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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 9, 1994

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA GRAIN ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for Minister of Agriculture and Agri–Food, Lib.) moved that Bill C–51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act and respecting certain regulations made pursuant to that act, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C–51 this morning, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act.

Bill C–51 represents a consensus among Canada's western grain producers and the grain industry. This bill contains the changes to the Canada Grain Act these communities have told us they need.

There are four key elements to Bill C–51. The first is to renew Canada's commitment to quality and therefore reinforce the uniqueness of the Canadian quality control system. The second is to eliminate the obligation for government to set maximum elevator tariffs. The third is to improve the financial protection available to grain producers. The fourth is to reduce the exposure of taxpayers in the event that licensees of the Canadian Grain Commission fail financially.

(1005)

I will now give some detail on these four particular aspects beginning with commitment to quality. Bill C–51 renews this commitment to quality. When we talk about quality, what we mean are the measurable characteristics that end users of these products tell us they need. Bill C–51 restates the need to meet the requirements of end users through visual and other quality determination methods. Until instrumental means are developed to rapidly and efficiently determine quality, visual methods must still be relied upon.

Grain quality, which is the primary reason for Canada's success in international markets, is more important than ever given the post–GATT climate in which freer trade rules reduce the role of export subsidies. Our competitors are going to have to become more like us. For this reason it is important that Canada preserve its tradition and widely acknowledged leadership in this area.

On the issue of maximum elevator tariffs, Bill C–51 provides that the Canadian Grain Commission will no longer be required to set maximum elevator tariffs. Tariffs are the charges grain elevator operators levy for their elevation, storage and cleaning services.

In the absence of maximum tariffs, elevator operators will be able to decide what to charge for their services. Operators will also no longer be required to provide the commission with 14 days notice when changes to tariffs are to be made. These measures will provide companies with more opportunities to be flexible and competitive.

Removing the obligation of the commission to set maximum tariffs is being done at the request of the industry. Elimination of the maximums should encourage more capital investment by elevator companies and result in a more flexible and competitive elevator industry.

Producer reactions to this provision have been mixed. Some do believe there is a risk that companies will charge excessive tariffs unless they are regulated but we are convinced that Bill C–51 addresses these concerns. There are safeguards within the bill and within the structure of the industry.

For example, the majority of primary and terminal elevators are owned or controlled by producers through the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Alberta Wheat Pool, the United Grain Growers, and the Manitoba Pool Elevators. These operators are responsible to their producers, so it is expected they will consider the interests of producers when setting these tariffs.

Some may argue that the corporate interests of producer organizations will override the producers' interests. It would be presumptuous for government to tell producers they are incapable of directing their own organizations. I am very much convinced that producers know what they are doing and they are in the best position to determine whose interests their organizations will serve.

In the unlikely event that producer owned elevators are not able to protect their producers Bill C–51 does include some legislative remedies. Specifically for a two–year transition period the Canadian Grain Commission will have the power to immediately establish maximum tariffs by order if the investigation of a complaint from an elevator user finds that a particular tariff is unjustified. The two–year period should be

sufficient for the industry and producers to adapt to a deregulated tariff environment.

The commission will continue to have the power to set maximum tariffs by regulation as a last resort if elevator operators set tariffs that are excessive. Furthermore, the commission will continue to investigate complaints and to mediate disputes.

However, if the past behaviour of Canada's elevator companies offers any indication of their future actions they will behave responsibly. The recent experience where the commission issued an order which removed elevation tariff ceilings for terminal elevators for the current crop year has shown this. Limits on these maximums were removed to allow operators to recover overtime costs, enabling the industry to deal with backlogged orders. The resulting tariff increases were modest and responsibly applied.

It is significant that the tariffs companies are charging for their other services are below the ceiling established by the Canadian Grain Commission.

The next point has to do with the licensing and security provisions contained in the bill. The Canadian Grain Commission plays an important role in helping maintain the integrity of grain transactions and thereby protecting the interests of grain producers.

The Canadian Grain Commission licenses elevators and grain dealers and holds security posted by licensees. This security which is mandatory for all licensees is intended to help protect farmers against losses in case a licensee defaults on payments to farmers.

In the past the industry viewed this security as insurance to cover licensee liabilities only up to the amount of security posted.

(1010)

However, in 1990 the Federal Court found the CGC liable in the case of the bankruptcies of two former licensees. In both cases the security held by the Canadian Grain Commission was insufficient to cover the licensees' obligations to farmers and the government had to pay the shortfall in security which was approximately $3.8 million.

The payments that resulted from these court decisions came out of general revenue, more specifically out of taxpayers' pockets. We feel it is important to change the act to protect taxpayers from further payments by clarifying the government's responsibility in any further bankruptcies. This view is shared throughout the grain industry with which the licensing and security provisions of Bill C–51 were thoroughly discussed.

The new licensing and security provisions are as follows. There is currently a one–year limit on security. The act will allow the time limit to be prescribed by regulation and it is the government's intention to fix this period at 90 days. The change is based on one of the major recommendations flowing from consultations. That recommendation was that farmers should take more responsibility for their transactions. This includes promptly pricing grain on delivery and cashing payment documents.

The vast majority of those consulted agreed that security is not intended to help farmers speculate on rising grain prices. By limiting their time to claim the act will place the responsibility on farmers for promptly obtaining payment and cashing documents.

Another provision is that farmers will have 30 days to notify the CGC of a licensee's failure or refusal to pay. If the CGC is notified promptly of a default, it can investigate a licensee that is potentially in financial difficulty and may be able to prevent the licensee from incurring further liabilities.

The onus will be on farmers to determine whether they are dealing with licensees. This is because the CGC only holds security posted by licensees. If farmers want to be eligible for security they will have to ensure they are dealing with a licensed organization. They can do this by contacting the CGC or by monitoring regular CGC advertisements in the farm press.

Farmers will have to hold prescribed documents to be eligible for security. Security posted by licensees applies only to cash purchase tickets, elevator receipts and grain receipts. To be eligible to claim against security farmers must obtain one of these prescribed documents. Only licensees will be entitled to use them. This will prevent non–licensees from misleading producers about their licensing status.

Security available to producers will be limited to the amount held by the commission. If the security held is less than total liabilities, the monies will then be shared on a pro rata basis. Government will not be liable if the security held is not adequate. The commission will monitor companies to make certain their security is adequate to cover their liabilities.

Finally, Bill C–51 will enable the commission to set by regulation the percentage of losses that would be covered by security. The government intends this will remain at 100 per cent of any losses. These are very important provisions that will resolve some of these long outstanding issues.

There is another point here that should be discussed that has to do with special crops. When Bill C–51 was reviewed by the agriculture committee some members and witnesses expressed the view that Bill C–51 should be held back until issues of specific concern to some members of the special crops industry could be addressed in the legislation.

The answer to the problem does not lie in holding up this bill. Rather, the answer is to proceed with developing legislation that is geared to special crops. What does special crops mean? This refers to products such as canary seed, sunflower seed, mustard seed, lentils, buckwheat, beans, peas, corn, safflower seed, soy beans, triticale, fava bean.

At one time special crops played a relatively small economic role when compared with other Canadian grains such as wheat, barley, oats, canola and so on. However, the industry has grown significantly, particularly in western Canada where special crops have grown by about 30 per cent in the last 10 years.

Special crops are regulated under the Canada Grain Act. This act was designed to regulate an industry largely devoted to the bulk handling of cereal grains. Many industry participants have observed that because special crops differ significantly in terms of handling and marketing the act does not meet all the needs of the special crops industry.

This general assessment has some merit. Over the past several years the Canadian Grain Commission has consulted widely on this issue, mostly through the special crops initiative which was conducted by a committee of special crops producers based in the three prairie provinces. These reviews have confirmed that the special crops industry operates differently than the sector of the industry that handles the major grains and that legislative changes are needed to address these special needs.

(1015)

These reviews have also consistently underlined the need expressed by producers to have access to companies which are licensed and to financial security should those companies default on their payments to the producers.

The commission has examined numerous suggestions and a combination of suggestions that have come forward from participants in the special crops industry. Some suggestions had to be rejected because they were administratively complicated and unduly expensive.

More consultation is planned because the commission wishes to determine which regulatory option is most acceptable to special crops producers and the industry.

The commission recently circulated a discussion paper which outlines options and it will be holding discussions with the special crops industry in western Canada over the next two to three months. From these discussions will emerge recommendations for legislation in 1995.

The conclusion to be drawn from all of this is as follows. First, a special crops industry has special needs which must be addressed. These needs are being addressed in a thoughtful and timely fashion. Second, because the needs of the special crops industry will be the subject of legislative proposals, the minister of agriculture intends to bring it to the House in 1995. We should not delay the passage of Bill C–51. Delays will aggravate problems C–51 is designed to overcome.

In conclusion, we should all thank the many people who have been involved in one way or another in the development of Bill C–51. They include many members of the multitude of Canada's producer and industry organizations, staff of the Canadian Grain Commission, Agriculture Canada and many members of the House, all of whom have contributed to make this bill a success in addressing these issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–51 under consideration today is an administrative bill. It is designed to make the operation and administration of the Canadian Grain Commission and the grain industry more efficient.

Canada's reputation for grains of constant and reliable quality is commonly recognized as Canada's winning card on international grain markets. The Canada Grain Act will be amended a number of ways by the bill before us, to strengthen the role played by quality in the Canadian grain industry.

Under the provisions brought forward today, the Canadian Grain Commission, which is responsible for administering the Canada Grain Act, will no longer have a duty to set maximum elevator charges. We know that these charges are fees levied by elevator operators for the handling, cleaning, storage and drying of grain.

This deregulation of maximum charges will be introduced in stages. There will be a two–year transition period during which the commission will retain the power to set rate ceilings by regulation. During and after this transition period, the Canadian Grain Commission will act as an ombudsman, investigate complaints and try to settle them. Following the transition period, the Canadian Grain Commission will retain the power to set maximum charges by regulation, as required.

This enactment will give elevator operators more flexibility in setting their prices, enabling them to compete. It will also encourage much needed capital investment.

Bill C–51 will lift the requirement for grain to be hauled from province to another exclusively by common carrier. This will benefit the producers, in our view, by giving them transportation options that could help them cut their marketing costs.

The Canada Grain Act, 1912, established the Canadian Grain Commission mainly to look after the interests of grain producers. Their protection remains the main focus of the act and several of the proposed changes are designed to ensure this protection. Among the amendments is one giving the Canadian Grain Commission the power to take measures against companies making illegal use of the grade names established under the Canada Grain Act.

(1020)

The bill also requires licensed grain dealers to use the official grade names established under the Canada Grain Act in all their dealings with producers.

There is also a provision allowing the Canadian Grain Commission to suspend primary elevator operation licenses when surpluses exceed the allowed limits. A surplus is the difference between the quantity of grain stored in the elevator and the amount that should be there according to shipment records and receipts.

The bill also contains provisions giving the Canadian Grain Commission the authority to require operators to fully insure the grain stored in their elevators. Finally, it requires eventual licensees to provide specified financial data proving their solvency.

Under the bill, the Canadian Grain Commission would license elevator operators and grain dealers and hold security posted by licensees, to help protect farmers in cases where a licensee defaults in its payment to a grain producer.

After the bankruptcies of two licensees who had posted insufficient security, the courts ruled that the shortfall should come out of general revenue or, in other words, out of taxpayers' pockets. The bill before us proposes several amendments intended to clarify the respective responsibilities of the Canadian Grain Commission and of grain producers and to protect taxpayers against future disbursements.

These amendments include a provision that protects producers by regulation during a fixed period following grain delivery to a licensee. Should producers not try to obtain payment during this period, they will not be eligible for reimbursement out of the security posted by the licensee, in case the licensee goes bankrupt, of course. Based on the consultations which the Canadian Grain Commission held with producers and industry stakeholders, the statutory period will be 90 days.

The bill also contains a provision requiring the grower to notify the Canadian Grain Commission within 30 days if a grain company has not met its obligations.

It also contains a provision making the grower responsible for determining whether he is dealing with a duly accredited company. Since accredited companies are the only ones that have to provide security to the Canadian Grain Commission, claims against the security will not be valid if a grower deals with a non–accredited company.

We also find a provision requiring the grower to obtain documents authorized by the Canadian Grain Commission from grain dealers and other Commission licensees.

The bill also contains a provision allowing the Commission to set a limit on the protection afforded by the security. The Commission could not use this regulatory power without the approval of the Governor in Council. At present, the protection is total—100 per cent—and will remain so in the foreseeable future.

There is also a provision explicitly limiting the Canadian Grain Commission's obligation to the amount of the security provided by the companies which it accredited. This provision exists to make the protection which the growers enjoy closer to the security provisions commonly found in other sectors. It is similar to the limits set on the amount guaranteed by the government when financial institutions fail.

I realize that I went quickly, but for these reasons, I will support Bill C–51 presented by the government.

(1025)

[*English*]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak at third reading of Bill C–51 which amends the Canada Grain Act.

The Canada Grain Act regulates grading and inspection of grain, maximum tariffs on handling charges including elevation, cleaning, drying and so on. The act also restricts in some cases transportation of grain. It is involved in licensing of businesses dealing in or handling grain and also in the security requirements of these companies.

The Canadian Grain Commission oversees the act. It is made up of appointed commissioners who seem, for some reason, to turn over to some extent after an election.

Today I will discuss the changes to the Canada Grain Act which are proposed in Bill C–51. I will discuss these changes under three headings: first, excessive power moved to the hands of the minister and to cabinet; second, maximum tariffs on handling charges; and third, bonding and licensing. As well as these three main areas I will speak briefly about a few other areas which I think are of particular interest.

I will begin with the excessive power moved to the hands of the minister and cabinet under the changes made in Bill C–51. In this bill an increased amount of legislative action is given to the governor in council which is the formalized constitutional body through which the federal cabinet exercises executive power. The executive instrument of the governor in council is known as an order in council which represents delegated legislative power as permitted under specific acts of Parliament.

