

CSE provides intelligence services akin to those of CSIS, but without reporting to Parliament. Both agencies also signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation. The activities that are carried out in the Chomley Building, in Ottawa, where hundreds of CSE employees work on nine floors full of top secret electronic surveillance equipment, are very similar to those of the CSIS.

The same year, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that a device supposedly allowed CSE to listen to 10,000 telephone conversations all at the same time and to tape specific ones on "Iran" or "sovereignty", for example, just by entering these words in a computer. But it seems we are safe.

Does CSE communicate its intelligence to CSIS? We do not know. Does CSE violate Canadian laws? We do not know. No citizen, no member of Parliament and no member of SIRC knows. Nobody knows. Yet, according to the Solicitor General and his parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, SIRC is supposed to review intelligence services on behalf of the members of Parliament who are democratically elected by the people.

How many untold Bristow cases are still to be unveiled inside CSE? It is difficult to say. One has to wonder if ministers across the aisle know more about this than Opposition members. We do not believe they do.

CSE has a staff of 900 civilians and about 1,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces. It has facilities everywhere in Canada: in Ottawa, in the North and in large cities.

I would like to read another excerpt from the article published in *Le Droit* which says: "The work of the CSE is so secret that its 1,000 or so employees are asked never to travel on commercial flights in case the plane is hijacked or they are taken hostage". But there is nothing to worry about, right?

Does the CSE gather information on legitimate political parties such as the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois? We do not know. Can a citizen make a formal complaint to a monitoring agency? The answer is no. Why do we have a charter of rights and freedoms if CSE employees can, whenever they wish, listen to our phone conversations without prior judicial authorization and without ever having to report to a parliamentary body or an intelligence agency?

In short, the CSE is not monitored by Parliament nor by any other body. The government does not want to ask SIRC to review the activities of the CSE. Nobody knows why. And the Sub-

Supply

Committee on National Security that everybody on the government side is raving about cannot get any answers from members of SIRC and, I will say it again, has no authority over the CSE.

(1550)

But there is nothing to worry about. Or so we are told.

That is why we need a royal commission of inquiry to explain to all Canadians and Quebecers as well as to members of this House how intelligence agencies and secret services are constantly keeping track of what we say and do.

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to hear my hon. colleague's remarks because I am particularly qualified to answer at least some of them.

I am the author of a book called *Best Kept Secret* that deals with the early history of the CSE and brings it up to the present. It was published last November. The member is welcome to get it. I regret however it was published only in English, but I would greatly appreciate it if the member could find me a French publisher, a Quebec publisher, so it would be available to him in the language of his choice.

The history of the CSE goes back to the second world war. I will help the hon. member by giving him some background. It was part of the allied effort in code and cipher breaking during the second world war. It began with the examination unit that was in the house next door to the Prime Minister's residence during the second world war.

It was engaged in breaking codes and ciphers primarily Japanese and Vichy French. The breaking of codes and ciphers was a shared arrangement, both diplomatic, economic and military during the second world war. The Americans specialized in Japanese ciphers in particular and the British specialized in German and Italian. The Canadians were left with some Japanese and Vichy French.

The reason Canadians got involved—and this is important so the member will understand the perspective right now—was that Canada was the best country in the world for picking up radio signals. It was because of the radio skip phenomenon where the radio waves bounce in the atmosphere and come down in various parts of the world at focal points. Canada was excellently situated to pick up all kinds of messages. That is how we got involved.

Naturally during the second world war this was a highly secret endeavour. It went into the post war period. Canada continued to be involved first as the communications branch under the National Research Council and subsequently it became the Communications Security Establishment.

Supply

There is no secret about what the Communications Security Establishment does. If the member would look at my book, I cite in it a particular presentation before a committee, the name of which is in my book, by the deputy clerk for security intelligence, Ward Alcock, a couple of years ago. He explained that the mandate of the Communications Security Establishment was to listen in on telecommunications worldwide, just as do the Americans, the Australians and the British. The idea was to try to pick up intelligence that may have a bearing on Canada's political and economic security.

There might be a case where Canada has entered into international agreements and one party or another is not obeying those agreements. Am I going on too long, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the member have a question or a comment?

Mr. Bryden: I am coming to it. I will speed it up. I am sure my hon. colleague is interested because it is apparently—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): With the greatest of respect to all colleagues in the House, the member spoke for 10 minutes and we have 5 minutes for questions or comments. When I rose for questions or comments there was more than one member rising. I would like to keep the debate flowing as much as I possibly can, for and against, so we might have the best possible debate in the Chamber.

I would ask the member for Hamilton—Wentworth to conclude his remark or ask the question directly to the member for Terrebonne.

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I will try to make it a very quick question then. I am sorry for the delay.

In a situation where an organization is charged with monitoring foreign intelligence sources, does the member agree it is very difficult to bring it before a parliamentary committee for open examination because of the tremendous political, social and economic implications of possible leaks of confidentiality?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, I think that, as elected representatives, we are entitled to know the main organizations who manage this country and Quebec.

(1555)

The hon. member opposite said: "We monitor conversations that can be detrimental to national unity". Given what we hear in this House, does that mean they can eavesdrop on conversations in Quebec? Surely not, but one has to wonder.

Concerning the translation of his book, he could have done like one of his former colleagues, Senator Hébert, and have it translated in the Senate. Our only question is: Why should we have a security intelligence service without any supervision scanning the airwaves and recording conversations around us?

My hon. colleague wrote a book on secret services. I would like to know why the 117 recommendations made by the committee have never been implemented. If there is no secret, why do we read things like this: "The CSE headquarters is located in the south end of Ottawa in a building surrounded by a high fence topped by barbed wire. The roof is covered with a myriad of antennas, but the name of the occupant is nowhere to be seen. If you try to take a picture—and let this be a warning to Canadians—you will most probably be challenged within minutes". But there is nothing secret.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleague, the member for Terrebonne, had to say and it frightens me in a way. We all know that the SIRC was created following enquiries. I am talking particularly about the Keable enquiry which was held in Quebec towards the end of the 1970s. It was sparked by a unimportant event. A former RCMP officer had been caught placing a bomb. Somehow this expanded and led us to find out about very disturbing facts.

The RCMP had set fire to a barn, stolen lists of Parti Québécois members, illegally opened mail—a totally democratic way of doing things after all—placed bombs and written false press releases in the name of the FLQ. Those events made us realize the need for a special service, one which would be totally independent from the RCMP, the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

Given what we are learning today, given the reasons why the committee was established, given the fact that it is totally impossible to know what is happening there, even though we repeatedly made requests, does the member feel that security is now better, worse or equivalent to what it was in those days?

Mr. Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my colleague from Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies. I want to tell him that I feel less secure, especially when we hear the number one officer of CSIS say to the committee which is supposed to solve all the problems: "I have learned never to say yes or no."

That is what the number one officer of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service says. He says to the subcommittee which is supposed to solve all the problems: "We do not need any royal commission because we have a subcommittee. I have learned never to say yes or no." The other witnesses appearing before the subcommittee never want to answer the questions.

Supply

Therefore, do I feel secure? No. Do we need a royal inquiry commission that would be independent instead of a subcommittee with a majority of Liberals? My answer is yes.

[English]

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the opposition motion. The motion is to denounce the government for not appointing a royal commission to inquire into the “illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service”.

The hon. member is putting the cart before the horse. Why would the government wish to mount a royal commission when there has been no evidence of illegal activities? It is true there have been allegations of wrongdoing but they are just that, allegations.

Yet on the strength of unproven allegations the member wishes the government to mount a royal commission which would cost the taxpayers of the country hundreds of thousands of dollars. The hon. member may be prepared to take such liberties with the public purse, but the government has made it clear that it is committed to a program of fiscal responsibility.

Fiscal considerations aside, there is a more serious concern raised by the hon. member’s motion. Implicit in the wording of the motion is the idea that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is an organization that is not subject to the authority of Parliament or to any type oversight mechanism. This motion, by suggesting such an idea, does a grave disservice to the reputation of CSIS and to the House which in 1984 put in place an extensive array of legislative safeguards and oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability, control and review of CSIS activities. Operating within this legislative framework, CSIS has proven itself to be a responsible security intelligence agency on a professional par with those of other western democracies.

(1600)

Central to the control and direction of CSIS are the principles of ministerial control and accountability which are also central to Canadian parliamentary democracy. The CSIS act ensured that the minister would have full knowledge and power of direction over the policies, operations and management of CSIS. Subsection 6(1) of the CSIS act is unequivocal in its message that the minister provides direction to the director of the service.

The CSIS act also supplied the minister with the means to control and guide the service. Ministerial control is to be distinguished from ministerial accountability. Though they are sometimes used interchangeably, the terms have distinct meanings. Control refers to the minister’s power of approval, the minister’s ability to set policy and give direction and the means at the minister’s disposal to ensure that decisions are implemented.

Accountability refers to the minister’s obligation to answer before Parliament and the duty of officials to answer to the minister. A principal means by which the minister exercises control over CSIS is through the power of approval. By the normal rules of government, a minister must be consulted on all important matters related to the minister’s portfolio.

In addition, the CSIS act and ministerial directions issued to the service require the minister to personally approve a wide variety of operational activities, particularly sensitive operations. The CSIS act stipulates that the minister must personally approve all applications for judicial warrants, all CSIS arrangements with other federal agencies and departments, provincial authorities and foreign governments, and the service’s assistance in the coalition of foreign intelligence in Canada.

The minister also exercises control over the service through statutory power to establish the policy guidelines for the service. This is achieved through the issuance of ministerial directions.

An act of Parliament can construct a legislative framework but legislation alone cannot provide detailed guidance covering every aspect of operational activity.

For this there needs to be a policy framework to assist interpretation and implementation. Legislation governing the creation of a security intelligence agency has a special need for such a policy framework if there is to be public confidence in how the agency operates.

Policy frameworks in support of legislation are normally achieved in two ways; through the formulation of regulations and the development of operation guidelines. Neither mechanism however is entirely satisfactory in the security intelligence context.

Regulations as public instruments are obviously unsuited for conveying detailed instructions on how secret operations are to be conducted. Internal agency rules on the other hand would not provide a sufficient level of confidence.

A third device was therefore embodied in the legislation in the form of ministerial direction issued pursuant to subsection 6(2) of the act. Ministerial direction helps to ensure that the Solicitor General is the linchpin of the legal and policy framework.

In practice the minister issues all instructions of consequence in written form regardless of subject. Through the experience of working with the CSIS act the government now defines direction pursuant to subsection 6(2) as “written instructions of a continuing nature issued at the prerogative of the minister that relates to policy standards or procedures”.

The strategic work for ministerial direction is clear. Over the last 10 years a set of ministerial directions has been developed setting out the Solicitor General’s governing principles for the service and its activities. The directions may be grouped into seven major categories relating to; arrangements to assist the director’s accountability to the minister; the government’s annual priorities for intelligence on threats to Canada’s security, known as the “national requirements”; guidance on the service’s statutory duties and functions; guidance on investigative

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methods and techniques; instructions dealing with the service's corporate management practices; standards for negotiating co-operative arrangements with domestic and foreign organizations and, policy and file mismanagement issues, particularly the service's retention of files inherited from the RCMP security service.