This delegated legislative power gives cabinet, or really the minister, the ability to enact subordinate legislation by order in council or by regulation. Power delegated through enabling legislation is so common that the law is effectively formed by administrative bodies rather than by Parliament as it should be.

The legislator's role should be to pass the initial legislation authorizing certain agencies to devise, promulgate and supervise regulations as may be deemed necessary to give full effect to a particular act.

Too much power is continuing to be centralized in governor in council. In this bill, clauses 2, 4, 9, 15, 33 and 35 are examples.

How can the Liberals reconcile this with their red book promises of more open and more democratic government? Why are they formalizing control in cabinet? The argument that was presented when this question was raised is that the bill only legitimizes the authority that is there anyway.

If the government is serious about moving to a more open and less interventionist style of government, why did it not remove these powers rather than just formalizing what was there anyway?

This expansion of the scope and use of governor in council power which has occurred at the expense of the power of the legislature or Parliament is largely a result of the increasing complexity of modern government. However this delegated legislative power may involve matters of administrative routine right up to matters of major political and economic consequences. A wide range of issues are dealt with by the order in council power.

Such legislation is so extensive that Parliament can do little other than conduct random checks and investigate only some apparent abuses. The decisions made by cabinet or governor in council are based on informal procedures and the deliberations are secret. This amounts to little more than government by cabinet decree with no accountability.

In this bill there are an increasing number of areas for which the Canadian Grain Commission will now require governor in council approval. Conceivably the Liberal government under the revised act would be given the ability to covertly affect the interest of an individual farmer, a farm group or a grain dealer, for example, which is not operating according to its wishes. Dare I suggest this change opens the door to pay–offs for political favours or punishment for political foes. This is the type of thing the governing Liberal Party campaigned against during the election.

(1030)

In two cases in this bill there is a movement toward less ministerial control. This bill states that the Canadian Grain Commission will have the power to set the salaries for the members of the eastern and western standards committees which have 26 members and the grain appeal tribunal which is made up of three members. This is in clauses 4 and 6 of this legislation.

Currently the salaries of members of these committees are fixed by governor in council at a $125 honorarium per day for non–government participants and $10 per sample for the grain appeal tribunal. The commission will now be setting the salaries for committee members in order to better reflect the reality and provide the Canadian Grain Commission with additional flexibility to make adjustments without having to go to order in council.

The second area I would like to talk about briefly this morning is the setting of maximum tariffs. Clause 14 and some following clauses eliminate over two years the requirement for the Canadian Grain Commission to set maximum tariffs charged by grain elevators. Instead the Canadian Grain Commission is provided with the discretion to decide whether or not it wishes to regulate this aspect of the grain industry while eliminating the requirement that elevator operators have to give advance notice to the Canadian Grain Commission of changes to elevator charges. Tariffs are fees charged for handling, cleaning, storage and drying of grain, that type of thing.

Removing these tariffs is a positive step. My concern though is with the grain companies that own primary, that is the country elevators, as well as terminal elevators. It is very common in the grains industry for companies to own the farm elevators that farmers ship directly to as well as the terminal elevators which are responsible for receiving the grain in port position and loading it on the ships. Those grain companies may lower the tariffs in the country elevators which is good, but they may at the same time raise the tariffs in the terminal elevators to make up for the cut rates in the country.

This would be fine if only these companies were dealing through their terminals. However these terminals are semi–public terminals by law which means that companies and individuals other than the owners are allowed to ship grain through the terminal.

I am afraid these changes may cause an increased rate at the terminal. The smaller companies which are provided an opportunity by law to deal through the terminals may be squeezed out of business. The rates could be raised beyond that which is reasonable.

Just to make this very clear, there is a provision in place which allows the Canadian Grain Commission to set a maximum in cases where the rate is raised too much. That provision is there and I will talk a bit about that in a minute.

The irony is that while I am concerned about this happening, the positive result from this type of action could be that the small companies may decide to improve the direct hit loading. That is simply loading directly from rail car to ships which started in the port of Vancouver and they may actually expand this to increase the competition. I see this as something positive.

The other positive thing that may result from this is more grain movement through the United States and through American terminals so that Canadian farmers have another option when there is a disruption in grain movement within Canada. That would encourage settlements by those in the grain handling industry, including the companies that own the business and labour. Settlement may be encouraged if they know there is competition so that they cannot stop the flow of grain.

I touched on my concern before about the Canadian Grain Commission or order in council maintaining the power to set the maxmimum tariffs. By getting rid of the maximum tariffs it gives the grain buyers more authority to penalize people who put grain in terminals and do not move it quickly enough. This is in clause 14 of the bill. I believe this is a good move. However, since we know that government wants to increase and not decrease the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board for example, cabinet just may choose to reverse these penalties in cases where the Canadian Wheat Board is affected.

(1035)

Could the ability to invoke governor in council authority be used in the future by government to give even more power to the central selling desk of the Canadian Wheat Board to further regulate the grain sector? This is a legitimate concern.

With the present legislation the terminals do not have the power to penalize the Canadian Wheat Board for dumping grain for which they do not have an immediate buyer. All other shippers of grain must have a buyer ready before they can move the grain to port. The Canadian Wheat Board is the exception.

We have found over this past year that the Canadian Wheat Board moved grain into terminal position for which it had no buyer. This was the case particularly in Thunder Bay. Without the ability of the companies that own the terminals to raise the tariffs, this put them at a disadvantage because they could not move the grain due to the terminals being plugged with Canadian Wheat Board grain. At least now the law provides for them to raise this rate, but it also provides for the minister to say: ''No, this is out of line. We are going to lower the rate''.

That overriding power concerns me. I understand there is some need for that because in a business where there really is not enough open competition there could be a rise in tariffs which is not justified. There is a balance. It is tricky to find the balance, but I am just expressing some of my concerns.

The third area I want to talk about today is bonding and licensing requirements and the proposed changes under this piece of legislation. A major change in the bill involves the clear legislative removal of any responsibility on the part of the Canadian Grain Commission and therefore the taxpayers, above the level of the bond that is posted by the Canadian Grain Commission to a licensed company. In the past, courts have required the Canadian Grain Commission to cover losses above the bond level.

Companies buy bonds to protect the customers they do business with against losses up to the bond level if they go out of business. In the past the courts have determined that somehow the Canadian Grain Commission and therefore the taxpayers have a responsibility to cover losses above the level of the bond.

However in at least two cases over the past years taxpayers have also been forced to cover losses for companies which have not been licensed under the Canadian Grain Commission. Therefore, there is no responsibility on the part of the Canadian Grain Commission or the taxpayers. The Auditor General was very critical of the bailouts of these two companies which seemed to be politically motivated.

With the changes that are made in this area there is no doubt at all that farmers will not be protected above the level of the bond. The courts will not be able to determine that taxpayers should somehow be held responsible for farmers and grain companies through funds from the Canadian Grain Commission.

The Canadian Grain Commission does however monitor these bonds to try to determine whether the licensed companies are operating within the level of the bonds. This is a very difficult thing to do and it is very expensive. It is a function which does offer some degree of protection. At the same time while the monitoring is there, the grain commission is not responsible if the monitoring is ineffective. That is a concern.

Once again the Canadian Grain Commission has the power but does not take the responsibility for its mistakes. It has the power to refuse to licence a company, to require expensive insurance and bonding. It spends the money to perform these functions, but again the only protection is provided by the companies and the protection is only up to the level of the bond. It is important that farmers know this.

For this reason I believe that elevators and grain dealers should have the right to choose to opt out of this licensing and bonding requirement. This was the reason for my first amendment to Bill C–51, Motion No. 3, which was debated and defeated at report stage. That amendment would have allowed individual elevator companies, grain dealers, to choose to opt out of the licensing requirements under the Canada Grain Act.

(1040)

It is very expensive and very difficult for some small companies to provide the bonding and insurance the Canadian Grain Commission may require. In those cases these companies could have chosen to opt out.

The protection we offered to farmers and people doing business with these companies is that on the premises there would be a sign very clearly stating that the place of business was not licensed under the Canadian Grain Commission. As is done in other areas with this type of body, on the front of every contract it would have been required to clearly state that the company you were about to enter into a contract with was not licensed under the Canada Grain Act. That was the protection for farmers.

As well, the amendment would have provided the flexibility so that when a company did opt out it no longer had to meet any of the requirements of the Canada Grain Act. This amendment would also have allowed companies, if they chose, to use the grading and inspection services that the Canadian Grain Commission provides, of course at a cost as is done now.

There are a few other points that I want to raise. One further clause in this bill authorizes the Canadian Grain Commission to suspend licences of primary elevators where overages exceed allowable limits.

Overage is just a difference between the amount of grain an elevator has in store compared to the amount it should have in store when looking at the records of shipments and receipts of grain. This is to offer some protection that in fact companies are paying their customers for what has been brought in and put through the facility.

Another clause confirms the authority of the Canadian Grain Commission to require operators to fully insure the grain in their elevators. It requires that prospective licensees provide specified financial data which demonstrates their financial viability.

What they are talking about here is a little bit closer monitoring of the bonds. While it is impossible to make sure that a company is operating within the bond level, it was pretty clear from what happened in the past when companies failed that the monitoring was not as good as it should be.

A further step in this bill involves movement of grain within Canada. This may surprise some people although people who are knowledgeable in the grain industry know this, the legislation seems to grant free movement within the eastern division or within the western division, a line drawn just west of Thunder Bay. This is in clause 25 of this bill. My question is: Why should there be any restriction to interprovincial trade and grain in this country? Yet, there is.

This legislation will allow free movement within the eastern division or within the western division but not between the two divisions. This seems absurd. To add further to that under the Canadian Wheat Board Act it is still against the law to transport grain from province to province even within a division. This seems absurd when you consider we are moving to more free and open trade with the world.

A further change requires that licensed grain dealers use the Canada Grain Act grade names in all of their transactions with farmers and grant the authority of the Canadian Grain Commission to act against companies which illegally use them. This has almost been a normal practice in the industry and this change only legitimizes what is already happening.

My concern is that dealers do not have the right to operate as unlicensed businesses. They may apply to the Canadian Grain Commission which may choose to grant them the right to operate without a licence but it is not a right. Of course my amendment which was defeated at report stage would have provided this as a right.

I believe that farmers and dealers in the industry want a change which will allow a dealer to operate as an unlicensed dealer and choose to deal in either ungraded grain or grain which has been graded by the Canadian Grain Commission. They want the choice. Because farmers are paying for the majority of the operating costs of the Canadian Grain Commission, they should be provided with the choice.

(1045)

In conclusion, one witness in committee referred to the bill as the reregulation of the industry. The time has come for an open and honest evaluation of the role of the Canadian Grain Commission to determine what functions it should perform and how it should perform them.

The evaluation must determine what farmers want in areas that affect them and what others in the industry want in areas that affect them. The role of the Canadian Grain Commission should be to provide no more or no less than what is wanted by players in the industry.

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate the statements made by my hon. colleague from Vegreville. He made a very good speech on what this change to the grain commission act really is. I will add a few comments.

As members of the standing committee on agriculture know very well, I am not a big friend of the Canadian Grain Commission. I was very close to the issue when Grandin wheat was smuggled into the country and put the reputation of our milling wheat at stake. The way the grain commission acted on the issue was really appalling. Not only did it not try to keep the grain out of the country but it more or less showed the smugglers, as I call them, how to get around the rules and regulations to bring it in and fill their pockets with wheat that was really not suited for our area.

It makes me wonder: I see a bill like this one that says deregulation and then I see it is probably open to loopholes whereby small players could be put out of business in a very short time.

When I look at small elevator companies with no terminals, I wonder how they will be able to compete with a very low tariff in the country. When grain is shipped to the terminals of larger

players they can be hammered with the tariffs and put out of business. That is not fair. The grain commission was put in place to see that everyone was treated equally, small players or big players.

Why would large grain companies be worried about exporting grain if their terminal charges were so high they actually made more money by keeping it there than moving it once or twice during the year? It is a deterrent to exporting grain outside the country.

We have small players in the grain industry like small seed cleaning plants. They are really the entrepreneurs in the special crops industry. They were the people who put at risk the bit of capital they had by experimenting with lentils and with peas. These small players are going to be licensed and regulated to a point where they cannot exist. I received a call from a small seed plant owner one day who said: ''Jake, to enforce the new regulations in the act it will cost me $20,000 extra for doing my books''. A chartered accountant will now do his books which were always done by him and his family.

The accounting and the bonding are putting these small players out of business. Every farmer knows the reputation of the seed plants in their areas. They have been in business for years and have never defrauded anyone of a single dime. They are now going to be put out of business. That is wrong.

(1050)

Another thing that is wrong is that grain commissioners are paid by farmers; 90 per cent of their wages are from farm receipts. However what input do they have in who the commissioners are? This is a point in our democracy that must be changed. When a player pays he should also have the right to know whom he is paying.

Clause 4 of the bill also bothers me. It would permit the Canadian Grain Commission rather than the governor in council to fix allowances paid to members of grain standards committees and grain appeal tribunals, removing the set of rules as far as payment is concerned one step further from the House. Before it was the governor in council and farmers who had some input. Now it is to be removed from the governor in council and given to commissioners to set wages for grain weighing tribunals or grading standards people.

This is not very effective nor what farmers want. I do not think it saves the taxpayer money. I would equate that to putting the fox into the chicken coop instead of outside the door. It is dangerous and should not be allowed to happen.

Clause 21 of the bill really bothers me. Under the clause process elevators, unlike primary elevators, would no longer have to perform weighovers to determine whether there is an overage or a shortage, a discrepancy between the amount a grain elevator has in store and the amount it really paid for. This is to recognize that process elevators are not required to account for grain delivered by producers.

Why should process elevators be treated any different from primary elevators? These are the elevators that are processing the special crops. These are the process elevators that really turn over the dollars, where the big bucks are. Very little overage or a shortage can increase their profit margins and it is all coming out of the pockets of farmers. It will open the door to more corruption and more lost revenue for farmers. If we want a bill that is fair to everyone, it should be on a basis where primary and processing elevators are treated exactly the same.

My colleague touched on another item I do not like. Public carriers will only be able to transport grain in the west, not into the east or vice versa. It is another regulation that will hinder value added processing companies.

Just this week a small miller in Manitoba tried to export to another province. He will be able to do so under this act into Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. However he cannot go into Ontario and compete with the bigger processors or the millers. The country should be shared by everyone. We have agreed to the establishment of the World Trade Organization but we do not have free trade in our own country.

There is so much to be said about the government that we could probably talk all day long. One of these days in the House, especially when we are not debating this bill, I will mention to hon. members what the old red combine did to my farming operation. We could probably debate a few matters outside this bill.

(1055)

When I commented in the standing committee that there should be a revamping of the Canadian Grain Commission I was not very far off. Farmers will very much support that idea, just like they supported the idea that the Grain Transportation Agency should be done away with.

It amazes me that we can debate bills in the House and agree in committee 100 per cent, Liberals, Bloc and Reform, but legislation does not get passed. I would suggest very strongly to the House that if we want the farming industry to stay in business we will have to start making real deregulation, not superficial.

As far as I am concerned the bill is giving the grain handling system the chance to increase its revenue without considering what it will cost farmers. We will not have the free movement of grain we should have. The bill will give us competition, but the competition will be limited. The amount of tariff that can be charged will be set by larger players with no regulation. That really bothers me. We have to start realizing that the primary producer should be protected by bills like this one, not the major players, the processors or the grain handling system.

My colleague did a very good job on the other issue that is wrong with the bill. I wholeheartedly suggest to members across the way that if western Canada does not get a few fair shakes in some of these bills, maybe we will start seeing more grain moving to the south, which will be detrimental to the country.

I am a Canadian. I like rules and regulations that benefit Canadians, but my children and my neighbours' children who are farming need to survive and have a profit. If we do not start drawing up bills to protect the farming industry, we are in big trouble.

With that I will close my remarks and turn the debate over to someone else.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

THE CANADIAN BOUQUET

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 4, 1992, I informed the House of my constituent Mr. Michael Reynolds and his contribution to Canadian unity, ''The Canadian Bouquet''.

The painting is a collage of the provincial and territorial flowers of Canada. This picture of beauty and unity is symbolic of the greater unity of the people of Canada. A pledge of unity was also drafted and accompanied the nearly 25,000 prints sold to raise money for charity.

The pledge reads:

> We the people, for love of country and in recognition of 125 years of Canadian Confederation, make this pledge. Until the seasons cease to change, each new spring will bring forth the flowers of ''The Canadian Bouquet'' in a united Canada.

Today more than ever Canadians must reaffirm their commitment to the very best country in the world. This pledge and print aim to serve that purpose.

* * *

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAM

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, business and industry are the engines that drive economic growth in Canada. For this reason it is of utmost importance to encourage the traditional Canadian entrepreneurial spirit.

This week I was delighted to present awards to the winners of the youth entrepreneurial program in the Carleton—Charlotte region of New Brunswick. This program was sponsored by the Carleton Regional Development Commission in partnership with ACOA and the provincial department of advanced education and labour.

Eleven university students presented their options for new businesses and from these presentations, three winning business plans were selected.

I offer congratulations to the winners: Lisa Gionet, Nancy Martin and Simon MacInnis. I extend my appreciation to all participants and the organizers for the event.

There is a new confidence in Canada, and the government's jobs and growth strategy is working. The Canadian entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well once again.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 10 is International Human Rights Day. I would ask all my colleagues to take some time tomorrow to remember the numerous areas of conflict around the world and the men, women and children who are victims of human rights abuses on a daily basis.

As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to increase general awareness of human rights abuses occurring globally and raise these issues in the House.

I hope that in the coming new year all parliamentarians will continue to work together in bringing human rights violations to the forefront and in spreading the message that these violations are unacceptable.

Parliamentarians can make a difference when they collectively speak out on human rights no matter where they occur.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning I want to give you another example of flexible federalism or, rather, federalism which ignores the legitimate proposals of a group of students.

Yesterday, the students' federation of the University of Ottawa was invited by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to a public consultation on the social program reform. The minister remained silent throughout the hearings and did not take any notes. Moreover, the minister's assistant led students to believe that the discussion was being recorded. A verification revealed that no recording was made. This illustrates the federal government's real idea of what public consultation is.

Is this the kind of federalism that the government wants to propose to Quebecers and Canadians? Flexible federalism is nothing but federal indifference. The government is more interested in imposing its already set ideas than in discussing issues with the others concerned.

* * *

PRE–BUDGET CONSULTATION

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière–des–Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a report tabled yesterday, Liberal members are paving the way for a new tax increase affecting all taxpayers, thus reneging on the election promise made by the Prime Minister not to raise taxes.

Besides recommending this possible surtax, the Liberal majority on the finance committee proposes to increase the tax burden of the middle class by imposing a new tax on gasoline and by giving the Minister of Finance full scope to tax RRSPs and pension funds in particular.

Moreover, by recommending additional cuts of $3.4 billion to social programs, the Liberal members on the finance committee confirm how despicable the Axworthy reform is, since it seeks to reduce the deficit on the backs of the unemployed, welfare recipients and students.

Faced with these unacceptable recommendations from the Liberals, the Bloc Quebecois, in a dissenting report, proposed ten progressive and specific recommendations to reduce the deficit and create jobs.

* * *

DRAFT BILL ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, during the debate on the Quebec referendum process, Bloc Quebecois members were quite surprised by the lack of historical perspective shown by Liberal members as a whole, and more particularly Quebec Liberal MPs.

While they all were quick to condemn the regional consultation process on the draft bill regarding sovereignty, calling it illegitimate and undemocratic, they conveniently forgot that, in 1981, there was no consultation and no referendum, in spite of the nearly unanimous opposition of the Quebec National Assembly to the new Constitution.

(1105)

They also forgot that the Meech Lake Accord was rejected in 1990 without a referendum and that the parliamentary process leading to the Charlottetown Accord in 1993, which was unequivocally rejected by the people, was flawed.

Obviously, members opposite have a short memory. And yet they are the ones who took part in the unilateral patriation of the Constitution through an undemocratic process.

* * *

[*English*]

CHIROPRACTIC PROFESSION

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 1995 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the chiropractic profession. Few people know that the study of this profession was founded by a Canadian, Mr. Daniel David Palmer, born at Port Perry, Ontario.

Today its practice is used worldwide. In fact many members of this Chamber, including myself, use its services.

I would like to extend to all members of this honourable profession a happy anniversary. I would also like to let them know that I share their disappointment over the decision of Canada Post not to commemorate this achievement in the medical area.

* * *

FIRST NATIONS SELF–GOVERNMENT

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Wednesday, December 7 was an important day in the history of Canada and our relationship with the First Nations people.

It was on this day that the dismantling agreement was signed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Grand Chief Phil Fontaine that heralds the beginning of self–government. I am pleased this initiative is taking place in my home province of Manitoba.

This agreement will give the First Nations the authority, the responsibility, and the accountability to govern their own affairs.

I was proud to attend this historical event, proud to be part of an initiative that represents co–operation, mutual respect and trust between the government and the First Nations of Canada.

I applaud the minister and the First Nations for their commitment to finding common ground on which self–government can be built in Manitoba and ultimately in Canada.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we celebrate the 46th anniversary of International Human Rights Day.

The world has since shown greater respect for freedom and human dignity. The Berlin wall has collapsed, the iron curtain has been lifted, apartheid has been abolished, and dictatorships have been overthrown.

At the same time we note with sorrow that citizens of other nations continue to live in oppression, or are forced to wage bloody wars to secure freedom.

We shall not despair. New tools for dialogue are emerging. Trade missions have built bridges of understanding and respect for one another. Canada is proud to have its International Centre for Human Rights. As a nation we should be proud of our leadership in this field, doing our utmost to promote peace and justice throughout the world to secure human dignity for all.

* * *

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Jake E. Hoeppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on November 29 a Manitoba Liberal member of Parliament stated in the House that the Liberal government cares about Canadians and cares about the economy.

Let me tell you about this caring government. This caring government continues to support the gold–plated pension plan while denying Manitoba cattle producers fair compensation for their depopulated herds. They spend $45 million needlessly backtracking grain and deny an FSAM II payment to an eligible farmer due to a postal mix–up.

This government provides crown corporation executives with $300,000 interest free loans while the Farm Credit Corporation forces farmers into receivership due to compounded interest.

To top it off, this caring government is talking of increasing gasoline taxes and taxing lottery winnings.

Care indeed. My foot.

* * *

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was recently visited in my constituency office by Barbara Mayer and Doreen Armitage, both of whom suffer from fibromyalgia, a chronic rheumatic disorder involving widespread pain and profound fatigue.

Headaches and irritable bowel are also among the approximately 35 other symptoms making diagnosis very difficult and complicating disability compensation claims for sufferers.

The degree of fibromyalgia can vary from very mild to extremely disabling. Doctors have no effective treatment and it is often difficult for patients to convince others of the true state of their health.

(1110)

Two–thirds of the sufferers are women and up to 5 per cent of the population may be affected. Unfortunately it is only in recent years that the disease has started to receive attention so there is a serious lack of research funding.

For this reason I urge all members to do whatever they can, financially or otherwise, to support research initiatives connected with fibromyalgia.

* * *

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the solution to our growing debt is not to increase revenues but to reduce government expenditures.

Northerners use a greater percentage of their disposable income for the bare essentials of food, shelter and clothing than do Canadians living further south. Northerners must pay more for food because it has to be trucked over longer distances. They pay more for fuel to heat their homes over the longer, colder winters. They pay more for medical care and education when they send their children south to specialists or universities.

We know the Minister of Finance is looking for easy tax grabs to fund continued overspending. Although it does not begin to compensate for all the differences, the northern residence deduction helps offset some of these additional costs.

On behalf of all northerners I ask the Minister of Finance to carefully consider the positive impact this tax deduction has provided toward assisting northerners to meet their basic needs.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my thanks to the minister responsible for ACOA for the new course he is charting for Atlantic regional development.

The beginning of a Team Atlantic, the end of grants to business, and the focus on job creation are the solutions that Atlantic Canadians are searching for.

While the government is offering new direction, the hypocrisy and noise of members of the Reform Party shines through. In their desperate attempt to attack ACOA they have resorted to spurious innuendo, untruths and distortions not only on the agency's record but on ministers of the crown.

I say shame on the party that promised before the election to do politics differently. Some difference. In its usual way the Reform Party has resorted to American style smear campaigns. It just goes to show it is out of touch, out of mind and has nothing to offer Atlantic Canadians.

* * *

DECADE OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq, Lib.):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow Canada will welcome the start of the United Nations International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

The goal of the decade is to strengthen international co–operation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people around the world. Canada fully supports this goal and the theme of the decade: ''Indigenous People: Partnership in Action''.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is co–ordinating the federal government's domestic efforts to mark this decade. Preliminary discussions have been held with aboriginal groups to obtain their views. A national conference is being organized for early in 1995 to set out Canada's preliminary action plan for the decade.

We look forward to the development of this plan as well as the development by the United Nations of a comprehensive world program of action.

I encourage everyone to support the goals of this important decade.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues recently stood in the House and admitted that she was beaten by a man.

A member of the Reform Party tried to connect this to the tragic situation five years ago in Montreal at l'École polytechnique by saying: ''Let's not bring disrespect to that day by trying to use it for an inappropriate political agenda''.

What is more appropriate than women saying in the House and across the country that abuse against women and children is not acceptable and they are not going to stand for it?

What better testimony to these 14 young women than the courage of the women of Canada in the support of abolishment of abuse against women? What is more appropriate than members standing individually and collectively to abolish violence against women in this country?

TAXATION

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance keeps telling us that his government is ready to listen to Canadians.

Witnesses told the finance committee that Canadians are taxed out. Reform listened to this and recommended that there be no new taxes. The government members on the other hand recommended a billion dollar gasoline tax.

(1115)

I am hard pressed to remember anyone who came before the committee and said to tax gasoline.

Canada's business, academic and opinion leaders appeared before the committee and said that 3 per cent is not enough. They said that we have to stomp out this deficit. We have to kill it before the next recession.

Reform heard the message and recommended the budget be balanced in three years. The Liberal members continued to stick with the 3 per cent target.

A fair question is who was really listening to Canadians? It certainly was not the government members.

As the Minister of Finance finalizes his plans for the next budget I can only hope that he listens better than his Liberal friends.

* * *

STATUS OF THE ARTIST ACT

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on June 23, 1992 Bill C–7, an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations between artists and producers in Canada, received royal assent.

The government repeatedly promises to reform social programs and the economy to meet the needs of the new economy. The Liberals say they are committed to restructuring and encouraging stable growth in the areas of self–employment and small business. Yet when it comes to action to implement a model to empower the self–employed worker the government has done nothing.

The legislative and regulatory approach in the Status of the Artist Act is nothing less than a crucial step and the foundation for this new self–employment based economy. The approach to labour relations in this act has the approval of the 2.3 million workers in the Canadian Labour Congress.

On Wednesday, more than two years after the law was enacted, more than 500 cultural workers rallied in Toronto to push the government for action. When will this government show its commitment to these small business entrepreneurs and the people who elected it?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

DRAFT BILL ON QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during the debate on the Official Opposition's motion to recognize the legitimacy of the process initiated by the Government of Quebec to determine its political future, government members repeatedly referred to Quebec's initiative as illegitimate, illegal and undemocratic, while during Question Period, the Prime Minister referred to it as raising unnecessary complications.