Currently some 50 ministerial directions are in effect. Directions are converted by the service into operational procedures for use directly by CSIS staff. This logical progression from statute to ministerial direction to operational procedure provides a manageable and auditable means of ensuring that the service is fulfilling its duties and functions in an appropriate manner. I remind all members that SIRC is copied on all these directives.

There is also great provision in the act for accountability. A general direction also exists to ensure the director's accountability to the minister. It describes the roles and responsibilities of the Solicitor General, the Deputy Solicitor General and the director and outlines formal reporting requirements such as the director's obligation to prepare an annual report. The minister has also established guidelines for the scope and content of the director's annual report.

Direction on service operational policy in respect of the service's security intelligence mandate is particularly important to ministerial control. It ensures that the service's collection, analysis and reporting activities respond to the government's annual national requirements for security intelligence and provides practical guidance in interpreting important terminology of the CSIS act.

The operational methods also are clearly laid out. A general direction on the conduct of investigations serves as an umbrella for other more specific directions providing guidance on operational methods. It implicitly endorses the five fundamental principles for controlling investigations espoused by the McDonald commission. The rule of law must be observed at all times.

The investigative means used must be proportionate to the gravity of the threat posed and the probability of its occurrence. The need to use various investigative techniques must be weighed against possible damage to civil liberties or the valuable social institutions.

The more intrusive the technique, the higher the authority required to approve its use. Except in emergency circumstances, the least intrusive techniques of information collection must be used before more intrusive techniques are applied.

A direction on joint operations recognizes that in certain circumstances Canadian security interests may demand the active presence in Canada of investigators from foreign security and intelligence organizations. The principles that are to guide the service's activities in this field are that Canadian sovereignty and law are to be fully respected and protected; the objective and potential product of the co-operation must be of

benefit to Canada and serve Canadian national interests; and CSIS must exercise effective control of the co-operative activity.

A direction on foreign investigation provides guidelines governing the service's foreign investigative activity in relation to threats to the security of Canada. It stipulates that the approval of the Solicitor General is required before CSIS may undertake operational activity abroad.

The direction applies to human source travel, foreign security intelligence investigations by CSIS officials and service operational assistance abroad to foreign security and intelligence organizations.

A direction on domestic liaison provides guidance on the establishment of arrangements between—

[Editor's Note: The fire alarm having sounded:]

Ms. Minna: Shall I stop, Mr. Speaker, or continue?

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We will suspend to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 4.08 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 4.25 p.m.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, I was talking about liaison and co-operation. Direction on domestic liaison provides guidance on the establishment of arrangements between the service and other federal or provincial institutions. A primary example is the ministerial direction on RCMP-CSIS co-operation.

The principles governing domestic liaison ensure that arrangements are consistent with the service's mandate and that they are in place when there is a requirement for access to information, operational support, information exchange or organizational consultation.

Similarly a direction on foreign liaison sets out principles to guide CSIS in the establishment and conduct of liaison with foreign security and intelligence organizations. The Solicitor General will issue new directions as necessary to ensure that Canada has a responsive and responsible security intelligence agency.

Other cornerstones of the accountability framework established by the CSIS act of 1984 were the review roles of the Security Intelligence Review Committee and the Inspector General of CSIS. SIRC has a mandate to review the propriety of CSIS activities, with emphasis on the delicate balance between national security and individual freedoms. Section 38 of the CSIS act directs SIRC to review generally its performance in the service of its duties and functions.

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This includes reviewing such things as CSIS annual reports and certificates of the Inspector General, ministerial direction, CSIS arrangements with domestic and foreign governments and agencies, section 20 reports on unlawful conduct, and regulations.

Section 40 of the legislation makes SIRC responsible for reviewing the service's compliance with the CSIS act, its regulations and ministerial direction, as well as reviewing CSIS activities to ensure they do not involve an unreasonable or unnecessary exercise of powers.

An equally important review function is carried out by the Inspector General of CSIS. The post of Inspector General is unique; it has evolved over time in response to practical experience and ministerial expectations. The basic role of the Inspector General is to conduct independent internal reviews for the minister.

The CSIS act identifies three interlocking functions for the Inspector General: to review the operational activities of the service, to monitor the service's compliance with its operational policies and to submit certificates to the minister.

To ensure the Inspector General is able to exercise these functions effectively, the act stipulates that the Inspector General is entitled to have access to "any information under the control of the service" that relates to the performance of the functions of the office and to receive from the service "such information, reports and explanations" as the Inspector General deems necessary. Under section 31 no information other than cabinet confidences may be withheld on any grounds.

I have provided this detailed overview to illustrate the comprehensive type of legislative safeguards and oversight mechanisms in place to ensure that CSIS operates within its mandate and within the law at all times. Taken together these safeguards and oversight mechanisms provide a solid legislative foundation for CSIS that is in keeping with the best traditions and principles of a free and democratic nation.

The motion before the House would have us turn our backs on these traditions and principles and on the years of work and experience that went into creating a modern and effective legislative framework to govern Canada's national security system.

I am sure the hon. member's motion was prompted by concern for the wellbeing of our national security system. However I would suggest we wait for the SIRC review and the work of the standing committee, of which hon. members across the way are members, before we draw final conclusions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of my hon. colleague who just gave us a list of the legislative authorities which would allow us, according to her, to make sure that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is a body that we can control to a certain extent.

She also said that, to some degree, CSIS is accountable to ministers who are empowered to control its activities.

(1630)

I would like to repeat to my hon. colleague that the RCMP was also, in fact, a regulated body and accountable to ministers. That did not prevent it from committing inexplicable criminal abuses. We now have created a new Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We put into place legislative measures and we now pretend that the problem no longer exists. What difference does my hon. colleague see between the situation that existed from 1970 to 1980 and the current situation?

[*English*]

Ms. Minna: Mr. Speaker, it is not exactly the same. I believe the controls on CSIS currently are much stronger.

The allegations that have been made against CSIS and discussed in the House, if they were true, and I stress the word if, I believe there would be cause for us to be concerned and for the government to take a look at how the issue might be addressed or what things might need to be changed.

However, we do have a process in place. SIRC does have authority to investigate all of the activities of CSIS. The standing committee, as the hon. member said earlier, is also holding hearings. Some members opposite are members of this standing committee. They will also be having hearings and reviewing the reports that SIRC has. They will be meeting in front of SIRC yet again.

If at the end of that process, when the report from SIRC comes out and when the standing committee reports to the House on this issue, at that point if hon. members still have problems or this government finds that there are major problems we would be the first to deal with the issue.

I would like the hon. member to at least allow for the process to go through and for the standing committee of the House, which is representative of members of this House, to go through the process rather than engage in a major royal commission which, as I said earlier, costs a great deal of money as we all know. Royal commissions do not always wind up when they are supposed to wind up and they are quite a cumbersome process to set in place when we already have a process. There is no need to duplicate that process at this time.

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Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, the reason CSIS was formed was due to irregularities in surveillance by the previous security organization under the control of the RCMP.

It is well documented that the RCMP broke the laws of Canada investigating a legitimate political movement in Quebec. It is also well documented when this illegal behaviour was revealed the government of the day not only authorized deep investigation but also formed CSIS so its actions would be responsible, law-abiding and within the scope of the law.

Now we have independent concern that CSIS may have encouraged a private citizen to gather information on another legitimate political movement.

What is the difference between the activity of the former security service and the alleged illegal activity of CSIS? I do not see any difference.

On page 48 of the Security Intelligence Review Committee's annual report it states, under the heading surveillance that SIRC is concerned about the large amount of information gathered by CSIS in the course of surveillance operations. On the same page, under sensitive operations, SIRC also is concerned that CSIS undertook a sensitive operation when no definite indications existed that there was actual or potential reason for the intelligence activity.

On page 47 of the same report SIRC expresses concern about the targeting of surveillance. It stated on one occasion the reason for surveillance, and in this case stretched its meaning too far.

(1635)

SIRC is telling Canadians that CSIS had no real reason to target or conduct surveillance on its target, but it began and continued to monitor and observe its target even though SIRC confirmed it had no legal authority to engage in that behaviour.

SIRC also stated that CSIS used inappropriate or imprecise reasons based upon section II of the CSIS act to target for surveillance. SIRC stated that CSIS had difficulty understanding what was considered an actual threat to the security of Canada. Yet there is no reference that SIRC ordered CSIS to better understand and follow the legislation that governs its operations.

There is another instance in the annual report where SIRC indicated that CSIS targeted another investigation improperly. SIRC announced when reviewing the reasons for the investigation that its investigators said CSIS did not have any justification to pursue its surveillance. Again SIRC reported CSIS was running amok, but there is no record of SIRC doing anything about it.

The act governing CSIS states quite clearly that CSIS must not have used and cannot use its powers unreasonably or

unnecessarily and must perform its duties and functions effectively, efficiently and, most of all, legally.

If CSIS paid a private citizen to infiltrate, assist in forming and spreading a message of supremacy, that clearly illustrates that CSIS violated the abuse of powers section of the guiding principles in the CSIS act.

If CSIS allowed this same private citizen to encourage white supremacists to join and infiltrate a legitimate political party, that is certainly violating the concern about abuse of power.

The Reform Party of Canada is not a group of terrorists. It is not a group of agents of hostile intelligence services and it is certainly not a threat to the security of Canada. The Reform Party, whether this government likes it or not, is the party of choice for the law-abiding citizens of Canada.

How can this Liberal government expect law-abiding citizens to continue their respect for the law when a government agency is accused of blatantly and with disregard for the legitimate purpose break the law with impunity?

At the very least the government watchdog for illegal activity by CSIS, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, must announce to Parliament in no uncertain terms if CSIS allowed its informant to be a mole in the Reform Party, if CSIS allowed its informant to encourage white supremacists to join the Reform Party? If this occurred SIRC must make that knowledge known to the entire public.

If CSIS knew the private citizen was actively involved with white supremacists, becoming active in the Reform Party would publicly damage the reputation of this legitimate political movement.

SIRC and CSIS are responsible to Parliament for their actions and Parliament is responsible to the people of Canada. At the very least, this Liberal government must tell the people of Canada whether CSIS allowed a loose cannon to sully a legitimate political party.

If CSIS was actively involved in initiating a supremacist group, forming a supremacist group and funding a supremacist group through the actions of their informant, full disclosure of this despicable act will not be a threat to Canada's security or to Canadians.

If CSIS was involved the only threat full disclosure will have is to the authorities in charge of CSIS.

(1640)

Considering if the illegal activity was sanctioned by those in charge, this Liberal government must give a full, detailed and in-depth disclosure to all parliamentarians and the people of Canada the reason CSIS considered a legitimate political party, my party, the Reform Party of Canada, a target for surveillance.

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Since this Liberal government refuses to initiate a royal commission into the possible illegal activities of CSIS we must consider why this Liberal government is trying to hide behind secrecy and the CSIS act. All Canadians must consider why the governing party in the House of Commons refuses to initiate a thorough investigation of possible illegal activity by a department of government, displaying a total disregard for the laws of this land.