How can the Prime Minister refer to the process initiated by the Government of Quebec as raising unnecessary complications, when it is essentially based on two components, a draft bill and a very comprehensive process providing for genuine consultations with the people of Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the opposition in Quebec City, there is also the government right here, the federal Liberal Party, as well as a steadily increasingly number of people in Quebec who realize that this is not a normal process, that the dice are loaded and that 13 out of 15 committee members will be appointed by the government.

We have a ''yes'' committee, financed by a government that is not financing any ''no'' committees. They do not need any committees or studies. Let them ask an honest question, no stratagems to confuse people but an honest question: Do you want to separate from Canada, yes or no? Not more than two lines, and the answer will be clear: Canada will win!

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister question the process initiated by the Government of Quebec, a process initiated by tabling a draft bill, when a similar procedure was used in 1980 by the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau which included the Prime Minister, a government that tabled a resolution in this House to initiate the unilateral patriation of the Canadian Constitution?

Why, when he was a member of that government, did the Prime Minister feel that tabling a resolution was acceptable, and why now, because the Government of Quebec is involved, does he no longer feel that this procedure is acceptable? Let him explain that, Mr. Speaker.

(1120)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are only asking them to be honest with the people. In 1980, all observers accused the government, and especially Mr. Morin, who was in charge of the step–by–step process, of hiding the question in a maze of 114 words.

The government's draft bill uses 1,645 words to try and hide the truth from Quebecers. The truth is, they are all separatists but do not want to be labelled as such. They are all for separation but say they support sovereignty. Be honest. Say what you are. Say you are separatists and want separation. The people will vote, and Canada will survive!

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely incredible to hear the Prime Minister criticize the Government of Quebec for setting out its plans for sovereignty in reasonable terms, when he and his colleagues keep saying in this House: Go ahead and tell us what your plans for separation are. Tell us what kind of Quebec you want. Tell us what kind of country you want. Today, however, the Prime Minister says: Make the question short. Do not bother to explain.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: If the Prime Minister takes this matter seriously, he will have to answer this question: How can the he question the legitimacy of the consultation process, when it is basically the same one used by the Bélanger–Campeau Commission that was set up by the previous Liberal government, a process in which the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs was a participant? It was all right for the Bélanger–Campeau Commission at the time, but not any more.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, turning up the volume does not make it a good question.

Mr. Speaker, when appointing the Bélanger–Campeau Commission, the leader of the government at the time consulted the opposition. Everyone was fairly represented. It was not 13 against 2.

Second, among the statements in the 1,645 words the draft bill contains, one says there will be an economic union with Canada. That is not up to Quebec to decide. Canada will decide. It says they will keep their Canadian citizenship. This is not up to the Government of Quebec to decide. The Parliament of Canada will decide. It says they will use Canadian currency. The Parliament of Canada will determine interest rates, not the Government of Quebec.

So in a bill like this one where all the decisions will be made elsewhere, people should at least have a say, before concluding that one can become independent and stay in Canada at the same time.

I am glad to see there has been some progress. This is the first time the word separation was used by the hon. member for Roberval. Bravo. At last the truth is out.

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): I too, Mr. Speaker, have a question for the Prime Minister.

The referendum debate has been initiated and the people of Quebec will soon be deciding their future democratically. In his autobiography, the Prime Minister says that he and others like him are betting on democracy, that they will set out to convince the people of Quebec to remain within Canada and win, and if they are not successful in their attempt, they will abide by the wishes of the people and go along with the separation.

Does the Prime Minister still stand by what he said in his biography and does he still recognize that the people of Quebec have the right to leave the Canadian federation if such is the democratic choice they make in a referendum?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I made myself quite clear: all we want is that a referendum be held as soon as possible, with a plain and clear question.

(1125)

We all know what is going to happen. That is why they are trying to dilute their proposal with 1,600 words, when the honest question to ask would be: ''Do you want to separate from Canada, yes or no?''

I do not even have to answer a hypothetical question. There is no doubt in my mind that Canada will win. Come on!

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is three questions behind answering mine.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Debien: Contrary to what the Prime Minister thinks, and considering that the consultation process gives the people of Quebec every chance to express their views not only on the content of the political proposal, but also on the referendum question, does the Prime Minister not recognize their right to decide themselves the wording of the question that they will have to answer in the referendum on their political future?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec federalists have the right to have a say in the wording of the question, so that it is plain and clear. The rest of Canada is also entitled to a question that is plain and clear.

Just think of the number of people who are presently refusing to participate because of the ambiguity, the trickiness; they are trying to trick people, they are using gimmicks. The Conseil du patronat, the Quebec chamber of commerce, the Quebec farmers' union, the Quebec manufacturers' association, and every federalist party in Quebec—and even Mario Dumont—do not want to participate because they do not want gimmicks, they want the truth, period.

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Finance committee report which was tabled Thursday contains a number of proposals and recommendations for possible tax increases, taxes on gasoline, on lottery winnings, on businesses and on cigarettes.

The deficit reduction surtax that is introduced would hit everyone who lives and breathes. Just to make good and sure that the report did not miss anybody the committee suggested going after dead people too by introducing an inheritance tax.

Will the Minister of Finance distance himself from this grab bag of potential taxation measures and commit to tabling a budget which does not increase taxation?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that I will not comment on individual suggestions. He also knows that the government's budget will come down when it presents the budget.

I would like to take this occasion to congratulate all members of the finance committee. They heard over 650 witnesses. I would like to also congratulate the witnesses who came forth and testified. I believe that the majority report will provide a very valuable contribution to the debate. An enormous amount of work went into it.

I would like to congratulate our members on our side of the House. At the same time I would like to compliment the members of the opposition and the third party who put a great deal of work into their efforts. I assure members I will look at each and every suggestion.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the minister's comments with regard to the process. In that Liberal majority report there is a very important item. There is an indication that we could potentially have a $1 billion tax grab by an increase on gasoline taxes.

One of the comments he raised as a challenge to the committee was when he said in determining which areas of the tax system should be scrutinized more closely, several principles have been adopted. Initiative should help make the economy more efficient. Initiative should improve the fairness of the system and broadening the tax base is preferable to rate increases.

Does the proposed gasoline tax satisfy any one of these three principles?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): He was a minister. That is why his questions often make sense, unlike the vast majority of his colleagues.

(1130)

I think what the committee attempted to do was really deal with the unfortunate fact that when a government makes cuts, as the member will know from his previous experience, those cuts do not show up immediately, there is a lag time which must be taken into account.

What was said in the report is that therefore certain tax actions may well be required. That is part of the balance and it is obviously the kind of thing the Minister of Finance and the government will have to take into account.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, one of those potential tax measures that may have to be taken in light of what the minister said is the deficit reduction surtax that could be used in an emergency contingency arrangement.

As Reformers we believe that if there is any kind of a contingency plan in place it should be for expenditure reduction, not for tax increases.

My question to the Minister of Finance is, having heard the anti–tax sentiment of a majority of the witnesses who appeared before the finance committee, can he support at this time increasing taxes in any way on every single Canadian before one dime is cut from the government's $1 billion boccie, incorporated infrastructure program as an example?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I understand, the members of the third party are going to be submitting their suggestions as to that whole segment of government spending that has not been dealt with yet in their report.

I hope when they do that they will deal first with the impact of those particular cuts. I also hope that in terms of both segments of their report they will deal with the timing as to when the cuts will take place so that it can be dealt with on a rational basis.

The member is nodding. I am sure they will do that and I look forward to receiving that report.

In terms of the infrastructure program, having gone across this country, having talked to mayors in municipalities across this country and to all the Canadians who went back to work and seeing the effect on productivity of the very important reports, that infrastructure program is an essential part of the Canadian recovery.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Several months ago, the Solicitor General asked the Security Intelligence Review Committee to look into the allegations involving Grant Bristow when he worked at CSIS. Mr. Bristow is accused, among other things, of creating the Heritage Front and of inciting its members to racist violence.

Does the Solicitor General promise to table the review committee's report on the Bristow affair with the Parliamentary Committee on National Security before we adjourn for the holiday season?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just received SIRC's report this morning. It is a very bulky report. I must review it and see what I can do about making it public in the light of the relevant legislation. I intend to make public as much of this report as possible, and I will make the necessary decisions as soon as possible.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Douglas Christie, a B.C. lawyer who defended members of the extreme right in 1989, has accused CSIS of inciting violence against Jews and of interfering in his clients' trials.

Can the Solicitor General tell us if the recent investigation by the review committee also dealt with Mr. Christie's accusations?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just received the report about an hour ago. I did not have time to review it. However, I think that SIRC knew about Mr. Christie's allegations and I look forward to reviewing this report because, as I just said, I intend to make public as much of it as possible.

[*English*]

Earlier this morning I received the report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee on the allegations involving the Heritage Front. It is a very comprehensive and bulky report. I have not had time to review it. I intend to do this as quickly as possible. Once I complete this review I will be able to make decisions about how much can be made public in the light of the relevant legislation.

It is my intention to make as much of this report public as possible because of the interest in its contents, as much as I can in the light of the legislation that deals with this matter.

(1135)

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it was announced about an hour ago that Mr. Schelew, vice–chair of the Immigration and Refugee Board, had chosen to resign rather than face a judicial inquiry into his conduct. Government counsel accepted his resignation and recommended to the judge that the inquiry be halted immediately, saying that no public interest would be served by pursuing this matter further.

Given the allegations of widespread irregularities in the IRB, why did the justice minister not recommend that the inquiry be expanded to include the entire operations of the IRB and what led to this investigation in the first place?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will understand that the inquiry was directed under a section of the citizenship and immigration act which defines the proper ambit of the inquiry.

Under that section a judge appointed for that purpose is directed to inquire only into the allegations with respect to a particular member of the board and is confined to making recommendations with respect to what should happen as a consequence of any findings. That is by statute. The terms of reference for the judge in question were dictated by statute and were provided accordingly.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Immigration and Refugee Board has lost its legitimacy and credibility. I ask the minister again, in light of what he just said, given that inquiry is done with, will he now order a new inquiry to continue to get to the bottom of the allegations of impropriety in the IRB? If not, why not?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is completely untrue. The legitimacy and the integrity of the board are not in question in these proceedings.

As to the broader question, this government has confidence in the process. In the final analysis it will be up to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to come to his own conclusion about the broader matter which has been raised here today.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the finance committee's report, the Liberal majority suggests that the Minister of Finance increase the tax burden on all Canadian taxpayers by levying new taxes, including a temporary surtax which alone could raise at least over a billion dollars for the federal treasury.

Can the Minister of Finance promise in this House to reject any proposal for new taxes or charges that would affect mainly the middle class, including this ridiculous idea of a surtax?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, I repeat that I promise to read and consider carefully the suggestions in the majority report. I also intend to read the minority reports from the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint–Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, why does the minister not immediately rule out these suggestions for new taxes and why does he not make a solemn commitment to immediately attack the real issues, namely family trusts, tax shelters, the $6 billion in unpaid taxes, waste and duplication? That is what people came to tell the finance committee. They did not come to say to raise taxes, to cut social programs further, to attack the unemployed, the poor, students and seniors. Had he been there, he would have understood right away.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that in our last budget, we closed a great many loopholes and I must say that we really began to act in many fields, even on the suggestions which the member just mentioned.

That being said, I read the Bloc's report carefully and perhaps I would like to ask a question myself, Mr. Speaker. I definitely noted that the Bloc picked up Richard Le Hir's suggestion about $3 billion in duplication and overlap. Am I to understand now that Richard Le Hir is the big economic thinker for the separatist movement in Canada?

* * *

(1140)

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday the Minister of Justice dismissed opposition from provincial justice ministers saying: ''We govern by what is right''. Reformers are getting calls from the police on the street saying that registration will not work.

If the minister will not listen, why is he consulting? Is his only justification for the registration of 10 million to 20 million firearms that he and the Liberal cabinet think it is right? Can he tell Canadians why he is ignoring such convincing and credible opposition to his proposals?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the first place the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has been asking for this measure for the last dozen years.

The other point may explain why the hon. member is receiving complaints. Last night I received a petition from a colleague of the hon. member in his party, a petition signed by people who oppose registration and other features. The petition decried government legislation that would ban rifles and shotguns, impose a $100 per gun registration fee and put limits on the amount of ammunition that will be available for sale. Those have nothing whatever to do with the proposals that we have put before this House. I would sign that petition.

I am here to say that people should be honest with the Canadian people about what these proposals are all about.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if this government would come clean and explain exactly what registration is all about and what it would accomplish, we would not have these difficulties.

The chief inspector and registrar of firearms in the state of Victoria in Australia recommended that its firearms registration be abolished after three years of trial in the 1980s because it did not control the criminal misuse and irresponsible use of firearms. If that were clearly communicated we would not have this problem.

Does the minister have measurable objectives and what will he do when his registration system fails to reduce violent crimes? Will he abolish it like Australia did, or will he ban even more guns and place more restrictions on law–abiding, responsible gun owners?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians want advice with respect to their health they consult doctors. When we want to know how to reduce the crime rate in this country we speak to the police. The police in Canada, not in Australia, have for a dozen years been asking this government for gun registration. I suggest we take the advice of the experts and put registration in place.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BOSNIA

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Prime Minister, but I will put it to the Deputy Prime Minister.

While the international community continues to drag its feet regarding the measures required to bring Bosnian Serbs to their senses, and now threatens to withdraw its peacekeepers, Canada does not seem to be making a significant contribution to the peace process. Yet, the Minister of National Defence clearly said that it was a shame that Canada was not part of the contact group, adding that he hoped the Prime Minister would raise this issue in Budapest.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us if the Prime Minister raised this issue in Budapest, and will she confirm that Canada is still not part of the contact group?

[*English*]

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during his visit to the CSE conference in Budapest, the Prime Minister had a number of bilateral meetings with leaders from many countries, including those of the contact group.

We have been assured that our views are being fully heard by the members of that particular group and that our input is valued. I think that goes some way to addressing the concerns that I outlined last week.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand from the minister's answer that Canada is still a powerless actor and is content to be a mere onlooker, at a time when negotiations are deadlocked? Is it not time for the Canadian government to propose concrete solutions to convince the Bosnian Serbs to accept a peace plan?

[*English*]

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, events of the last week have shown that the efforts to achieve peace in the former Yugoslavia have broadened beyond any five countries that are now in the contact group. A number of countries are involved. I think the statements made by the Prime Minister publicly and the representations made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister privately should assure Canadians that Canada's voice is being heard.

* * *

(1145)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has asked that an environmental assessment panel be appointed to conduct a public review in the Lac de Gras area of the Northwest Territories. The proposed review would focus on the environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with the BHP Minerals Canada Ltd. diamond mine.

Would the minister please tell the House when this panel will be appointed?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member for Brandon—Souris. I wish to inform the House that earlier today I announced the appointment of a four person independent panel to conduct a full public review of the BHP diamond mine proposal.

The panel will start its organizational work immediately. It will make sure that all interested groups, individuals, parties and organizations will be provided with the opportunity to participate. It will ensure that any decisions on the BHP proposal are only made after a full open and fair consultation and consideration of environmental and socioeconomic effects.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have stood in this House and repeatedly stated that after an intense and lengthy consultation process they have compiled a list of handguns, the primary use of which could only be in the form of criminal activity.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. How is it possible that the Shooting Federation of Canada that facilitates the rules and regulations of this type of firearm to be utilized in shooting competitions like the PanAm games and the Olympics was never consulted by anyone from this Liberal government over the practicality of banning these types of firearms?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the first place I met with representatives of that federation on more than one occasion. The most recent meeting was in my office here in Ottawa within the last six weeks.

Second, all of the international legitimate competitions using handguns were considered. The conclusion to which we came was not that the handguns proposed to be banned are primarily used in crime as the hon. member stated. We concluded that the handguns proposed to be banned are not used in legitimate competition. If they have no legitimate use then the logical question is: Why are they in the hands of Canadians?

Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when we telephoned the organization in question it said it was never consulted. It also suggested that because this particular gun is used by many people in the Olympics and in the PanAm games this puts the PanAm games in jeopardy because a full length of programs cannot be offered.

Could the minister comment on the validity of those statements?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to speak with the hon. member and tell him about the particulars of my meetings with the shooting federation.

The hon. member did not mention a particular handgun in the course of his question, but if he has a specific calibre or model of handgun in mind I would be happy to discuss it.

I can say there is a handgun which is specially registered. A .22–.32 calibre interchangeable barrel is used in international competition. We have already made it clear that firearm will be permissible because it is indeed used in that sort of competition.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. A few weeks after the Prime Minister's pompous economic mission to Asia, it is important to bring up the sad story of Tran Trieu Quan, a Canadian businessman held prisoner in Hanoi for over eight months without any charges being laid against him. This case could help us better understand the new attitude of a government that considers respect for human rights less important than trade relations.

(1150)

Are we to understand that if the Prime Minister took such a timid stand for human rights in Asia, it was because of his inability to protect the fundamental rights of this Canadian prisoner in Vietnam?

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the hon. member for raising this very importance issue. I want to assure him that the Canadian government has raised the issue on several occasions, not only with the Vietnamese government, with whom we have had further talks, but also with various organizations such as the United Nations.

I have noted his question and will get back to him as soon as possible, on this specific case.

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis–Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, seeing that the Canadian government is unable to resolve the Quan case and obtain guarantees for the safety of Canadian businesspeople, how can the Deputy Prime Minister pretend that business executives will accept such risks in their future trade relations with Asia?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade explained quite clearly, the Prime Minister himself raised the issue when he was in Vietnam and he is pursuing the matter.

That being said, it should be emphasized, as indeed we did before the Prime Minister's Asian tour, that I have personally reviewed every comment made by the Premier of Quebec when he was the host of the governor of a Chinese province and, each time, he adopted the same policy as the Government of Canada.

He stressed the issue intensely in private, but did not make public statements. The Premier of Quebec never made any public statement on human rights in China.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Justice.

The Minister of Justice has stated that any new firearms legislation will apply equally to all Canadians. On the other hand, the Minister of Justice and the government have also made assurances that special gun control provisions will apply to Indians living in self–governed areas of Canada.

Will the Minister of Justice today clear the air and tell this House if the government indeed is considering special firearms provisions for Canadian Indians?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can say in response that we emphasized in the material tabled last week that there will be principles which govern firearms in Canada. They will be universal, invariable and will apply to all. We also emphasized that in their application we shall demonstrate a flexibility which reflects the unique circumstances in various regions of this country, including aboriginal communities where for example some people hunt for sustenance.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, just as background, Bill C–34 permits self–governing bands in the Yukon to control or prohibit the possession and use of firearms. On October 4 the hon. Minister of Justice did say he would consider special legislation and will show respect to the Indian nations. Canadians are confused about the justification of statements like this when they consider themselves as responsible firearm owners as anyone else in the country.

Would the minister clarify the issue today and tell Canadians if there will in fact be equality in the application of the new firearms legislation, or will special legislation regarding the use of firearms be extended to Canadian Indians in Canada?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the principles will be universal and invariable.

I visited the Northwest Territories to speak to the residents about firearms. I visited a remote community and was told that there are eight official languages in that territory, 75 small communities, some of them hours apart. It became clear to me, as it should be to all of us, that the universal principles in their application to such communities must be flexible. We are not proposing special legislation but flexibility in the application of universal principles to the reality of local circumstances.

* * *

(1155)

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Yesterday Canadians were distressed by reports in the Toronto *Sun* that the department of immigration is browsing for technology to produce the new permanent resident's card in the United States. Say it ain't so. C'est incroyable. Surely it cannot be true that our hon. minister has become a cross–border shopper.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rush to reassure the hon. member that it ain't so. Indeed the minister is not only not cross–border shopping, he has been browsing and shopping where he should, in Canada.

Two contracts have already been issued to Canadian companies. The first was awarded to Datacard Canada Inc. of Mississauga in the amount of $3,209,714 over a three year period. The other was awarded to Security Card Systems Inc. of Markham, Ontario in the amount of $1,608,500 over a three year period. I thank the hon. member for the chance to clear up this base canard.

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[*Translation*]

GLIDING SCHOOL

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

In September, cadet staff asked for a feasibility study on moving the Saint–Honoré gliding school in the Saguenay region to Saint–Jean. At a meeting on Wednesday, cadet leadership confirmed to me and to the safeguard committee that the requested study had been completed and that it could be sent to us if permission was given.

Since a decision on this move must be made in the next few days, can the minister declare an appropriate moratorium, ask the department to provide a second assessment of the two sites, especially with respect to safety, from the Department of Transport so that the best possible decision can be made, and have the feasibility study sent to us?

[*English*]

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the specific case the hon. member has outlined this morning. I will certainly get him the details.

The hon. member should know that as a result of the white paper, with the reduction of the reserves from 29,000 to 23,000 there will be some major changes as to how the reserves work in Canada. This may affect a number of communities across the country.

No decisions have been taken. We are working on a plan of action to be fair to the cadet movement which we want to enhance and also to the reserves in general. Certainly we believe decisions that are taken must make operational sense.

I will get an answer for the hon. member and will communicate with him directly.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, domestic violence is a serious problem in need of remedy, but increased gun control is not the answer. Less than half of all spousal homicides are committed with guns, whether they are registered or not. Domestic violence has been studied for over 20 years. It has been studied to death and there has been no action.

My question is for the justice minister. What specific plan does he have to address the root causes of domestic violence other than ineffective gun registration?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every six days a woman is shot to death in this country. Seventy–five per cent of the female victims of homicide are killed in their home by somebody they know. By a margin of two to one the weapon of choice for such murders is a firearm. In 80 per cent of those cases that firearm is a rifle or shotgun legally owned. I cannot accept the premise of this question that gun control does not at least in part address the tragedy of domestic violence.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice on the eve of International Human Rights Day.

(1200)

For over eight years, since March 1986, a series of justice ministers have stood in the House and solemnly affirmed their deep commitment to amend the human rights act to end discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In view of the fact that this minister has promised repeatedly to table this amendment by the end of the year, this month, how does he explain to lesbians and gay men that he may join previous Conservative ministers in breaking this promise and giving in to the Neanderthal McTeague 46 in his own caucus.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I regret the hon. member's reference to the Liberal caucus. The commitment of the government to the implementation of that amendment is unquestioned.

Just the other day in the House I had the opportunity to reaffirm it. The Prime Minister, the deputy Prime Minister and this party stand firm with that commitment.

As I also said the other day, the question of timing is not the one that should be central. The question is one of principle and on that we are firm.

* * *

BAUSCH AND LOMB

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recent newspaper articles state that the company Bausch and Lomb has been misleading buyers of contact lenses. It appears that the company's short, medium and long term use contact lenses sell for $10 for the short term to $200 for the long term. The problem is they are all the same contact lens.

What can the Minister of Industry do to protect consumers against such deceptive marketing practices?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first may I assure the member that I am very concerned with the published reports that were in the newspaper this week.

I have been advised that the Ontario College of Opticians is ensuring that their customers are aware of this. It is important that opticians make sure their customers see clearly the difference between these types of lenses and their cost.

The bureau of competition policy, which administers the laws with respect to misleading advertising, dealt with over 10,000 complaints of various sorts last year. As yet it has not received a complaint concerning this matter. They are very attentive to the situation and will deal with it accordingly.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 19 petitions.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 53rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding amendments to the standing orders.

[*Translation*]

I also have the honour to table the 54th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on how to promote more direct involvement by citizens. This report is a follow–up to the order of reference tabled in this House on February 7, 1994.

[*English*]

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I rose during the item of presentation of Private Members' Bills. I have a bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to revert to presentation of Private Members' Bills?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I have given notice to the table that I seek to introduce a bill that would repeal the provisions of the Criminal Code in section 43.

(1205)

The Deputy Speaker: If members will be kind enough to give us a moment, we will get the correct forms.

* * *

PETITIONS

SERIAL KILLER BOARD GAME

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions I wish to table this morning. The first one is a petition signed by a group of Canadians asking that the serial killer board game be banned.

With this new tabling today, the total number of petitioners is now 118,756.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition signed by 861 people who would like to state their disagreement with any provision to remove portions of the Criminal Code that would permit assisted suicide.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions from Canadians asking that Canada not consider amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions urging Canadians to set aside their differences and to work toward the betterment of the economy and the future of all Canadians.

ABORTION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions asking that abortions not be permitted in Canada. These are Canadians living in the province of Nova Scotia.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is from residents also living in Cape Breton. These Canadians ask that Parliament not permit the aiding and abetting of suicide or any other form of euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): My final petition, Mr. Speaker, is also from people in Sydney, Nova Scotia. They do not wish to see the phrase sexual orientation included in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

[*Translation*]

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling three petitions on behalf of residents in the riding of Carleton—Gloucester.

[*English*]

The first petition calls for Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be retained without changes and enforced in order that Parliament not sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last petition, which was circulated by Mrs. Rita Curley and others, calls for Parliament 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.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have a large number of petitions from the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta.

The petitioners note that tobacco products are clearly linked to many forms of cancer, heart disease, stroke, emphysema, chronic bronchitis and many other illnesses; that the use of tobacco products is responsible for the premature death of some 38,000 Canadians annually, and therefore that tobacco can rightly be termed a hazardous product.

The petitioners call on Parliament to remove the exemption for tobacco under the Hazardous Products Act.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions to present this afternoon. The first petition asks that the protection enjoyed by born human beings be extended to unborn human beings.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with assisted suicide.

(1210)

The petitioners ask that the prohibition of assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition has to do with the witness protection act. The petitioners pray that Parliament enact Bill C–206 at the earliest opportunity to provide the statutory foundation for a national witness relocation and protection program.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition deals with not allowing the amending of the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase of sexual orientation.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, finally, petitioners request that Parliament refuse to accept the anti–firearms proposal of the Minister of Justice and insist that he bring forward legislation to convict and punish criminals rather than persecute the innocent.

The last petition represents a number of constituencies, including some petitioners from Okanagan Centre. The other four petitions are all from constituents of Okanagan Centre.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36. I have the honour and privilege to table three petitions duly certified by the clerk of petitions and signed by constituents of Brandon—Souris.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way 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.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certain petitioners of Brandon—Souris pray that Parliament enact legislation providing for a referendum of the people to accept or reject two official languages, English and French, for the government and the people of Canada.

SERVICE CLUBS

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the signatories of the third petition recognize that with cutbacks to services to communities, families and individuals in order to balance budgets, more than ever there is a need for service clubs in all communities.

In recent years memberships of service clubs throughout the country have been declining. In these times of monetary restraint service clubs would find it easier to recruit new members if the financial factor could be alleviated.

The Brandon—Souris petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to amend the Income Tax Act, allowing the members to deduct their membership dues from their taxable income in the same manner as union and professional dues.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition this morning asking Parliament to act quickly to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and to adopt all necessary measures to recognize the full equality of same sex relationships in federal law. It has my support.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to present a petition with over 1,000 signatures from my constituents who pray 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 homosexuality.

I concur with the petition.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present five petitions dealing with the subject of doctor assisted suicide.

The petitioners are opposed to any legislation that would permit doctor assisted suicide because it demeans the value of human life.

Therefore the petitioners call on Parliament not to enact any legislation that would allow doctor assisted suicide.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which is signed by petitioners from my constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway including the Seton Villa seniors residence as well as residents of Port Moody—Coquitlam and a number of other constituencies.

The petition calls on Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating illnesses the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice, subject to strict safeguards to prevent abuse and to ensure that the decision is free, informed, competent and voluntary.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of citizens of Winnipeg North Centre and elsewhere in Winnipeg I wish to present the following petition.

We the undersigned citizens of Canada draw the attention of the House to the following—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member will know that we do not encourage the reading of petitions. Please give a summary of it rather than read the wording.