A previous government not only investigated illegal activity by Canada's previous secret service, it disbanded the organization and formed a new service.

No one is suggesting this Liberal government waste tax dollars disbanding and organizing a new service. All Canadians are strongly telling this Liberal government a full investigation, detailed disclosure and removal of those from CSIS, if any, who had knowledge of and supported any illegal activities must take priority over any minor embarrassment that this government could suffer.

To refuse a full inquiry and detailed disclosure to Parliament tells Canadians this government condones unnecessary secrecy and is now abusing the trust given to it by the people of Canada.

This Liberal government may full well claim it does not or did not have anything to do with the possible illegal activity of CSIS because it was not in power when this activity occurred. Refusing to have an investigation into what may have been done will not satisfy the law-abiding people of Canada.

This Liberal government has everything to lose by not holding a full inquiry. It will lose the trust of Canadians and as a governing party that loss of trust can never be regained. That loss of trust may continue diminishing government in the eyes of Canadians, and that can never be allowed.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments made by the hon. member. I can assure the hon. member that no one on this side considers the Reform Party a terrorist organization.

There are all kinds of allegations out there on improprieties and we have set up a mechanism, SIRC, which was established 10 years ago as he very well knows, to look into those kinds of allegations.

Furthermore, we have gone one step further. In co-operation with the opposition benches, Bloc and Reform we have set up a subcommittee on national security issues. One hon. member dealing with this subcommittee has done commendable work. We are looking forward to all the proposals made by the opposition. We are awaiting reports from SIRC. I believe the subcommittee is going to pursue its research on these allegations made against the service.

I want to make sure it is perfectly clear to the opposition benches that never would this government condone spying on legitimate political organizations such as the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois.

Since Reform is so concerned about accountability and the way we spend money and controlling the deficit, does the hon. member really believe that by spending \$20 million to \$25 million on a royal commission we would not be better served by giving the subcommittee on national security issues the time and the chance to look into this and as well as SIRC to report to us and Parliament on what happened or what has allegedly happened? I would like to know if it would be preferable for us to wait before spending \$20 million to \$25 million of taxpayers' money.

(1645)

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his assurances with regard to the feelings of the Liberals about this particular activity.

I am shocked that anybody from that side of the House would suggest that spending money is wrong. Good grief, it has not shown it in any other direction or area. Spending money has become a very positive, happy thing for this group to do.

I certainly do not believe for a moment that there would be any reason to think this kind of investigation would call for that kind of money. I am pleased to see that this committee has been set up and I hope this government can assure us that once that committee has finished its investigation the Canadian people, not the Reform Party, who have a right to know are thoroughly satisfied that this thing is resolved and if not would it please assure us that we will get to the bottom of it and that it must never occur again in this kind of activity.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a very quick question.

The member mentioned in his speech that a parliamentary review must be taken which would cost \$25 million because CSIS is accused of breaking the law. The word the hon. member used was accused.

Does the hon. member not think we should wait until there is some evidence before we actually launch such an expensive inquiry rather than going on the basis of an accusation?

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would not suggest for a moment that we run hairy-scary into some kind of thing that is going to cost millions of dollars. I do not think I indicated that at all.

I did indicate that there is a special group of people put together called SIRC and I think it has a big responsibility to report everything that happens and when I suspect for a moment and when we have reasons to suspect that is not happening, my question in return would be is this Liberal government going to make absolutely certain that these people who are on the payroll

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are going to be accountable to the Canadians in earning the bucks that they make. Are they going to do their job or not? Do we have to go to extremes such as a royal commission?

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that members on this side of the House are planning to take their work very seriously and we have countless assurances that members of the security committee including members on the opposite benches are going to look through this thoroughly.

I hope, thanks to the questions raised by the hon. member and his colleagues, that we are going to clarify this thing once and for all.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to speak to this motion. I think there is always a place for this kind of debate. I do not feel this motion is correct. I do feel it is flawed. Nevertheless I think it is always a topic that we on all sides of this House should look at from time to time.

Let me address the motion first and foremost. The word used in the motion is “illegal”. A royal commission is to be called because of alleged illegal activities. This appears to rise from allegations in the press, in the media, this is the way we understand events, that would suggest that CSIS has been involved in impropriety that requires an investigation.

I would like to address that because one of the accusations in the press was that the CBC was being spied on by CSIS. I think it was that story more than anything else that fueled the reaction that has led to the debate we have before us and the various studies that are going on as to CSIS activities.

(1650)

I would like to comment on the story that was in the *Toronto Star*. I have a document here and I wish to show it. It is relevant. The headline from the *Toronto Star* states: “Spy agency kept watch on CBC”. I believe this was a page one story at the time.

Naturally a headline like that is going to cause a lot of concern on all sides of the House and with the public at large. When one examines the actual body of the story that is in question here about the CBC being spied on by CSIS, one discovers that this headline is entirely based on one paragraph in the story. That paragraph reads: “The source reported attempts by Howard Goldenthal, a researcher for the Fifth Estate, a CBC program, to obtain information from the Heritage Front leader Wolfgang Droege about whether members of the Canadian airborne regiment in Somalia had any links with racist groups in Canada.»

It was the Fifth Estate, a CBC program, but it could have just as easily been a CTV program or it could have been an inquiry from the press itself. What we really see here is the informant

replying to a legitimate concern that was connected to the possibility that there was racist infiltration of the Canadian airborne regiment.

I think we would all agree that it is legitimate for CSIS to want to examine possibilities such as there may be infiltration of the Canadian forces by a group that represents racist elements. That was the tenor and the content of that particular story. However, the headline was: “Spy agency kept watch on CBC”. This is the sort of headline that has probably generated more than anything else this type of public concern.

At issue there is the whole question that we are pursuing something, and I mentioned it to the member for Wild Rose, where a whole debate has been initiated on the basis of allegations and not evidence. I cite that as an example and there are other examples in the media that are basically only allegations that are not supported in any way by fact that we know.

Before we go to a royal commission I stress to the members present that we have to go a little further than allegations that appear in the press.

I would like to go on a bit further. This situation concerns me greatly. We have story that suggests that CSIS had an agent, an undercover person, in an organization that may have sometimes been associated with very right wing activities, and that this agent may have engaged in activities as part of his cover that could be construed as right wing or even racist.

What is the difference between this person, if he really did exist, and a police undercover operation involving a plain-clothes person penetrating a drug ring? Surely we would all agree that it is perfectly proper for a police agency in an effort to expose crime, in an effort to ferret out threats to national security or municipal security, if you will, to have an undercover agent and we would expect as part of that cover that the agent would take on the persona of the group he is trying to penetrate.

I will take that a step further. I do not have any background any more than any other member here about what was actually occurring. I submit that if this Grant Bristow was an undercover agent doing a legitimate task for national security and as a result of the leaks to the press has been disrupted in a project that had great value to the security of this nation, then I would say something very unfortunate has occurred.

(1655)

We should be disparaging of what occurred, not coming down on CSIS on mere allegations. CSIS, because it is a security agency and an agency engaged in secret intelligence, does not have the ability to speak out and simply defend itself without jeopardizing agents like somebody who may be doing an undercover operation.

There is another issue here, the whole question of the leak of the documents that led to the disclosure that CSIS was engaged in certain undercover operations.

The one involving the Heritage Front I do not know what damage is involved and I do not know whether it is true. However, I will draw the House's attention to something everyone seems to forget. There was a first leaked newspaper story in connection with this business. That leaked story resulted in a headline in the *Toronto Sun* on August 13, 1994, sometime before the *Toronto Star* headline that I mentioned, and it stated: "CSIS—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. Colleagues, there is a rule which refers to our not being able to use any form of exhibits in the House. I know that quite often all of us engage in quoting from materials, including the newsprint, which is correct in debate, but certainly I would encourage all members to be mindful of the rule regarding exhibits and not to display them in an open fashion to the attention of viewers or others in the House. I would ask the hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth to continue his intervention.

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected on that. I will read the headline because it is not relevant to display it: "CSIS spied on metro Somalis". The gist of the story, based on a leaked document, was that CSIS did have agents engaged in some undercover work in connection with the Somali community because it feared that there were some violent elements in this community that were a threat.

Certainly with the very recent history of the problems in Somalia, we would all agree that CSIS had legitimate cause for concern. We would probably also agree that its wanting to get information from the Somali community in this case was proper.

What is not proper is the fact that this document was leaked and the story appeared in the newspaper. I do not fault the newspaper because newspapers must run with the information they receive. The fault was the fact that a document was put out that very obviously was designed to or at least would have had some result in damaging a very legitimate operation on the part of CSIS.

That brings us to a very important point which is that we should be deploring in this House the fact that somewhere along the line the system went awry and that an individual in a trusted post was able to collect CSIS documents with the apparent intention of leaking them to the newspapers for whatever reason. We can only be grateful that the *Toronto Star* actually ran a photograph of one of these leaked documents leading to the person who was leaking them.

I do not want to sound very narrow and rednecked about this, to use that expression, but I really do hope that the government does take some very positive steps—and I hope it has the

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mechanisms—to prevent civil servants and people in trust from leaking documents of this nature. We must have orderly government, be it in connection with the secrets or intelligence agencies or cabinet confidentiality or whatever. This was a very serious precedent and we should all be concerned.

I believe I have time to move on to another topic which is the issue of accountability that has been raised time and time again and which I believe is the aim of the motion. It is a very important issue. I have heard the speakers on all sides and heard the explanation from my own members on the structure that has been set up to try to make CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment accountable.

(1700)

In the final analysis, when any agency or any government department is engaged in secret work, as many are—the military, for example, certainly is engaged in secret work; it has to do military testing and that kind of thing—the guarantee of accountability is the quality of the civil servants and the strength of democracy.

We can put the legislative controls in place but nothing is guaranteed because people work of necessity in the shadows. When we are dealing with foreign intelligence or counterintelligence we have to work in the shadows. Despite what has been said I do not really believe that members opposite think we can expose that to parliamentary committee examination. It really is impractical. We would lose all our allies if we did that, at the very least.

It still is a problem. How do we bridge the gap of confidence in the personnel who are engaged in activities that are not immediately seen, that are not laid out before you?

The answer ultimately is having a strong democracy and a strong screening process. The only thing I would add to that, and it is a pet thing with me, is that I would have a very carefully documented accountability.

Over and above what we have heard here, the only way we can control these individuals who must work behind the scenes, is to require them to put their orders always on paper and have this paper record preserved in perpetuity. We have to have a control that will not allow people to destroy records.

I believe when democracy is strong with a strong and dedicated bureaucracy, the control on the bureaucracy for doing the right thing when it has to operate in secrecy is to be answerable to history. When the historian comes along 30 or 40 years later and looks at it and sees that even if the decision was marginal or borderline or questionable, at least he sees the bureaucracy operated in good faith. The vast majority of people in our bureaucracy, certainly in this country, operate in a spirit of good faith and try their very best. This is an important point to bear in mind.

Supply

I will conclude by talking about the future of CSIS. This also is at stake in this debate, the fact that the world has changed radically, as we know, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and so forth. This has to and must change the face of counterintelligence.