(1215)

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, it deals with the decriminalization of assisted suicide or legalizing euthanasia and asks that Parliament continue to reject euthanasia and physician assisted suicide in Canada.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three sets of petitions to present.

The first one deals with the Young Offenders Act. The 44 petitioners ask that Parliament review and revise our laws concerning young offenders by empowering the courts to prosecute and punish young law breakers who are terrorizing society.

SPOUSAL COMPENSATION

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from 33 petitioners. It is with regard to spouses at home and is in response to the private member's bill of my colleague from Mississauga South which asks that we compensate spouses working in the home and caring for preschool children.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): The third petition has 57 signatures and is presented by Mr. Norman of Nepean. It is on assisted suicide.

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from residents of Halifax West. They request that Parliament not amend the human rights legislation to include the phrase sexual orientation.

The Deputy Speaker: We will now revert to Private Member's Bills for which unanimous consent was given earlier.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–296 , an act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank members of the House for their consent to introduce the bill at this time.

The purpose of the bill is to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code allowing corporal punishment of children by parents and teachers.

Condoning corporal punishment can lead to physical and psychological injury and death of children, contributes to violence in society, and is contrary to both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Section 43 allows punishment causing bruising and contusions. It allows children to be struck with belts and other objects. It is the relic of a bygone age and has no place in a democratic society that respects and values children.

Finally I would urge the section be repealed as part of the recodification of the general part of the Criminal Code. Several European countries have ended the legal approval of corporal punishment. I urge our government to uphold the rights of children and repeal this harmful and discriminatory section of the Criminal Code of Canada.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all the questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA GRAIN ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C–51, an act to amend the Canada Grain Act and respecting certain regulations made pursuant to that act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to speak to third reading of Bill C–51, the Canada Grain Act amendments. At the same time I express to the minister of agriculture my continuing support for the Canadian Wheat Board. I point out to him, as I know he is aware, the results of the recent wheat board advisory committee elections.

The minister must know by now that wheat board supporters won 10 of 11 seats, or perhaps I should say the supporters of dual marketing lost all but 1 of 11 seats up for election. As far as farmers and grain marketing are concerned it would appear that farmers think the Canadian Wheat Board is doing a fine job of marketing western grain and want it to continue doing a successful job.

(1220)

It is incumbent upon the government to accept the wishes of the western farmer as expressed by this vote, which was virtually a referendum on the issue of the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, and begin issuing statements in support of the board.

This week in the House of Commons the minister of agriculture was given the opportunity to congratulate the elected members of the advisory board and to declare his personal support for the work of the board. Instead, he chose to repeat the line that he must continue consulting with farmers.

Let me quote the minister from the December 7 edition of *Hansard*, as reported at page 8784. He said:

> I do not think it would be fair to say that the vote is the be all and the end all. I do not think it would be fair to say it is the absolute last and ultimate word. It is one very important piece of evidence which is clearly supportive of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I appreciate the acknowledgement of the evidence in front of the minister, but I believe the minister must accept the wishes put before him. Therefore I say the consultation must now be concluded. Farmers have had the best opportunity they will ever have to declare support for the board and they have taken it. They support the board. They have demonstrated they support the board. The minister must not now only acknowledge it; he must act on it.

Today, however, we must also deal with the government's amendments to the Canada Grain Act. I express my support for the act and the amendments before us today, although there are additional amendments that could be made to further strengthen the act and how it applies to farmers.

Basically the latest changes in the grain act were proposed in response to changing industry conditions and as a result of producer group recommendations. They also reflect the findings of the federal government's 1992–93 regulatory review that supported deregulation and a more market responsive grain industry, a review I have taken some issue with.

Primary producers are becoming increasingly vulnerable to exploitation by various trading interests as protective legislation is systematically deregulated. Deregulation represents the transfer of power from the public to the private sector. A loss of public power means a loss of sovereignty, a loss of opportunity for redress when something goes wrong. The more deregulated the industry the more vulnerable we become and therefore ironically the more regulated we need to be. What a situation.

As members are aware the Canada Grain Act is administered by a special operating agency, the Canadian Grain Commission. Its services are provided to clients on a cost recovery basis. It is responsible for establishing and maintaining grain quality and for regulating the grain handling system.

The bill before us is designed to deregulate elevator operation charges, provide more flexibility to producers in moving their grain, and tighten licensing and liability provisions. It gives grain producers the primary responsibility for securing payment for their grain shipments from elevator operators and grain dealers licensed by the commission. It also imposes greater responsibility on licensees of the commission for making such payments.

According to some who have studied the bill, it attempts to find a balance between promoting competitiveness and at the same time maintaining quality. On the one hand, in attempting to streamline the inspection process the amendments reduce the regulatory power of the grain commission. On the other hand, the grain commission is able to prescribe more activities in its

role of protecting producers and grain quality. The grains industry in Canada has a long and arduous history.

The bill in front of us is the latest in a long list of amendments that have come before parliamentarians over the years in many different attempts to improve the movement and storage of grain.

For the record it is important for us to take a look at that history. Members of the House may find it interesting to note that the need for legislation was first recognized by a private member of the House and first presented as a private member's bill in 1898. Farmers represented a great power in the House of Commons at that time. When the private elevator companies were accused of cheating in weighing, grading and deducting for weed seeds, discriminating as to whose grain they accepted and of price fixing, it did not take long for Parliament to act.

(1225)

A royal commission was appointed in 1900. Later that year, on the eve of a general election, Sir Wilfrid Laurier's government enacted a majority of the commission's recommendations. The 1900 Manitoba Grain Act established a grain commission to license elevators, to bond elevator agents and grain buyers, to approve handling tariffs, to inspect records and to settle disputes.

Is it not interesting that the need to regulate came at a time when the grain trade was dominated by competition from many grain companies growing like crazy and operating in a completely unregulated marketplace?

Deregulation is a direction the previous Tory government wanted us to take and it seems to be the direction the current government wants to continue. However it is a direction fraught with danger and all of us must proceed with a great deal of care.

The first amendments to the Manitoba Grain Act came in 1902 in response not only to a good crop but to apparent blackmail from the railways that were not supplying grain cars to the elevators for the movement of grain.

Another royal commission was called in 1906 in response to allegations against the grain companies. This commission verified the allegations and recommended 50 additional amendments to the act. These amendments include making elevator companies liable for damages for weight frauds, requiring samples of all bins to prevent grading fraud, paying farmers for the commercial value of screenings, and authorizing the grain commissioner to order equitable distribution of cars and to dismiss agents for fraudulent practices.

Then again in 1908 Parliament gave the grain commission full control of the cleaning, binning and shipping of grain from the terminals and the power to inspect terminal records and receipts.

The point of all this is that in the unfettered marketplace of the past farmers were being exploited or taken advantage of every time they turned around. If there is anything to be learned from our history, it is that farmers standing together with the help of their elected officials ensured that they received better and fairer treatment from the corporations then dominating the marketplace.

In continuing to look at our history we see that the farmers' need to take on the elevator companies and the railroads did not end in 1908. There were more amendments in 1912 and again in 1919 after the war when complaints over the handling and purchasing of grain again resurfaced.

Another royal commission was established in 1921 because the complaints against the corporation persisted. More changes were made and finally in 1930 things stabilized. The Canada Grain Act continues to be the basis of Canada's reputation in the world wheat market as a supplier of reliable, clean and consistently graded grain.

However, the political and economic struggle over grains did not end with the Canada Grain Act. The same forces which worked for greater farmer control in handling, storage and transportation also worked for control and fairness in marketing. The Prairie Co–Operative Pools were created in the 1920s and, finally, in 1949 the Canadian Wheat Board was formalized with monopoly control over marketing of western wheat, oats and barley.

Whatever changes are considered to the way in which grain is treated, it is very important to review history and take only those steps that acknowledge the lessons learned along the way.

Today in agriculture there are numerous changes taking place not only within Canada but around the world. The government we are facing seems to be pushing farmers again into a world of a more market oriented privatized industry where the corporations dominate and the farmers must compete not only against other countries but against themselves to participate in the marketplace.

In our fights to maintain a vision of a strong agricultural community with populated and productive rural areas, we find ourselves having to give up those things which make us strong.

(1230)

The Crow benefit is under attack. The Canadian Wheat Board is under attack and certain protections offered by the Canadian Grain Commission are being discussed.

Just as in 1898 the farmers of Canada and the communities they support today need the support of the Parliament of Canada to ensure they are, each and every one, treated fairly in the marketplace.

There is a tremendous opportunity in the world today both for the export of bulk quality Canadian grain and in the process or value added sector. Canadian producers have to remain in the game through whatever tough times we have to face in order to be here when those opportunities come knocking at our door.

I urge the minister of agriculture to ensure Canadian farmers remain in the game. Give us the opportunities we need to stay on the farm, to reap the rewards of the opportunities coming our way in the future. Give us the opportunity to continue to ship to port under the terms of the Crow benefit. Give us the opportunity to continue marketing our grain under enhanced, not reduced, powers of the Canadian Wheat Board and give us the quality protection we need under the terms of the Canada Grain Act to ensure our reputation in the world marketplace is protected.

I believe the amendments put forward before us today in Bill C–51 allow us to provide some of the protections that are needed. That is why I will support the bill at third reading. I want to ensure the direction the government is taking in agriculture is changed to ensure that each of the farmers, each of the producers can continue to do the work they want to do for their families and their communities. I urge the government to take a strong look at our history and the value of the product coming off the farm to the future of our country.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I felt I had to respond to the hon. member who has just spoken. My response is with regard to the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee elections. I would like to talk briefly about the tradition of these elections, what has happened in the past, what the real issue was in the election this time and about some new abuses that came into the voting this time.

The tradition of the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee elections is that there is a very low turn out at the elections, this year under 40 per cent. The reason is that this advisory committee really has no power whatsoever in terms of the operations of the wheat board. It has no power so people tend to stay away when it comes time to vote.

These elections in the past have been won in the garbage cans of post offices. There is no personal identification involved in the voting in these elections. There was not in the past, I am not sure about this last election. People who support a particular position strongly have gone to the garbage cans and picked out numerous ballots and mailed in a good number of ballots. I have seen this happen. I have talked to others who have seen it happen and have been involved in it. That is the type of process that has taken place in the voting in the past. To my knowledge this has not been taken out this time, but I cannot say that for a fact.

There were some new abuses added to the election process this time. This is very important to point out. The board of commissioners, the commissioners who are government appointed, not elected, is supposed to oversee the election process. Therefore it plays a role very similar to Elections Canada in a federal election.

In spite of that fact these same commissioners including the chief commissioner, Lorne Hehn, were out campaigning for those who were in favour of maintaining the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly—

Mr. Penson: Trying to protect his $175,000 a year job.

Mr. Benoit: Out trying to protect his job.

We will see any monopoly and people involved in a monopoly out to try to protect their job and their personal interest. That is understandable except when this body is the body in charge of the administration of the election.

This should never have been allowed to happen. It was very improper behaviour on the part of those commissioners and I believe they should do what is right and step down because of that.

(1235)

This kind of abuse is totally unacceptable in any kind of election, whether it is an important election or not. What this has shown is that there is a great concern on the part of these commissioners and those who supported maintaining the wheat board monopoly that things would not go their way. I think this is the reason that the commissioners, against all past tradition, have decided to get involved this time.

Because of this involvement the issue changed from the issue of dual marketing versus monopoly, which was never the issue in this election. The real issue because of the way this was presented by the commissioners and others was. Do you want the wheat board or not? All of the candidates involved in this advisory committee election want the wheat board. To my knowledge they all support the wheat board. Yet that was the way the issue was presented by the commissioners and by others and through the farm media.

This election was to determine whether farmers wanted the wheat board or not, except all of the candidates running wanted the wheat board. I believe probably 70 per cent to 80 per cent of farmers want the wheat board maintained.

That is not the issue that is important here with regard to the wheat board. The important issue is whether the wheat board should be run by an elected board of directors or by government appointment. That is the key issue, should farmers get some control over their organization, the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers pay the total operating cost of the wheat board. The board supposedly exists for farmers. Why on earth will this

government and others not allow them to control their organization?

The advisory committee has no power and therefore is pretty much unimportant in this whole process.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the hon. member's speech before. I did not hear a question in what he put. However, I do have a couple of comments to make in response to the hon. member for Vegreville.

I could not help but think as he was speaking today and as I have heard him say in this House recently since the advisory board elections were completed that when you lose on substance you appeal on the basis of process.

In this case the Canadian Wheat Board advisory elections, at least in my part of the country where I had the great opportunity to talk not only to the candidates running but to many of the farmers responding, were very much discussed on the basis of support for the monopoly powers and enhanced powers of the Canadian Wheat Board or dual marketing.

Again, even in my own area the debate on the farm and in the coffee shops was not concerning itself with process but on substance. In the end when the ballots were counted the substance of the debate I think was quite clearly heard in that those who support the monopoly and enhanced powers of the Canadian Wheat Board were successful.

The member for Vegreville indicated that in some cases less than 40 per cent of farmers voted. Certainly this is not a low number in terms of wheat board elections. This is a very good turnout in terms of the history of the Canadian Wheat Board advisory elections.

I believe that every farmer had the opportunity to express an opinion and certainly those who did not quite often, as we know in politics, represent those who are satisfied. Only when those who are disgruntled vote in large numbers do we recognize the protest in their voices.

A turnout of 40 per cent in which the majority supported the Canadian Wheat Board indicates that those who did not vote would also likely support the wheat board.

I was concerned that the member for Vegreville indicated that he recognized improprieties in the voting. I am sure that on behalf of the minister of agriculture and all Canadians I would ask the member to name those he knows were involved in the improprieties and ensure that the elections are conducted fair and square and that those who are aware of the improprieties and problems that may exist within the system bring them forward to those who can act on them.

(1240)

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, first of all, concerning the 40 per cent, I only referred to that to show that it is not regarded as a valid body that is being elected.

Does the hon. member feel that it is all right for the commissioners who are responsible to oversee the election, as Elections Canada is in a federal election, to actively campaign on behalf of one side in this election? It twisted the issue from an issue of dual marketing versus single desk marketing. They did it from their massive coverage in farm papers and local papers by twisting it instead to an issue of if you let the monopoly break the board will disappear, it will be destroyed.

I would like to ask the member if he feels it is all right that the commissioners campaigned in that way.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, the message that the Canadian Wheat Board commissioners brought forward is the message that I was also discussing in my constituency and so were the candidates who were running for the advisory committee.

I did not see the Canadian Wheat Board commissioners bringing forward any new information to the debate.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak on Bill C–51, the amendments to the Canada Grain Act.

This bill covers also the Canadian Grain Commission. It is designed to reduce the Canadian Grain Commission's responsibility in a couple of areas. Today I would like to focus my attention on government control over the whole grain industry, including that by the Canadian Grain Commission.

We have one of the most controlled industries in the world, the grain industry. No other industry I know of has the level of government control this industry has. As an active farmer, I believe this is not in our best interest. I am going to be pointing out some of the reasons for that later.

We also have a body, the Canadian Grain Commission, heavily controlled by the federal government but does not have the funding from the federal government. In other words, 92 per cent of the budget of the Canadian Grain Commission comes from producers. Only 8 per cent comes from the federal government, yet it wants to maintain in effect exclusive control. I do not think that is a good thing. We also have the same thing with the Canadian Wheat Board where it is a producer funded body and yet the Canadian government maintains control and I believe not in our best interest.

I understand the need to maintain standards. Canada is one of the most reliable exporters of grain. It has a very high quality and we have maintained a very good standard, one that could easily be done by having the Canadian Grain Commission have exclusive control through an elected board of directors rather than appointed as they are now by the federal government.

If producers are paying the bill they should have control. They should have an elected board of officers. This could easily accomplish the same goals of trying to maintain very good standards in order to maintain our customers abroad.

This bill reduces the responsibility of the Canadian Grain Commission in a couple of areas. Setting upper limits on tariffs is one area where it is going to be backing off on controls. The other is reduced payment of losses to the level of the bond of the Canadian Grain Commission on the companies that are required to post a bond.

The Canadian Grain Commission by maintaining this system of bonds must maintain and monitor that these bonds are actually effective. When a grain company is required to post a bond, if it fails the Canadian Grain Commission's liability is only to the level of the bond.

I have information from some industry people that grain dealers who post a bond only have to get back to that level at the end of every month. It is not uncommon for smaller under capitalized grain dealers to be four or more times over exposed to their bond level.

(1245)

What message are we sending out to producers? That these people have a bond which may be up to four times less than what is really required? We should be sending a message of buyer beware. They should check out these companies and see what their reliability is and not give a false sense of security to producers when they are dealing with companies by believing that there is a bond in place to take care of the problems should the company fail.

In the past there have been cases where companies have failed and there has been heavy exposure by the taxpayer. That is not in our interests either. We need a situation whereby producers deal with companies based on their merit and historical performance. Let them know they have to check out these bonds. It does not have to be done by the Canadian Grain Commission. A false sense of security is being put in place.

My main concern is that the regulation of our whole grain industry is far too high. I talked about the Canadian Grain Commission but it also applies to the Canadian Wheat Board. The previous speaker talked about the Canadian Wheat Board and how important it is. I agree. We are also calling for a democratic election to the board of the directors of the wheat board rather than appointments to the board. This would bring responsibility back to this body which is very badly needed.

In this heavily controlled industry, including the Canadian Wheat Board, a farmer who is producing his own wheat is required to establish a mill on his farm to grind it into flour. The farmer has to buy his own wheat back through the Canadian Wheat Board and apply for permits to do that. This is ludicrous in a time when people are looking for opportunities to expand their business. This is the kind of heavy handed tactic we would see in Russia.

The Western Grain Transportation Act is another area of overregulation in the industry. It is a heavy government hand where it is not required. Grain is being shipped to Thunder Bay, back to Regina and then south across into the United States. It is called backtracking. It costs the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to continue this practice just to qualify for the Crow benefit. It is absolute nonsense. We would have expected this type of thing in Russia 10 years ago.

These are the kinds of controls we see on the Canadian grain industry. As a grain farmer I know others believe this is very much a business where we can compete very well by government getting out of our faces and letting us get on with our job. We will find the markets. We will find the most effective way of getting it there at the lowest cost.

As long as we have a heavily regulated industry like we have in the three areas I can think of offhand, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian Wheat Board, both of which by the way are undemocratic, and the western grain transportation authority, it shows that we have some serious problems. In fact we do not even comply with the new World Trade Organization regulations. There is a better system outside of our country than there is internally. Things have to be resolved.

I want to take a moment to talk about the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee and the recent elections. The member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake talked about how this was a very important body. That is not how it is regarded in my constituency nor is it generally throughout the industry.

The Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee is just that. It is an advisory committee. It has absolutely no authority and no power. In the industry it is really seen as a very minor player in the whole scheme of things. It is seen as a public relations exercise for the Canadian Wheat Board. If the government put as much stock in the idea of having elections for the Canadian Wheat Board directors as it does for the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee then we would be getting somewhere.

We have to apply the same principle. How can there be an elected advisory committee and not an elected board of directors of the wheat board? I think some of the reason is that the Canadian Wheat Board commissioners do not want to open up

the books, which is something that should be required. Let producers see what is happening in the Canadian Wheat Board, see if there are any inefficiencies taking place or any areas where we can make some changes.

(1250)

Producers do not want to get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. What I have heard from many constituents is that they want to open up the board and have it elected, effective and accountable. That is the most important thing.

When members talk about how important this election was to the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee, that is certainly not what I am hearing throughout the country. Less than 40 per cent of farmers voted in this election. It was actually one of the higher ones, but generally it is not regarded as an effective board. People just take it as a joke and that is the reason we are not getting good turnouts. If we had an election for Canadian Wheat Board commissioners themselves I think we would see a very high turnout.

I will close by saying that with this heavily regulated grain industry in Canada we have to ask the question: Who is asking for this? It is certainly not the farmers I am listening to. People are saying to open up the process. These producers want to do more than grow grain. They want to have more control in saying how this grain is marketed and transported. They do not want a regulated industry. They want deregulation.

I believe that Canada and Russia passed in the night about two or three years ago. At least Russia is going in the right direction. It is trying to deregulate its industry while we are still going in the opposite direction. I encourage the government to open up the process or at least start by making these institutions democratic. That is the very least we can do.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, a recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred until 6.30 p.m. Monday, December 12.

The Government Whip on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to defer that vote from Monday at 6.30 p.m. until Tuesday at 5.30 p.m.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement with the whip's proposal?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.) moved that Bill C–56, an Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, today we begin the last stage of the debate on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. This debate has now been going on for ten years, a decade, and we are finally at its conclusion.

During this decade, several eminent persons were involved in the debate on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, including the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Jean Charest, and the former Minister of the Environment, Lucien Bouchard.

[*English*]

I would like to do a thumbnail sketch of how we got from where we were in 1984 to where we are in 1994 on environmental assessment.

(1255)

Ten years ago the federal government of the day introduced guidelines to be followed in the environmental assessment of all projects which in one way or another involved the Government of Canada. The intention of those guidelines was undoubtedly good, but the result was chaos.

The guidelines were vague and subjective. On the one hand they were incredibly complicated and on the other hand they were incomplete. The result unfortunately was arbitrary and haphazard decision making. That led to over 40 significant court challenges, probably the most famous of which would be characterized as the Rafferty–Alameda and the Oldman dam decisions.

Business people were frustrated because they could not get a straight answer on whether their projects were environmentally acceptable or not. Environmentalists were frustrated because the cause of protecting the environment was lost under the weight of hundreds of thousands of pages of legal documents.

[*Translation*]

The federal and provincial governments were bogged down in legal battles on obscure points of interpretation. The people of Canada felt excluded from the environmental assessment process because, as individuals, they did not have the millions needed to become involved in such battles, even if these fights had a direct impact on their daily life, their immediate environment and their economic prosperity.

[*English*]

All political parties in Parliament soon realized the need for a law clearly defining what constitutes federal responsibility in environmental assessment. After a number of years beginning with the then Minister of the Environment, Mr. Tom McMillan, through to Minister Bouchard through to Mr. Charest, Parliament passed that law with the support of every single party. Unfortunately, once the law passed for a number of reasons it sat on the shelf and was never actually brought into force by the previous government.

During the last election, the Prime Minister promised that if elected a Liberal government would proclaim the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. It would then introduce amendments to simplify, open up and strengthen federal environmental assessments.

Two months ago I was pleased to announce in this House that we would keep the Prime Minister's red book promise and proclaim the act. At the same time I was happy to introduce amendments to make the act fairer, more open, more straightforward and indeed to make the decision making more public.

With the passage of Bill C–56 the government will keep its red book promise. With the passage of this legislation Parliament, we the parliamentarians of Canada, will put our country at the forefront of nations in the world in approaching the extremely important issue of environmental assessment.

As our Prime Minister leaves for Miami today for the hemispheric summit, one of the issues that underpins economic development around the world is the necessity for open, transparent and public environmental assessment. Certainly this legislation will indeed underline Canada's pre–eminent position as a country that respects the open public and transparent process before projects are begun.

Environmental assessment must be a powerful tool for the future in which economic health, environmental health and human health are integrated. Indeed, that is one of the functions of the summit.

With that understanding in mind my colleagues and I have spent the last year listening carefully to environmentalists, academics, community representatives, business, labour and other levels of government and indeed most important, individual Canadians. We want to make sure the amendments we are proposing will advance the cause of sustainable development in the best possible sense. There are three simple but key amendments.

First, the federal government is implementing the principle of one project, one assessment for federal endeavours. We do not want a complicated process where there is a big assessment at the planning stage of a project, a second assessment at the implementation stage and then another assessment every time somebody decides to make a change. What is more, we do not want a whole group of federal departments and agencies conducting individual assessments on the same project. We want environmental assessments to be tough and fair. One comprehensive assessment of a project serves everyone's interest much better than several half–baked separate assessments.

(1300)

[*Translation*]

Secondly, this bill guarantees the general public the right to participate in major environmental assessments by providing funding for their participation. This idea of involving the public was first proposed in 1987 by the former Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Lucien Bouchard, but was set aside in the bill passed in 1992.

We always believed that it was a mistake to set the issue of popular financing aside. Today, we are pleased to be able to repair this deficiency in the legislation. It is all very well to say that everyone has a right to participate, but we must ensure that they have the resources required to really be able to do so.

[*English*]

It is one thing to say that people have a say. It is another thing to give them the tools to exercise that right.

[*Translation*]

This amendment entrenches the public's right to really participate. It is the most basic common sense that those who have to live with a project have their say.

[*English*]

Third, Bill C–56 will take away the power of any individual cabinet minister to ignore or overrule environmental assessments produced by an independent panel.

Recommendations of an individual panel can only be modified by a decision of the entire cabinet. Any changes to an independent assessment will require a written, detailed public explanation for those changes.

This amendment ends the era of backroom deals made at the expense of the environment.

[*Translation*]

I am proud that our government has the honour of giving Canada a progressive, fair, practical, sensible environmental assessment system. It introduces a new way of thinking. From now on, we will make decisions with due consideration for their environmental impact. The environment completely disregards man–made geographical boundaries.

The Prime Minister constantly repeats how important Canadians consider the environment to be and we must find answers together. Canada is working actively to harmonize environmental assessments throughout the world and will be pleased to sign agreements on this. I know that every one of us here in this House wants to protect the environment and that no one wants to act against the environment for short–term gain.

I hope that our efforts to achieve positive results throughout the world will have the same results here in Canada. We must work together to avoid duplication and overlap.

[*English*]

We have demonstrated our willingness to co–operate on environmental assessment by signing harmonization agreements with two provinces already. We are a few months away from signing harmonization agreements with two other provinces. We are actively negotiating comparable comprehensive agreements across the country.

We want to show that Canada's federalism can be flexible. We want to show that at the federal level we are doing everything we can to make Canada work better for the environment, for individual Canadians, for the protection of the heritage of our children.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, one government recently decided to boycott the harmonization discussions: the Quebec government.

(1305)

All those interested in protecting the environment must ask the Quebec government if it really wants to avoid duplication and overlap. Come back to the negotiation table; come back to talk to us. We are not only prepared to speed up the harmonization process, but also to meet Quebec's officials to improve our environment. When it comes to the environment, no one must act alone.

Sustainable development is a common goal for all; it is everyone's responsibility and it knows no frontier. It is important not to get involved in jurisdiction battles, so as to ensure the best possible environment for our children.

[*English*]

The amendments before Parliament will not create environmental paradise on earth overnight. They will, however, produce a solid, thoughtful and democratic foundation for environmental assessments and for making sure that environmental thinking is a central component of planning. That is what sustainable development is all about, making the right decisions before the fact instead of cleaning up after the fact.

Future decision makers, the young people of today and their children, will have to think differently than the way we thought in the past. Thanks to this legislation we believe they will have the tools necessary to translate environmental goodwill into every day decision making.

[*Translation*]

The new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act is extraordinary in that it changes our way of thinking. We must think before we act. We must think about sustainable development and we must think about the fact that the environment knows no borders.

[*English*]

One project—one assessment, public involvement, government accountability are three simple principles translated into reality by today's amendments.

[*Translation*]

We are ready to translate into reality the principles stated by the former Minister of the Environment.

[*English*]

With these three measures we will finally be ready to move forward in January with the proclamation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the agency. We can finally move forward to a new and wiser generation of environmental assessment.

It has taken us 10 years to reach the point where finally we are ready to move ahead. I want to thank the thousands of people who participated in that process.