CSIS is primarily a counterintelligence agency. We must be very clear on that. New threats are spread across the board. We now have situations where very small countries can pose very great threats. We all realize there is a terrific problem now in keeping controls on plutonium. The great stocks of plutonium that exist in the former Soviet Union may pop up in any third world country. I regret to say that the technology for making small bombs is well known. This is a fundamental threat.

Fundamental again is the threat of biological and chemical warfare agents, particularly biological warfare agents. These are the weapons and dangers of very small nations. We have to have a constant and very alert secret service that examines these dangers worldwide. We also have to examine these dangers internally.

We have an open door immigration policy, which I think is wonderful, but we have to understand that with that open door immigration policy we are also open to genuine security threats. It is not just obvious criminals, but the ones that are not obvious, the ones that may be carrying the torch of hatred from the animosities of their homelands which they might employ against other ethnic groups in Canada. We must have a strong organization to look at that.

(1705)

I have one more thing to say. This pertains to the Communications Security Establishment, which we alluded to before. The world is a global village. The threat now goes beyond just security threats. The threats are also economic and political. We have to be aware of the fact that Canada is a nation that relies enormously on trade.

I see the Minister for International Trade is here. He will agree with me that Canada's future is delicately balanced on our ability to compete worldwide. Not every country competes fairly. Some countries are willing to resort to intelligence gathering in various ways and in other illegal activities, which may affect our ability to trade honestly and adequately.

The role of our intelligence organizations involves making sure Canada is always dealt with fairly. We must have a strong intelligence service that will back us up because the record of history shows, going back to previous centuries and this century, that a nation with a strong intelligence service will use it and use it sometimes, I hate to say, on the weaker. We must be strong in order to compete.

Finally, if ever there was a reason against separatism, against the break-up of the country into smaller pieces, it is the expense of running a comprehensive and professional intelligence service.

If we separated, the new piece—a separate Quebec—would have to set up its own intelligence service. It would lose all it has gained from the very fine intelligence services that we have had since the second world war. It would be on its own and it would not have friends. That is a very dangerous situation to be in.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments. I listened to them carefully. He cautioned members of the House, correctly so, that we should not condemn CSIS simply based on allegations and rumours or innuendo.

Yet I have sat in the House and listened to members across the way label members of the Reform Party as racists and bigots. I have heard those words spoken in the House. In fact the Deputy Prime Minister had to recall the fact that she called one of our members a racist during debate. That is on the record.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning unparliamentary language. I would like to know if the hon. member has any source or if this is actually printed in Hansard .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I am not aware of the allegations or of the exact scenario that has been referred to, but I will take the time to remind everyone that in the conduct of the business of this Chamber we should all be respectful of one another and this institution.

(1710)

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I would just conclude that those kinds of comments we have been subjected to without proof, without evidence have been done simply for the purpose of political partisanship.

I would like to ask the member if it is a fact that this Bristow individual infiltrated the Reform Party in order to discredit it, who would benefit from that? Why would anyone in CSIS want to discredit the Reform Party of Canada?

My analysis of this situation is that no one would want to take the time or energy in order to discredit the Reform Party. But who would benefit from it if the Reform Party was in fact discredited? It would be the political parties because we were vying for support from the Canadian public.

Is it not reasonable that these two bodies, SIRC as well as the subcommittee, should examine whether the Solicitor General of the day politicized CSIS in order to do that very thing and received the benefit that would come if this party was discredited by those kinds of labels? I would ask my hon. colleague to comment.

Supply

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I certainly think that the examination of this issue should go wherever the parliamentary committee deems it ought to go and call whatever witnesses the committee thinks appropriate.

I do point out that there is an enormous assumption of dishonesty here. Is my colleague opposite suggesting that the previous government was so corrupt, and it would be corruption, that it actually could politicize CSIS and do what he said? Otherwise, unless that assumption is made there is no reason, no motive to believe that this Mr. Bristow did infiltrate the Reform Party.

I submit that the apparent lack of motive makes it enormously probable that this did not happen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member who just spoke mentioned the role of CSIS in connection with our economy and the protection of our patents here in Canada. I know that several years ago, there were frequent complaints that Canada was a sitting duck for this kind of espionage. I think that was one of the roles CSIS had to play.

Since the hon. member appears to be very familiar with the agency, with CSIS, I want to ask him, since we want an inquiry, whether this could also be part of the inquiry, in other words, why Canada is a sitting duck for industrial espionage. We are told it is terribly easy. People come from all over the world and apparently have no trouble taking or stealing—I think that is the word—something on which we have spent a lot of time and effort.

Since we do a lot of research in this country, why is it so easy to come and steal the results of our research? Perhaps this should be included in the inquiry the Bloc Québécois is calling for, so we could find out what the problems are and why it is so easy to get away with that.

(1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I think it was a very good one indeed.

The reason Canada has been perceived in this way—and I think it is a very serious problem—is that perhaps not enough money has been invested in CSIS in the past. Perhaps CSIS has not had the support it deserves. I am aware that there was a major investment in CSIS just recently. A new CSIS building has just gone up south of the city here. I think progress is being made.

I do not think a royal commission, if I may say to my colleague, is the way to go in getting to the root of his particular concern which I share. I think this should be the subject matter of the appropriate parliamentary committee.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, in my speech I used the word if quite often, as did the hon. member across the way. We have a couple of speeches with a lot of ifs. I think his if was a little bigger than my if. He was talking about it being a shame if Mr. Bristow happened to be on the right track of something and this whole thing interfered with it.

I know what I believe. I do not think there is any doubt about it. One thing that has been lost in the country is the trust of the people who sent us here. That trust has been lost in the public. All we have to do is open our ears and listen to the fears of people about corruption, suspected corruption or supposed corruption, for the last 30 years.

So far no one has accused me of it, but I have seen surveys asking people what is the most popular occupation or who are the most valuable persons in the country. When we see doctors and teachers on the list and find politicians underneath lawyers I think we in the House have something to think about.

I like the assurances of the parliamentary secretary, but I am afraid assurances like those ones have become nothing more than political rhetoric for Canadians. They have heard it before. They probably heard it before that hon. member was born. It has been going on and on.

What does the member suggest as a basis of the ongoing studies on what actions SIRC should take when it has obviously identified some serious problems? What actions does he think the committee will take if it verifies even some of the allegations?

Mr. Bryden: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member commented on the public's lack of trust. I submit to him that we do not help the public's confidence or trust when we engage in major, shall we say, witch-hunts based on unsubstantiated allegations as in this case and as occurred many times in case of the previous Parliament. When the House is drawn into debate and people make allegations across the floor without proper evidence we erode the public's trust.

On his other comments, I cannot forecast what a review committee or the people reviewing the matter ought to do until they see the evidence. They will make their own decisions.

(1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to also rise in support of this motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Bellechasse, whose riding happens to be next to mine. I think it would be worthwhile to remind the hon. members that the motion in question reads as follows:

That this House denounces the government for its refusal to set up a Royal Commission of inquiry on the alleged illegal activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I listened with interest to the remarks made by previous speakers and I think that what the opposition is suggesting is not that all activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service be abolished but rather—and the Bristow affair was the pretext

Supply

for introducing this motion—to ensure that the Canadian public, and particularly the government and the House of Commons, be as well informed as possible on the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The public has reason to believe that illegal activities have taken place. During hearings held by the House sub-committee looking into this matter, our colleague, the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm asked a number of questions which, to tell the truth, remained unanswered for the most part. That is an important fact.

I think that the Canadian public, the Canadians taxpayers who are paying to receive services, are entitled to get as much information as possible. Often members are asked questions and if those of us who sit on committees are unable to get the information required to answer these questions, how are we expected to adequately inform the public?

This motion is about setting up a royal commission of inquiry to do everything possible to make sure that, at least the members of Parliament sitting on the commission, hear all the facts.

Let me tell you about my personal experience as a Quebecer. It is a fact that we have gone through some rather quiet times, but I recall an event that many Quebecers of my generation remember. There was this incident in 1973 when a barn was burned down and a list of members of the Parti Québécois, illegally seized. Quebecers of my generation remember that incident. The younger people were not around then and cannot remember, but it has remained in the minds of many Quebecers.

At that time, some measures were taken; then there was the Keable Commission which was finally able to establish that some illegal acts had been committed. Of course, not as many people were convicted as should have been, but the facts were proven. After that, there was a relatively quiet period.

In spite of all that, in the more recent past—I refer to a certain affair which I prefer not to name—there was evidence of an attempt to infiltrate not a political party but the Government of Quebec.

The Bristow affair is another case that has come to our attention. Everyone saw it on the news.

(1725)

This was not just an attempt; another political party was actually infiltrated. This time it was not the Parti Québécois but the Reform Party. I find such infiltration unacceptable on purely “democratic grounds”.

Problems of infiltration by secret agents from foreign countries were mentioned. That may be, but since the Berlin Wall fell, I do not think that there is a really big threat from foreign

sources. I listened to my colleague from Longueuil; yes, a security intelligence service may indeed be necessary, but it must operate legally, within a legal framework.

The issue here is not the one raised by the member for Longueuil, but rather illegal activities. Given what such a security service costs, I think that not only Quebecers but all Canadians are entitled to answers.

I will mention some questions that could be raised in a royal commission of inquiry. Has CSIS directly or indirectly obtained information on Canadian media or political parties since 1989? We admit that we must not go back too far, but since 1989. Yes or no? We were unable to obtain that information. Without necessarily disclosing the information itself. However, if the answer is yes, it should perhaps be studied by a sub-committee. There could be some really important things. We should at least know whether or not information was gathered directly or indirectly on the Canadian media or on recognized Canadian political parties. Not small groups from abroad but legally recognized political parties that are among this country’s democratic institutions.

Could we have an answer on this? That is the kind of question to which Canadians would like an answer.

Did the Inspector General of CSIS and the Security Intelligence Review Committee find cases where information was gathered on the media, unions, political parties and other legitimate Canadian organizations?

Rightly or wrongly, as a member of Parliament, and before that as a member of public organizations, people told me personally on many occasions—that is not hearsay—of their concerns regarding some individuals then involved in militant and union activities—I could give examples of CSIS collaborators infiltrating the CNTU, a major union body in Quebec. Infiltration may be acceptable but I think that dynamite, arson and theft warrant investigation.

I have a general question: What is the basis—I would very much like to know that—and the scope of the contacts which CSIS has with foreign intelligence services and with the Communications Security Establishment of the Department of National Defence? This should not be an official secret. What is the basis and the scope of the activities of that service? We should be allowed to know that. Why is it not the case?

Does CSIS receive information from other Canadian or foreign intelligence services on activities conducted by Canadians within our borders? If so, is the receipt of such information by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service legal under the CSIS Act? Is it legal or not? Bench marks are required. If such bench marks exist, then they must be known.

Supply

(1730)

In the Bristow case, when did CSIS become aware of Mr. Grant Bristow's participation—this is very important—in political events held by the Reform Party of Canada? Did CSIS end its relation with Mr. Bristow at that point?

Regardless of its nature, has information gathered by Mr. Bristow been used for judicial purposes, in Canada or elsewhere, since 1989? Yes or no? These questions do not touch upon official secrets, and they can be answered by a simple yes or no. We could not find out.

These vague answers, or even the lack of answers, leave Quebecers and Canadians with an uneasy feeling which may well undermine their confidence in certain institutions. Yet, we should reinforce public confidence in those institutions. The setting up of a royal commission of inquiry, as suggested by the Official Opposition, is justified since it would hear all those who can shed some light on certain activities. I am alluding to presumably illegal incidents. The idea is not to question the system as a whole but, rather, some specific actions and facts.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I would like again to say to the opposition that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service does not cover the legitimate activities of any advocacy or protest organizations. It does not spy on legitimate organizations like political parties or unions, as the member opposite claimed.

Again, the opposition keeps harping on about events which took place over twenty years ago. Since then, we have had the McDonald Commission which helped to create the civil service as we know it today as well as SIRC. I also have the feeling that the opposition tends to remember only what suits its philosophy, and that is unfortunate.

Last night, as a Quebecer, I was very disappointed by the new Quebec government, when I heard Bernard Landry himself state publicly that he would weed out federalists hiding in all the Delegations General of the province of Quebec and that he was appointed to find out if they are true sovereignists. Sometimes, I think the opposition should look at itself and ensure that the government of Quebec will still respect the great majority of Quebecers who are federalists and not separatists.

I still want to point out to the hon. member opposite who is yelling at me that Canada is, after all, a land of open arms, a free country that first and foremost respects individual freedom. I think our government has made a commitment to examine in detail the allegations made against our services and to take remedial action if needed.

So, I do not see why we should spend \$20 million to \$25 million on a royal commission of inquiry, when we have not yet completed our own investigations, mainly through the Subcommittee on National Security and the upcoming SIRC report. However, I want to add that I am deeply disappointed by the hon.

member, who belongs to a separatist party in the province of Quebec and wants to weed out the federalists, as suggested by Mr. Landry. I think this is unacceptable in a democratic society such as ours.

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, this is a funny way of getting out of a predicament. If we were in the military, we would say it was a good diversion tactic.

(1735)

While talking about shifting the limelight to the National Assembly and what is going on in the new government in Quebec, incidentally, before 1976 we had a Liberal government that had an intelligence gathering services referred to as the CAD, which the Parti Québécois government—I realize the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine is too young to remember that, but this may be useful to other people who are listening—later removed.

What we are talking about today, however, is the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. As for shifting the focus to Quebec—The hon. member's answer is particularly disturbing since he is saying, more or less, that now the National Assembly has a new Parti Québécois government, the separatists are in power, and the hon. member gets all upset and blurts out this type of question. The more I hear this "nervous" reaction the more I am convinced we should be concerned about the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. I must say that to me, this kind of nervous-Nellie reaction to the new Parti Québécois government is all the more reason to support the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Belle-chasse.

I would just like to remind this House that the members of the Bloc Québécois and the members of the Parti Québécois were elected in the same way as the hon. member. I respect the fact that he was elected to represent another party in my province. I respect him as an elected representative, elected by constituents who put their trust in him. However, when he goes on in this way, he infers that the people of Quebec—and I will not be unparliamentary—showed poor judgment in electing members of the Parti Québécois, and because of that, people should be wary and feel insecure about this new government, but after all, like the members of the Reform Party who were elected in Western Canada by people who used their good judgment, after a democratic debate, these people were elected to represent them.

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague.

Sometimes separatists say that after separation the new Quebec can still retain a shared currency with the rest of Canada and even a shared citizenship, which is somewhat contradictory in my view.

Supply

Does the member feel that the new, separate Quebec should also expect to share CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment?

[Translation]

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, although more calm than his predecessor, the hon. member nevertheless suggests, when talking about separatism, that we are wicked people who wish to inflict hardships on members on the other side, whereas we wish to remain good neighbours and friends as much as possible.

As regards the question, you will understand that I represent the Official Opposition in the House of Commons. I am willing to act as a messenger or an interpreter and to pass on the question, but I think that it should be answered by an elected Parti Québécois government after it has won the referendum. Therefore, I believe the question is rather premature or that it should be asked instead during a referendum campaign. Please understand that as a member of the opposition, I have no precise mandate to talk in the name of the Government of Quebec. That could be the kind of service that could be maintained.

I take good note of the member's question and I thank him for his interest but this is all I can do for the time being. As a member of the opposition I am more used to asking questions than to answering them.

(1740)

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. member that he does not represent all Quebecers, and neither do we, I admit.

But we have to take into account the commitment of our government, of this sub-committee, which is to look at this question in depth. I believe that today's question was to determine whether or not we needed a parliamentary commission. This sub-committee includes one member of the Bloc Québécois and one member of the Reform Party, and along with them some of us on this sub-committee want to shed some light on the allegations against the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

I can assure the hon. member that once the reports of the sub-committee or even the SIRC have been submitted to Parliament, he will have the opportunity to look at them, and make enlightened judgments.

Mr. Dubé: Mr. Speaker, my answer will be very short, as requested. It is precisely the lack of clear answers and, in some cases, the total lack of answers that the member for Berthier—Montcalm who represented our party on the committee had to endure, which motivated the opposition.

If, during the summer, the member, acting as our official representative, had been able to get the answers he was looking for, obviously this motion would have been very different. In our

view, if the government is willing to change its attitude and wants to get to the bottom of this, as we do, the only way to proceed is to call for a royal commission. This is what we contend.

[English]

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time I think I might begin with my conclusion and then get to the beginning part.

It is my feeling the hon. member's motion is flawed and that it assumes the veracity of the recent allegations that have come to light in the media. The allegations have in no way been substantiated by fact or tested by the accountability of the system that is already in place in the CSIS act as it exists. The motion is premature, if not inappropriate at this time.

The Security Intelligence Review Committee has appeared at the subcommittee of the House and offered assurances that its review of the matter will be painstaking, thorough and complete, and I expect nothing but that. The House should respect that commitment and await the outcome of the legislative process of review prior to reaching any conclusion on the matter.

A basic principle of any democratic system should be the presumption of innocence. Unsubstantiated allegations which lead people to reach immediate conclusions of guilt fly in the face of this basic principle. Whether it is an institution or whether it is an individual, it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that due process is followed and that only facts are entertained in reaching a decision.

To date we have not been apprised of the facts. Nor have we been allowed due process to be followed. Sensationalism and innuendo, a lot of it in the House, have no place when we are dealing with national security issues.

The CSIS act provides Parliament and all Canadians with both a process and an opportunity to reach factual conclusions. Regrettably in recent weeks we have seen a frenzy of unsubstantiated allegations and finger pointing that has undermined public confidence, about which many members have spoken today, in an important institution charged with significant responsibilities in ensuring the public safety of all Canadians.

Members of the House, the media and all other Canadians have a responsibility in allowing the effective systems we have in place to run their course. Our national security ultimately depends on the public's confidence in the people and the institutions which are designed to ensure it.

CSIS as part of this regime implicitly depends upon public co-operation to meet its mandate. It is our responsibility in the House to ensure that the review regime as prescribed in the CSIS act is allowed to run its course and address any doubts about our national security system.

Supply

In the meantime members of Parliament should not encourage the distrust the member for Wild Rose spoke about. They should follow the process, review the information, and then if we are unhappy with the outcome the motion might be in order.

It is important to remember how CSIS got here. In fact many members have spoken about that.

(1745)

It has been 10 years since Parliament passed the act which created the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. This was done following lengthy deliberation and with the full participation of the then members of Parliament following the conclusion of the McDonald commission of inquiry into the activities of the RCMP security service.

This latter inquiry was extensive and exhaustive in addressing concerns about the activities of the RCMP security service. The recommendation was clear that the national security interests of Canada would best be served by a civilian agency. I believe that the regime and the powers created by Parliament in 1984 by the enactment of the CSIS act fulfil the requirements of accountability to the Canadian people because the act itself fulfils the five basic principles which emerged from the McDonald commission.

I will remind members of Parliament what those principles were. The first was the provision of security and intelligence is essential to the security of Canada. Second, there is an adequate legal framework within which a security service would co-operate under the rule of law while recognizing the democratic rights of all Canadians. The third was an effective management system to ensure responsible direction and a respect for the law. The fourth was effective accountability to ministers who are responsible to Parliament or responsibility subsequently assigned by Parliament to the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The fifth principle was openness to satisfactory external review, ensuring that the agency does not abuse its power and that it is not misused by governments.

These principles were adopted by government in the drafting of the CSIS act and confirmed in Parliament in 1984. In 1989 Parliament met the statutory requirement of the CSIS act by reviewing the effectiveness of the act and its stated objectives.

It has been some five years since this review and I see no reason to question the validity of that document produced at the time. The recent flurry of allegations about CSIS are just that, allegations. The allegations have not yet been subjected to the full scrutiny of the review regime outlined in CSIS.

It is worthy to note that the CSIS act is comprised of 29 pages, half of which are devoted to the control and review mechanisms applied to CSIS in the performance of its duties and functions.

This fact alone should provide us with initial comfort in assessing the concerns that have been raised over the last seven weeks in the media. Each year for the last 10 years the House has been provided with an annual report from the Security Intelligence Review Committee. While initially it was critical, it has in the last few years been much better and much more clear in its issues because of course CSIS is getting better and better in its operations.

It is important to remember that here we are in 1994 and there still are threats to Canadian security. International terrorism remains a threat to world order. From time to time Canada is a base for activities in support of terrorism in other countries. Terrorist acts can have direct impacts on the lives of Canadians. The guests of Canada can also be the subject of terrorist threats.

We do not want to be subject to violence in this country nor do we want our reputation as a nation internationally damaged. It is important to remember that this does exist. The technology of terrorism is becoming more accessible. The World Trade Centre bombing confirms that this is so. The sources of terrorism remain strong: nationalism, religious and political extremism, state sponsored terrorism, ethnic unrest and regional conflict.

Canadians thankfully in recent years have been spared in large part from those acts of terror but we live in a world that is becoming increasingly smaller as a consequence of globalization. What happens in a distant part of the world can have an immediate impact in Canada. We are no longer isolated from what was at one time viewed as a far off regional conflict. We have responsibilities to assist our allies and protect ourselves in countering the effects of international security concerns.

Our borders are long and open and we are part of a global transportation and communication system. Canadians and Canadian soil are not immune from security concerns. Terrorism is not an abstract force sowing its horror in a foreign land. Canada and Canadians are vulnerable and have been vulnerable in the past. Canada's evident prosperity and open society make it sometimes all too inviting a venue.

The CSIS act defines the roles and responsibilities for the Solicitor General, the deputy Solicitor General and the director of CSIS.

This regime provides a full measure of checks and balances in ongoing CSIS operations, particularly those of a most intrusive nature. Approvals are required from a federal court judge for the utilization of these most intrusive measures.

This is a clear reflection of the priority and concern that the public and parliamentarians attach to the potential for abuse of power by a security service, given the extraordinary means that it would have at its disposal to intervene in the private lives of Canadian citizens.

Private Members' Business

As a member of Parliament, I am very concerned about this. For these reasons special care, precision and clarity were used in describing the mandate of CSIS in the act and the role of the various review bodies in control mechanisms.

The system has evolved over a 10-year period and works effectively to guard the integrity of CSIS conduct. Certainly the process we are now in will determine whether that is the case.

In addition to the the Security Intelligence Review Committee, the Solicitor General also has available the Office of the Inspector General to ensure CSIS complies with policy, procedures and ministerial direction. By international standards this is the most complex control and accountability system in the world. We should all be proud of that.

This is what Canadians demanded in 1994 and creates the balance we see in the system today. Let us see the system work. Then we will have motions like this if they are appropriate and needed.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.50 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 81(19), debate on the motion is now concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as you have indicated, the motion that I seek approval for today is that the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve a goal of eliminating child poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

On November 24, 1989 the then member for Oshawa put forward a motion essentially in the same terms as follows: "That this House express its concern for the more than one million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000".

That motion received unanimous support from this House. All members present voted in favour of that motion. They voted to commit this country to eliminating child poverty by the year 2000.

That gave rise to Campaign 2000, a group of organizations fighting for the implementation of this motion, fighting to ensure that our most precious resource, the resource which will provide for our future, receives some attention in Canada today.

As many will know, the number of Canadian children living in poverty has increased since that time, now amounting to some 1.3 million children. Not only have we not brought a downward trend in child poverty, but in Canada it has increased.

Canadians who care about children and children themselves will be watching Parliament's response to this motion. Does this Parliament care about children as it did in 1989? Does it want to reduce and move to eliminate poverty among Canadian children, our greatest resource? Does this Parliament view child poverty as an emergency situation, which surely it is in Canada today? Or will it try to turn a blind eye and a cold heart to those 1.3 million poor children in Canada?

At the end of my speech I will seek unanimous consent to make this motion votable, as it was in 1989, in the anticipation that this Parliament is as committed as the Parliament in 1989 was to Canadian children. We may believe there are different ways to eliminate child poverty in Canada. We have different philosophical and economic perspectives on how to achieve this most important and laudable goal.

It would be remarkable if anyone in this House would not support a motion to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

(1755)

As I said, since 1989 child poverty has worsened in Canada and I would like to give some indication of how deep and how serious this matter is by quoting some statistics. I will do that at some length because I am sure many Canadians are unaware of how serious this problem is in Canada. They may have a sense of the numbers involved but I do not think many have a sense of how deep and how serious this problem is and how important it is in the long term for Canada because of the economic and social costs which are incurred as a result of not addressing this very serious social problem today.

The high school dropout rate for children from poor families is 2.5 times that for non-poor families; children in families with incomes in the bottom 20 per cent of the population were twice as likely to be living in inadequate housing than in families with incomes in the top 20 per cent, and 1.4 times more likely than children living in middle income families.

Private Members' Business

The infant mortality rate is twice as high among families at the lowest income level as it is among families at the highest level. Low birth weight is related to poverty as well; it is 1.4 times more common among babies born in the poorest families than children born in the richest families. Children from low income families are 1.7 times more likely to have psychiatric disorders than children from other families and almost twice as likely to perform poorly in school and twice as likely to develop a conduct disorder, a behavioural problem.

Teens in low income families are almost twice as likely as teens in higher income families to smoke and to have alcohol problems, and 1.5 times more likely to use drugs.

Children who grow up in low income families are less healthy, have less access to skill building activities, more destructive habits and behaviour, live more stressful lives and are subject to more humiliation. In short, they have a less stable, less secure existence and as a result are likely to be less secure as adults.

It is sometimes thought that people are poor because they do not work. Yet half those who live below the poverty line in Canada do work. Half of Canadians who are poor work to earn a living and still cannot sustain themselves above the poverty line.

The total number of poor households has grown substantially over the last two decades. The number of poor families increased from 700,000 in 1973 to almost one million in 1992, a jump of 41 per cent. Similarly, the number of poor unattached individuals grew by 79 per cent. The total number of poor households in 1992, the last year for which numbers are available, was 2.36 million, an increase of almost a million since 1973.

A family is five times more likely to be poor if the head of that family has not worked during the year. One earner families face four times the risk faced by two earner families. Twenty-five per cent of the heads of poor families and 15 per cent of poor unattached individuals work a full year, but in spite of this they are still poor.

What distinguishes poor families from other families is on the whole lower levels of formal education and lower levels of employment.

Let me say a brief word about aboriginal peoples because it is there where we find the greatest level of poverty. The incomes of aboriginal peoples tend to be lower than the incomes of other Canadians; almost one-half have incomes well below \$10,000 compared with one-quarter of other Canadians. Almost three-quarters of aboriginal peoples have incomes under \$20,000 compared with only 50 per cent of other Canadians. The proportion of aboriginal people falling below the poverty line is increasing and is about 20 per cent higher than the Canadian population at large.

Let me also say a word about persons who are disabled in Canada because that is another group that is over-represented in the poverty group. Those with disabilities are 25 per cent more likely to be poor than Canadians of the same age.

Part of this problem is because income distribution in Canada is getting worse. The gap between rich and poor is increasing and is at around 1951 levels. The top 20 per cent of Canadian households, the richest 20 per cent, receive about nine times the income of the bottom 20 per cent. That gap is increasing in spite of some measures taken in the 1970s and 1980s.

(1800)

The number of poor families in the 1980s and 1990s increased by 18 per cent. One of the most significant increases was among younger families. We have essentially addressed to a large measure the problem of poverty among seniors because we cared that seniors who had provided so much to the country should be able to live their last years in dignity. We addressed the problem of poverty among seniors because we had the political will to do so.

We sometimes hear from the government that more education is the answer to the problems of poverty that people face or the inability of people to participate effectively in the marketplace. Over the last decade it has become clear there is a large increase of families living in poverty whose heads have post-secondary degrees. The number of poor families where one or more of the adults held a post-secondary degree almost doubled in the decade of the 1980s. Therefore higher education is no guarantee against poverty but it is clearly an important element of the fight against poverty.

Unless employment and the income picture improve, the poor will increasingly represent a larger portion of our population. We know about the incidence of poverty among single parent families. We know too that it is increasing.

We also should bear in mind that the poverty gap, the gap between what people need in order to live at the poverty line and the money they actually receive from income and from other government supports is increasing. Indeed the increase in that gap was almost \$3 billion in the decade of the 1990s due largely to an increase in the number of poor.

The numbers go on and on and they are be depressing enough for everyone and should be enough to make us feel urgently of the need to address this important issue.

The numbers of people living in poverty, the numbers of children living in poverty are growing. The gap between what they receive in increment and support systems and what they need in order to survive at a moderate level of dignity is increasing. The numbers of people working full time and nonetheless poor are increasing.

Without an effective strategy to deal with this problem Canadians will continue to suffer with the second highest child poverty rates in the world. As we all know, only the United States has a worse child poverty rate than Canada and yet as we see with the suggestions for social security reform the government is proposing that we move to a more Americanized social security network. We need to do something about our tax system. We need to do something about our economic system so

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that there are adequate jobs for those who need them to raise their families.

It is not a question of people not wanting to work, not being able to work. It is a question of insufficient jobs to provide income through the traditional workforce for all who need it.

In making a few suggestions for where we should proceed let me just say that children who just happen to be born to poor parents, and after all children do not choose to whom they are born, if they are unfortunate enough in terms of economic opportunity and social deprivation to be born to poor parents, on average, they will be born with lower birth weight. They will be sick more often and when they are sick they will be sicker than those richer children. They do less well at school. They will be more likely to drop out of school. They will have more accidents. They are more likely to be unemployed. When they are unemployed they are more likely to be unemployed for longer than children of richer parents. They are more likely to experience behavioural problems and they will die several years younger than their richer counterparts. That is the legacy we present, that we enable to take place, for poor children.

We should be ashamed of what we have done in this country with regard to children of those who are less well off. It is not the case that this is the only solution. In particular, if we look at the northern European countries, Norway, Sweden and Germany, certainly West Germany before the joining of the two, those countries had child poverty rates of about 5 per cent. We have child poverty rates of about 25 per cent, five times as high as countries who have committed themselves to solving this problem.

(1805)

The so-called solutions of the past have not worked. Child poverty and poverty in general have increased while over the last 20 years federal governments have cut social programs, cut taxes to the rich and large corporations, built up enormous deficits and engaged in trade, monetary and fiscal policies which have sucked jobs out of the Canadian economy. At the same time little has been done to address the structural problems of the economy which has led to the second highest child poverty rates of rich industrialized countries.

As I said, while the U.S. has the worst poverty rates, the government is setting out this week to further the Americanization of Canada's social programs, continuing in the Mulroney tradition.

The only solution to poverty and child poverty, and I want to stress that, is to make it a matter of national urgency to address the apparent inability of the Canadian economy to create the jobs required to enable those four million Canadians who are not presently part of the paid workforce to find work, four million Canadians who want to be in the workforce so they can feed their families.

Further cuts to social programs can only make matters worse and yet that is what the government intends to do. Training can only help if there are jobs to do when that training has been received.

The real problem is not social programs, but unemployment. As a country that is what we should be focusing on. If the government had committed the resources both human and in dollar terms to the job side of the equation that it has instead committed to social program review, we would be in a much better position to show hope and opportunity for those 1.3 million children presently living in poverty. They would have a much better chance of breaking that poverty cycle.

Two further brief points. As a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada recognizes: "the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development".

Canada by this article is obligated to take and again I quote: "appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programs particularly with regard to nutrition, health, clothing and housing".

We have not done that. We have not lived up to our international responsibilities. As a country we have not lived up to our responsibilities to our children.

Last I would like to go back to the point I raised at the beginning. I know all members will regard this matter as a serious one and one of considerable importance. I believe that everyone in the House believes that we should work toward eliminating child poverty and assisting Canadian children and their future.

I would now ask if there is unanimous consent to make this motion a votable motion, to recognize the critically important part that children will play in our future and our critically important responsibility to children we have today. I would like to seek unanimous consent to make this motion votable. If that was available I am sure we could choose a time to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

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Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to debate this very important motion presented by the hon. member.

Child poverty is on the minds of many Canadians. We know from surveys that 91 per cent of Canadians make the reduction of child poverty a major priority. Considering the enormous riches we have in the country, there is no excuse whatsoever for Canada to have so many children living in poverty.

Estimates vary as to the number, but a commonly cited statistic is 1.25 million children live in low income families. Clearly this is not acceptable. There are those who believe that poor children is not an isolated issue, but that poor children come from poor families, poor parents. It is a complex issue that we can appreciate only too well.

This is not a simple matter. Child poverty is more than a little boy or little girl going without adequate nutrition or warm clothing for school. Yes, it is that. But it is so much more. Child poverty can stem from family breakdown, or a parent or parents not having a job, or not having a job that pays a decent wage.

(1810)

What do we need to do? We need to work together with our partners in the provinces and the non-governmental organizations to come up with constructive solutions that will address the underlying cause of child poverty. Let us do it right. Let us work in a co-operative, constructive way. Let us take the necessary steps to make a real difference in alleviating the plight of so many Canadian children.

I extend an open invitation to hon. members and to all of our partners to contribute their input. That to me is what social security reform is all about. It is not about whose toes are being stepped on or how the status quo is going to be affected. No, it is about finding real solutions for real people and real problems.

Let us explore a broad range of ideas and then zero in on the most effective measures to prevent children from falling into poverty in the first place rather than always reacting to the situation once it is there.

Let me assure you however, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government is already contributing to the welfare of Canadian children through a number of initiatives. For example, in 1994-95 under the child tax benefit program we will provide \$1.6 billion to families with incomes below \$30,000. Under the Canada assistance plan the federal government will provide to the provinces and territories some \$1.3 billion for welfare payments, \$315 million for child care and \$440 million for child welfare.

In the red book document the government outlined a commitment of \$720 million over three years to expand the availability of quality child care. Last February the budget set aside money for the first two years of this initiative.

We will have to develop a consensus in co-operation with our provincial partners and parents across the country about how that money should be spent. Discussions on child care have already begun with provincial and territorial governments but invest we must because our investment in children is an investment in our future.

I am pleased to say that the Department of Human Resources Development is also working with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to improve child care for First Nations children living on reserves. As a government we also have the initiative of the head start program that is being headed up by the Department of Health.

Hon. colleagues know that I have a special empathy and so do they for aboriginal children and the appalling conditions that they face daily. I am reminded of a 1990 report by the National Youth in Care Network. It is estimated that of the more than 303,000 children 17 years of age and under, 51 per cent of status aboriginals and 27 per cent of the Metis children live in poverty.

It is no wonder that we have tremendous child poverty in aboriginal communities. On average aboriginal income is about one-half to one-third less than for other Canadians as a whole. This is a statistic that has been used quite often in different efforts to create equity.

Both the unemployment level and the level of illiteracy is twice that of the Canadian population. Aboriginal students are only one-half as likely to receive a post-secondary education as are Canadians generally. There are significantly fewer aboriginal students who complete high school. In some northern communities as few as 5 per cent of aboriginal youth complete grade 12.

This situation which we should be especially ashamed of cries out for our immediate attention. The Canadian Council on Social Development reminded us last week that while we focus on social security reform to make our programs more effective we need to also look at the labour market and how it can supply good paying jobs.

Of course, it all ties together. I am sure hon. members will agree that child poverty is linked to education and employment.

(1815)

I heard my hon. colleague refer to the fact that there are educated people, heads of households with degrees, who live in poverty and their families that live in poverty. We realize as a government in terms of education and life-long learning that it is not that they learned something, that they have certain skills and certain talents, but that their skills are matched to opportunities.

We have to approach the whole issue of learning with a difference. Not only will we be challenged with making tougher choices, but we will also be guiding people to make the right choices, better choices and smarter choices for their employment and other opportunities.

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In 1993 there was a 17 per cent increase in jobs for students with post-secondary education. There was no growth for those with only secondary education. There was a 17 per cent decline in jobs for students with less than secondary education.

The Canada Council report says that children from poor families are more than twice as likely to be school dropouts. Let us face it, the better educated and the better trained a person is on the whole, the better chance he or she has of landing a well paying job.

Last spring the Minister of Human Resources Development and I collaborated with provincial and business partners to implement an employment and learning strategy for Canadian youth. The strategy for which we have budgeted \$684.5 million in the current fiscal year is helping our young people in the difficult transition from school to work. It is addressing barriers such as high school dropout rates, access to post-secondary education, lack of work experience and effective job training.

Youth Services Canada is one of the strategic measures aimed at putting unemployed and out of school young people back to work. The mission of Youth Services Canada is to strengthen young people's sense of accomplishment, self-reliance and self-esteem and to enable young people to gain meaningful work experience.

I point out that the majority of the program funds will go directly to youths and that eligible participants will receive financial assistance to help them pay for day care while they are working.

As we reform our social security programs the whole employment and learning strategy will help to ensure that young people, the future leaders, the future builders of this great nation, will have every chance to become productive and self-reliant.

This is the thrust of social security reform. It is a springboard, not a cushion that robs people of initiative and self-esteem. It is an effort to reintegrate, to pick people up and to help them to reintegrate into the mainstream, not to marginalize them and not to create dependency.

Another aspect right now of the 1.25 million children living in low income families is that over 40 per cent live in single parent families headed by women. In the Northwest Territories in 1991 the average income for single parent families was \$17,100. Someone familiar with the politics and the economic demographics and otherwise of the country will know that the cost of living in the Northwest Territories has been stated as 30 per cent to 40 per cent higher than that of southern communities. North of 60 there is a real difference in the cost of living, not to mention the lack of infrastructure and the lack of opportunities for employment. There are situations that are quite limiting so we are definitely at a disadvantage.

We need to do much more to help sole parents, mostly of course single mothers, by providing more quality affordable child care services. Helping these sole parents become self-supporting will go a long way toward alleviating child poverty.

One example of building self-reliance is a project announced by the government on September 16 in Rimouski, Quebec. For 27 weeks beginning the middle of next month the government and its partners in the Rimouski region will give women with no income access to a training program that will enable them to enter the labour market by creating their own businesses. This is an empowering process. These women entrepreneurs have sound business ideas but they have no income to launch their businesses. By training them, by enabling them to attain specific skills, we are helping them to get their businesses off the ground.

(1820)

Human resources development is supporting the initiative in Rimouski. Each participant will receive financial assistance in the form of weekly allowances, which includes child care costs for those who require them. We know it is very limiting when individuals are faced with extra hours either to learn or to perform their duties on the job and are not provided with any kind of assistance.

Three weeks ago in Winnipeg the government signed an agreement with the Government of Manitoba to assist 4,000 single parents currently on welfare. It is called "Taking Charge". This five-year project will give single parents access to a storefront office where they will receive help with needs ranging from child care training to family support to job placement.

I conclude by saying that I hope we will not hear complaints and cynicism that nothing can be done. If we work together we can do a great deal. There is plenty of optimism among Canadians. Let us tap into that hope and develop a social security system to serve Canadians in the 1990s and for decades to come. Poor people are not poor by choice; they are poor because of circumstances.

I appeal to all my colleagues to have a heart for the poor children of Canada. They are not poor by choice; they are the victims of circumstances. We have to work to alleviate those circumstances and set the record straight for those people to have a better future in our country.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to rise in the House today, as the Official Opposition critic for training and youth, to support the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing. The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reaffirming its commitment to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

In a country that has already won international recognition for its quality of life, it may seem strange that it should be necessary to advise the government to deal with a problem as serious as that of child poverty. Children are a country's greatest asset, and it is thanks to them that nations develop and evolve. Thanks to them, we can look forward to the future.

However, according to a recent study by the Canadian Institute of Child Health, in 1991 1.2 million children in Canada were living in poverty, which is 500,000 more than in 1981. Today, 20 per cent of our children live in poverty in this country.

The hon. member who moved the motion mentioned more recent figures—1.3 million children—which indicates a trend and shows that the situation continues to deteriorate.

Forty-two per cent of child deaths before the age of one year can be attributed to prenatal conditions. The mother's quality of life before birth is crucial to the life expectancy of the child. The incidence of learning disabilities and mental health problems among children from poor families is double that of children in the rest of the population.

If I may, I shall digress for a moment. I was told recently that even in the supposedly richer areas, children in increasing number go to school without breakfast or a nutritious lunch. No wonder their failure rate is so high and they eventually become high-school dropouts.

One cannot talk about child poverty without talking about poor families. As we all know, in the past few years, the average family income has not kept up with the cost of living.

(1825)

According to the same report on child health I quoted earlier, in Quebec, in 1993, a single parent earning the minimum wage had to work 73 hours to have an income equivalent to the poverty level. In Canada, the same single parent on social assistance, with one dependant child, would receive 65 per cent of that. In 1991, 453,200 single parents were women whereas a mere 83,600 were men. Therefore, we cannot talk about child poverty without talking about the poverty of mothers, especially single mothers.

Single families make up 20 per cent of all families, but the most alarming situation is that of single mothers with children. Indeed, in Canada, close to 90 per cent of children living with a single mother live in poverty.

Our young people, and that includes children of course, find themselves in a situation we had not seen since the Depression,

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that is to say that they are in a worse predicament than the previous generation. They have less opportunities than their parents had. The report on child health in Canada, which was published this week, and from which I got my statistics, was funded mostly by the federal government. I would like to hope that the federal government reacts quickly and with concrete measures in the light of this troubling conclusion because it would be obscene for the government to commission a study and then to ignore its findings, particularly when it comes to the health of our children.

As my hon. colleague who introduced the motion indicated, this is not the first time that the House of Commons looks into child poverty. On November 24, 1989, at the initiative of the hon. member representing Oshawa at the time, the House unanimously passed a resolution similar to the one before us today, to eliminate poverty among children by the year 2000.

May I digress for a moment to say how disappointed I was when we did not get unanimous consent to vote on this motion, while consent was granted in 1989 and all the hon. members present at the time voted in favour of the motion. That was five years ago. Things are getting worse instead of getting better. Why is that? A resolution was passed, but why has the situation deteriorated? I say that it is because the Conservative government of the day did nothing to correct the situation and in the past year, the Liberal government has continued, as we heard again this week, to consult the people on social program reform, but this reform will only take effect next year, yet another year away.

That will make six years since a unanimous resolution was passed to fight child poverty. However, the Liberal Party at that time was in favour of the resolution as it voted unanimously for the motion in 1989. Members then, even some who are ministers today, said many things which are worth quoting. Even the member for St. Boniface, whom I see in front of me, spoke in favour of this motion in 1989.

Mr. Duhamel: I am still in favour of political reform, my friend!

Mr. Dubé: I will go more quickly, but one quote in particular attracted my attention because this speech was made by the present Minister of Human Resources Development. He said that members should set aside the fine speeches prepared by the departments and open their eyes and their hearts a little.

(1830)

They should try to face reality and talk about Canada's real problems. Not one day went by in the House without a minister or member of the Conservative government talking about the deficit. That is what they said at the time.

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I never heard the then finance minister talk about Canada's real deficit of one million children living in poverty. That is where we should be investing. That is the real tragedy. In 10 years these children should be our educators, business people, politicians and journalists but they will never get that far because they cannot get a head start. One million children living in poverty is a tremendous loss. That is the big deficit we must face. Yet, nothing was done to solve that problem.

In 1989, the current Minister of Human Resources, the same member who is now a minister, authorized the cut in the UI program, did not provide more daycare spaces, voiced his intention to cut social programs to fight the deficit, and did not, in my opinion, table a real program to create permanent jobs. Let me give you an example: The Youth Service Corps is a program designed to give \$150 per week to young Canadians. In other times, it would be nice to create part-time jobs for our young people, but these are not real jobs.

Such a program maintains duplication in the field of vocational training and this is costly for everyone. In the meantime, his colleague, the Minister of Industry, refuses to allocate funds for the conversion of military and civilian industries. I raise this issue because we have an industry back home called MIL Davie, which waited in vain for a year to get an answer from the Conservative government regarding a simple ferry, and which has now been waiting for another year to get an answer from the new Liberal government. If approved, this project would create at least 700 jobs.

We are poor because of the deficit. We cannot help needy children since we are poor. In the meantime, there are costs. I am truly disappointed because the members of this House—some of whom seem to approve—will not even seize the opportunity to vote and confirm our commitment to fight child poverty.

[*English*]

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to the motion to recommit to eliminating child poverty in Canada by the year 2000.

What is poverty? The Oxford Dictionary definition is: Being poor, not having means to procure comforts or necessities of life, in deficiency, in want.

Distinction must be made between basic financial deficiency for which there may be economic solutions, and social deficiency where individuals are deficient in relation to others, emotionally or otherwise, and the deficiency is more than just simple finances.

Socially each individual may find themselves poor in some aspect of their life in relation to others, a situation which can never be helped. The purpose of government social programs is not to make people equal in every way.

There is however, potential for government to find solutions to long term financial hardship by reducing taxes, reducing debt and reducing spending. It must be clearly understood that there is a world of difference between poverty, which is a situation where the basic needs of life are not being met, and the situation in Canada where we have a portion of population living with low incomes relative to the majority.

These low income Canadians would be considered well off as an income group if compared to the citizens of most other countries in the world. However, because it is more common for us to compare ourselves to our neighbours to the south rather than to people in Brazil or Morocco, it is this comparison that forms the argument for the anti-poverty lobby in Canada.

(1835)

There is at this time no existing fiscal definition of poverty. In Canada this is a general measure of low income that is widely misused by various advocacy groups as poverty line and it is called the low income cutoff of Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada has publicly and consistently stated that the low income cutoff is not a measure of poverty. Based on the premise that any family with an income less than the low income cutoff is in poverty, the child poverty lobby has falsely concluded that over 1.2 million children, that is one in five, must be living in poverty.

Barbara Greene, the chairman of the House subcommittee on poverty in the 34th Parliament studying the issue, stated that the goal of eliminating child poverty is impossible to attain because the low income cutoff measure is a relative measure.

Because the low income cutoff is a relative measure we will never be able to eliminate poverty if it is defined this way because we will always have a similar percentage of Canadian families statistically described as low income.

As an example of how weak a substitute the term "poverty" is for low income consider that 18 per cent of the low income cutoff population owns their own home mortgage free.

There are some generalizations that can be made from studies done on low income earners. Low income can be attributed to youth, unemployed persons, recent immigrants, single parents and native communities. The first three groups, youth, unemployed and recent immigrants, will undoubtedly increase their average earnings over time as their employment opportunities improve with their skills and experience.

Single parents will clearly be helped by the reversal in family policy proposed by the Reform Party as family will be promoted through the tax system and the cycle of welfare dependency will be broken through the reform of social programs.

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Native communities will benefit from Reform's commitment to abolishing the department of Indian affairs and a move to full participation in Canadian society.

I have described the confusion and have shown the distinction between real fiscal poverty and low income in Canada. Regardless of whether one accepts the premise that real poverty, meaning lack of food, clothing and shelter, is not a reality in Canada, we are debating the question of child poverty.

It is possible that some children have faced such desperate situations through no fault of their own, as a child is a dependent. As such, a child is not expected to have an income or provide for its own needs. Canadian law recognizes this fact and makes provision for this fact in the Criminal Code of Canada. Section 215 states that everyone is under a legal duty as a parent to provide necessities of life for a child under the age of 16. According to Canadian law failing to provide these necessities is not child poverty, but child abuse and neglect.

Child poverty advocates claim that they just want to help the hungry children but are there really 1.2 million hungry Canadian children as the advocates imply? Is there evidence of such a major crisis? Realistically there are children who are living in broken families and low income families but this does not mean that the basic physical needs of these children cannot or are not being met.

In Canada the generous welfare system already in place is more than sufficient for parents to meet the basic physical needs of their children regardless of employment or family status. The government can never meet all the needs of children. How could government ever provide love and affection? Government can, however, provide a non-intrusive economic climate in which families can grow and prosper.

Reformers believe that the state has no business attempting to raise the nation's children and that full responsibility for children must reside with their parent or legal guardian. The only time the state must intervene is in situations of clear neglect or abuse. Should parents find themselves in situations in which it is difficult for them to provide the necessities the responsibility to do so should remain with the parents. These parents may in these situations request help, first from relatives, but failing family support, private social service agencies and then as a last resort governmental agencies.

There may well be isolated cases of individual suffering on the part of some children due to neglect or abusive parents just as there are cases of child sexual abuse, infanticide and child pornography. This is of great concern to all Canadians. Reformers believe that the proper enforcement of existing law and the promotion of family values in society are the most effective ways to deal with this sort of tragedy.

(1840)

Health researchers and others have correctly pointed out that statistically there are problems those in low income situations are more likely to have compared to those of higher incomes: problems such as greater school dropout rates, more domestic violence and higher health concerns. It is clear that these problems do not occur as a result of low income but as a result of family breakdown, illegitimacy, structural unemployment and a loosening of societal values.

However the child poverty lobby believes that low income itself is the problem. Low income or poverty, as they call it, is not a disease that people catch. It is a situation that is the result of other factors.

The child poverty lobby has proposed some solutions to the situation of low income earners. They want more day care, more welfare and more state intrusion in the lives of families. However studies by Dr. Doug Allen of Simon Fraser University show that 80 per cent of low income families do not collect welfare. Clearly for the large majority of low income families, more social programs are not the solution.

The Reform Party recognizes that low income is not the problem itself, but rather one symptom of a much deeper problem in our society. Broken families, divorce, illegitimacy and unemployment are many of the factors that lead to low income status. These problems have quickly increased during the past 30 years due to intrusive policies of Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments.

These are the tax policies that discriminate against stay-at-home parents or discriminate based on family type. These are welfare programs that provide disincentives for people to find work and that encourage and sustain illegitimacy. These are policies that fail to punish crime, especially youth crime, adequately and a massive debt that has led to structural unemployment in our economy.

What do we propose as the solution? We believe government must get out of the day care business. We believe in a tax policy that does not discriminate based on the type of family one has. We believe in a non-intrusive system of social programs that helps the truly needy. We believe in a tax policy that continues to recognize the costs associated with raising children. We believe in spending cuts in all areas to deal with the debt and the deficit. We believe long term tax relief must be achieved so that families may have more freedom to make their own choices.

Reformers are interested in promoting healthy Canadian families and in helping the truly needy. We do not believe more social programs are the solution to society's problems. We do believe in the promotion of the family as the best possible solution to the majority of Canada's social dysfunction.

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Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me tonight to speak on this issue, although a sad one at the same time.

Child poverty in Canada is a clear indication of the failure of social programs in a society. I believe very strongly that this is something that we must as a nation take in hand, and take in hand very quickly.

Poor children are not poor by themselves. They are poor because their parents are poor. Child poverty does not make for a healthy future in our society. Our human deficit will be the future deficit of this country. I believe that firmly.

We talk about the need for a better educated, skilled labour force all the time in the House. We talk about the deficiency of skills in the workforce. We talk about the need to train and educate. We discuss youth crime and retribution. We talk about how we must punish these young people and put them in jail and throw away the key sometimes. We talk about harsh punishment for young children.

We do not discuss openly and honestly why they are that way. The horrible blight on Canada is child poverty. It is a shame for this country to be in that position. We must work to eradicate this.

Children do not get involved in crime and problems all by themselves. Society has a hand in helping from the time that they are born whether it be because they are poor, or whether it be because they are abused in their homes or what have you.

(1845)

In my view poverty is not just poverty from the point of view of not having enough food, shelter or clothing. It is also poverty of the society and the environment around them. Children are abused in homes all the time.

It is true, so there is no point in arguing about it, that we do not have social programs that meet the needs of children. We have seen mental health programs cut when children who need these programs are in line-ups across the country. That is unacceptable. How do we expect them to cope when we are not providing the support system they require? We do not have a proper child care program. We must provide one. Parents need that support. We need to have a comprehensive and supportive system for parents in this situation to cope.

We heard a member across the way talk about the fact that the only way to recognize poverty was to look at basic fundamental deficiencies. He indicated that we were looking a little too high at poverty and that low income was somehow too high a threshold. He referred proudly to a former member of the House, Barbara Greene, who was busy trying to raise the threshold of poverty so that it could be technically wiped out of the books. That does not get rid of poverty. The people would still be there. The children would still be there. They would not disappear. We can change the jargon. We can change the verbiage. We can

change how we describe it. However they are still there; they do not disappear.

It is the state's business to worry about the children of the nation. We have a collective responsibility toward our children. They are the best resource of the nation to survive as a nation. We collectively make decisions about iron ore, forestry and all kinds of things, but when it comes to children the member across the way talks about the sanctity of the family and not doing anything. He says that we have no say or no role as a collective society. We do have a very strong role as a collective society.

Child care is very important. Proper support systems are very important. Low income is low income. Deficiencies, whether they be social, physical or whatever, are deficiencies. Supportive services in social programs are terribly important. We cannot blame the children. We must accept that raising children and preparing them to lead the country in the future is a collective responsibility that cannot be neglected. The member does not agree.

The UN has said that Canada is the best country in the world to live in. That is a wonderful thing we can be very proud of, but for certain individuals, namely children, it is not the best country in the world to live in. That is something we should be ashamed of and deal with tout de suite.

If we accomplish anything at all in the country it must be the eradication of child poverty in all its forms. We must develop a social support system that is comprehensive and supportive to children and their families.

I look forward to working with the upcoming social security review process and working hard with members of the House and Canadians to develop a system to address the basic needs of families and children at the very least. I hope all members of the House will participate in the process and in the end come up with something can be very proud of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Under the right to reply, I recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing for a maximum of two minutes.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond. It is clear there are some different philosophical concerns in the House. There are some who see the urgency of dealing with the problem and there are others who want to talk about philosophical issues while children stay hungry. It is offensive to me that we are having a philosophical debate about why children are hungry when we do not have a commitment to solving the problem of child hunger.

How can Reform members look in the eyes of hungry kids and tell them they are not hungry? It is a disgrace to hear people saying those things. You say it is a question of parental responsibility. Maybe it is, but what about the hungry kids who do not have that parental responsibility administered to them? Are you just going to let them stay hungry because you do not like the way—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I would remind members to make their interventions through the Chair and I

Private Members' Business

would ask the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I get angry. I see poor children on a daily basis in my riding and it is offensive to me that people do not respond in an adequate way to their plight. They are hungry and they need help now; they do not need it in 10 years.

We need a commitment to resolving the problems we face. Children are poor because they are born to poor parents. They do not choose to be born to poor parents; it just so happens that that is the way it is.

The hon. member may think it is funny but it is not. The problem of hunger is serious. He should treat it seriously and not in the facile way he is doing it.

We need a national commitment to job creation. People are poor because they do not have jobs, four million of them. We

need real and progressive tax reforms so that Canada will have the resources to deal with poverty. We need changes to trade and monetary policy so that we can solve our child poverty problems. Without a real and determined focus on these real problems we will not find a real solution.

I think we all know poor children. We all know the pain they face and the hunger that they face. Surely we need to respond to them in the most humane and careful way that we can. Children do not need ideological debate. They need answers. They need food. They need support. I only wish the Reform Party would have supported the motion being votable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6.52 p.m., as there are no members available for the proceedings on the adjournment motion, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.52 p.m.)

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