In absentia, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition who was one of the first thinkers of how we could remake environmental assessment. I want to thank the former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of the Environment. He supported this new process of environmental assessment.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank the thousands of Canadians and Quebecers who understand so well that the environmental assessment process affects everyone's life, and that we not only have a right but a duty to participate in it. We hope that the three simple amendments which we propose—one project, one assessment; public financing, and participation of every minister in the decision–making process—will improve the process set in place by the Hon. Lucien Bouchard.

(1310)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, before I start I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to extend the clock for approximately five minutes so I may complete my speech.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Gilmour: Mr. Speaker, I thank the House. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this bill today.

Bill C–56 proposes amendments to three sections of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The basic principle behind environmental assessment is addressing concerns in the early stages of development in order that action can be taken before the project is too far along. This is a relatively new process at the federal level.

A number of years ago EARP, the environmental assessment and review process, was introduced with guidelines. Not until CEAA was passed by Parliament in June 1992 did we have any meaningful legislation at the federal level. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act replaces the EARP guidelines and provides for a new process of federal environmental assessment.

It has taken two years for this bill to be proclaimed into law. Although the bill was tabled two years ago the regulations were only published two months ago.

The minister has stated that the amended act will be proclaimed into law by January 1995. Once CEAA is proclaimed federal environmental assessment will be legislatively entrenched.

As this process is still quite new at the federal level, there are still many bumps to be ironed out. The amendments to the act contained in Bill C–56 attempt to address some of the problems already encountered with federal environmental assessment.

Bill C–56 proposes to amend the act in three ways. First it requires participant funding be established by the Minister of the Environment. Second, it encourages, where possible, that one federal environmental assessment be carried out per project. Third, it requires cabinet approval instead of ministerial approval of responses to panel recommendations.

At first sight these three recommendations appear quite positive. However a closer look at these amendments reveals that they represent few initiatives on the part of the government. These three amendments do little to change the status quo. Further, they are inadequate in living up to what they attempt to accomplish.

During the course of the subcommittee hearings we heard from several environmental experts regarding this bill. Many of these presentations expressed a common concern that Bill C–56 does not live up to its expectations. Amendments to the act to guarantee intervener funding, to broaden the scope of decision making authority and to reduce timely and costly duplication, to guarantee one assessment per project have been requested since consultations on reforming the act began seven years ago. These are worthy goals that need to be addressed but the goals are simply not realized in this bill.

I would like to address each of these three amendments in turn. The first clause amends section 4 of the act and adds a clause which emphasizes the need for responsible authorities to carry out their actions in a co–ordinated and efficient manner with a view to eliminating unnecessary duplication in the environmental assessment process. This clause has been referred to as the one project, one assessment clause.

As I mentioned during second reading of this bill, the harmonization process simply does not go far enough. Although the possibility for more than one federal assessment is reduced, the fact remains there is still duplication of the federal and provincial assessments as well as the possibility for federal duplication between various departments.

Theoretically the amendment for one assessment per project minimizes the potential for duplication of federal activities. Where more than one department is involved, federal authorities are to attempt to co–ordinate environmental assessment activity. However I want to make it clear that this legislation does not mandate one assessment per project. This amendment merely makes it mandatory to take into account existing assessments.

The bill changes the assessment process so that departmental assessments should occur simultaneously rather than sequentially. In other words, there could be simultaneous co–ordinated effort but there will still not necessarily be one assessment.

If decision making triggers occur at different points in time, a single project may still endure more than one assessment. Therefore multiple federal assessments are still possible under the act as long as there are different federal triggers for any project.

It is well understood that the single most critical issue to industry is the length and the uncertainty of the assessment process.

(1315)

Although I am pleased that this government is taking into account the need to co–ordinate the efforts, this bill lacks teeth. It lacks the teeth it needs to give it some meaning. We simply must stop duplicating our efforts and this bill does not decisively address that concern.

As it stands the bill still fails to live up to Canadian expectations for one assessment per project. The process needs to be co–ordinated to ensure there is no duplication between federal departments. This legislation would be improved if a lead responsible authority could assist in ensuring that one federal assessment is carried out. This would be a particularly good role for the agency. Such a responsibility would give the agency a greater role in the assessment process and would assist government in streamlining its functions and ensuring that one assessment per project becomes a reality, not just a consideration.

The agency could be given the responsibility to notify departments of their potential involvement in an upcoming environmental assessment, thus streamlining and co–ordinating the process. The agency could be the most effective body to ensure that the principle of one assessment per project truly becomes a reality.

We must not only deal with duplication between federal departments but also address the duplication between federal and provincial governments. At present we currently have two federal–provincial harmonization agreements in place, one with Alberta and one with Manitoba. Bilateral agreements as the minister mentioned between federal and provincial governments are being negotiated at other levels and they are intended to reduce duplication by allowing for a co–ordinated process.

We should be working toward a common set of environmental standards and goals for both federal and provincial levels of government. Federal–provincial harmonization agreements need to be worked out and signed by the provinces and the federal government to ensure that we truly have one joint assessment per project.

Let me remind the House of the horrendous cost for duplication. Forty–five per cent of federal programs representing expenditures of $40 billion overlap and compete to varying degrees with provincial programs. That comes straight out of the Treasury Board. Canadians simply cannot afford this costly duplication of services.

The second amendment to the act seeks to ensure that responses to public panel recommendations are decided by cabinet. This means that the decision to act or to reject on a panel recommendation is not made solely by the Minister of the Environment but by the cabinet. This amendment broadens the decision making authority to include more members in the decision. However, it simply does not go far enough.

As I mentioned earlier, the spirit of this clause is to ensure that responses to public panel recommendations are decided by cabinet, but cabinet remains undefined. Cabinet could be a few ministers or it could refer to the full cabinet. The term cabinet is very loose. Cabinet has many versions and it can be many things. There are inner cabinets, outer cabinets and committees of cabinet. The term cabinet is simply too loose. As it stands, important environmental decisions can still be controlled by two or three ministers with their own agendas.

Current government amendments represent only a small step forward and they change very little. If we are to ensure that the assessment process is fair and democratic this clause must be amended to replace cabinet or governor in council by order in council.

Not all responses by governor in council are orders in council. Order in council responses are more formalized and must be published in the *Canada Gazette* and tabled in Parliament. This amendment, which would have improved the procedure, I proposed during report stage and was unfortunately rejected by the government.

Another problem with this bill is that there are no guidelines on how or when cabinet review will be undertaken. There are no guidelines which spell out which projects will be assessed or which assessments, once completed, will be forwarded to cabinet for review. I would hope guidelines for environmental assessment procedures would make it very clear to all participants exactly what the rules are.

As it stands, there is nothing to prevent cabinet from reading the report and ignoring important recommendations. There is nothing to prevent a few members of the cabinet from rejecting panel recommendations purely on a political basis.

In addition, it is not clear whether the cabinet would be able to change either a panel's recommendations or a mediator's report. There is no clear definition of what the cabinet can or cannot do. This must be clarified in the regulations that guide the assessment process, otherwise we are no farther ahead than we were before.

(1320)

Bill C–56 is yet another example of this government's failure to live up to its red book promises. Bill C–56 effectively takes decision making authority from the minister and gives it to an undefined cabinet. What it does not do is give authority to the agency or panels as promised in the red book.

The Liberal red book promises to amend the act to shift decision making powers to an independent Canadian environmental assessment agency subject to an appeal to the cabinet. The agency's relationship to government would be roughly similar to that between the CRTC and the cabinet.

This agency simply has none of the powers of the CRTC as promised in the red book. For example, this bill does not entrust decision making powers to an independent Canadian environmental assessment agency subject to an appeal to cabinet.

The head of the agency is not independent from the minister. The minister appoints this person to the position, which again makes it more of a patronage appointment than an independent agency. In no way is this agency at arm's length from the government.

Section 7 of the CRTC legislation gives the commission licensing powers which are essentially final decision making powers. There is clearly no similar commission being proposed in this act. The panel or the CEAA is not given decision making powers or powers as responsible authority.

In addition, the CRTC under the Broadcasting Act has all the powers of the superior court. This is not the case with the assessment agency.

The CRTC is a quasi–judicial commission. This is also not the case with any of the decision making powers under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

The principles of fairness of decision making which are required for the CRTC are not required for the process of decision making under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

During the hearings on this bill several witnesses presented concerns that Bill C–56 does not give the agency or the panels the power to make decisions with an appeal to cabinet. This bill as presently drafted fails to address these concerns.

Clearly responsibility for environmental assessments are not in this act vested in an independent agency as promised in the red book and the relationship of the CRTC to government bears little relation to that between the agency and government.

Yet when a motion was put forward during report stage amendments to recognize the agency as an independent body, the Liberals voted it down and in doing so voted against their own red book promise. We hear so much about the red book, yet here we have the government not only ignoring a promise, but actually voting it down in the House.

There appears to be a great discrepancy between government promises in the red book and government actions in the form of legislation.

In Ontario the assessment process has been amended to make all decision making by an environmental board binding unless appealed to cabinet. In practice most decisions are final. This process works, plus it saves time and money.

I would now like to move on to the third and final amendment of this bill dealing with participant funding. Section 58(1)(i) of the act currently enables the minister to establish a funding program to facilitate public participation in mediation and assessment by review panels. Bill C–56 proposes to repeal this measure and replace it with a new section that requires the minister to establish a participant funding program rather than leaving it up to the minister's discretion as is currently the case.

Of all the stakeholders in the environmental decision making process, ordinary Canadians are those most directly affected by the environmental impact of projects. Participant funding is an important tool as it enables stakeholders to participate in the decision making process.

As I mentioned in the House on second reading, regulations are needed to guide the amount and distribution of participant funding. I recommend that the government broaden the scope when developing these regulations. The participant funding program will not be up and running until criteria are set up. Regulations could take as long as a year before they are brought into force which means that it will be some time before the participant funding program becomes a reality.

Participant funding regulations should ensure that those people directly affected by a project have an opportunity to participate. However, there must be guidelines to ensure it does not become a growth industry, funding courtesy of the taxpayer.

(1325)

We do not want to start an intervener industry. Funding would be at a level to allow effective participation by those who can demonstrate they will be affected by a project. Guidelines for participation should consider whether the applicant represents a clearly ascertainable interest that should be heard at the hearing and whether separate representation of the interest would assist the panel and contribute to the hearing.

Guidelines should also take into consideration whether the applicant has attempted to bring other related interests under an umbrella group that would facilitate the retention of common experts and council and whether direction is included that only those costs that are directly related to the preparation and presentation of a submission are recoverable.

Regard should be given to whether there is a requirement for submissions and presentations to be conducted economically and last, whether a special power is required to deny costs in cases in which a submission or presentation is unnecessary, irrelevant, improper or the cost claim is excessive.

Alberta currently has established criteria in place for participant funding and could serve as a guide when regulations are drafted. According to Environment Canada sources the amount of participant funding is limited to $1.2 million per year and comes from the green plan. Although funds are currently limited by the budget, the number of dollars is open ended as the government can decide to increase or decrease these funds in future years.

One proposed amendment which I brought up in committee and which I feel still merits consideration for this act is that of proponents paying a portion of the intervener funding. How much the proponent would pay could be at the discretion of the minister or included in the regulations.

Some of the witnesses on C–56 raised concerns that intervener funding tends to be quite small, sometimes to the point of undermining the usefulness of having any critique whatsoever. As long as the funding comes only from taxpayers, funding will be less than if the proponent paid for a portion of the fund.

Let me make it clear, however, that I am not suggesting proponents should be forced to pay for every interested critic of a project. Guidelines would need to be quite specific in this area to protect from abuse. Several of the witnesses also suggested the agency be granted the authority to award participant funding under ministerial guidelines rather than vesting the authority solely with the minister.

This suggestion should be looked into either as an amendment to the act or as a regulation guiding the participant funding regulations. This amendment to the act would allow the agency to be empowered with some decision making powers, decision making powers that the agency is sorely lacking at present.

Participant funding regulations need to identify what the money can be used for and accountability must be assured. This amendment as it stands does not ensure that all Canadians and interest groups can participate equally in a full and meaningful way in all phases of various environmental assessment processes. This is beyond the scope of the bill. However, some choices must be made in the regulations which will ensure there is a selection process to ensure those parties that play a significant role have adequate funding.

In addition, attention must be paid to the fact that funds are not endless, nor are the timeframes for the assessment process without some constraints. It is not fair to subject one project to an endless tirade of inquiries. There must be a balance in the process to ensure a fair and reasonable assessment takes place.

In concluding I wish to take the opportunity to highlight another problem with this bill. During second reading I raised concerns regarding the amount of ministerial discretion allowed in the act. I noted the minister may or may not call for a review, and the fact that the minister appoints the mediator or panel members. These concerns were also raised by a number of witnesses.

Panel members are appointed by the minister. Therefore there is no permanent body that one could refer to as an agency that decides who will staff a particular hearing. The panel approach is hardly an independent agency, as members can be appointed at the whim of the minister to suit particular cases as the minister sees fit. This has direct influence on the outcome of any panel decision.

As well, during second reading I addressed concerns about the exclusion and inclusion list that makes up the regulations guiding what is and is not to be included in the assessment process. In addition, the fact that there are no regulations regarding the transport of hazardous waste still concerns me.

It is with regret I note the government has shown little initiative with the bill. The act as it stands remains virtually unchanged. We desperately need to move forward on environmental issues. There is little point in spinning our wheels for the sake of appearances. The bill requires reworking before it will begin to live up to the spirit that was intended. I have suggested some improvements for the bill, including my motion to change the final decision making authority from cabinet to order in council.

In conclusion, the government had the opportunity to move legislation that would have had a substantial impact on how environmental assessment is carried out in Canada. Unfortunately it failed in the attempt.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, the hon. member for Don Valley North has given me written notice that he will be unable to present his motion during the hour provided for Private Members' Business next Monday.

[*English*]

Despite our best efforts and many phone calls it has not been possible to find a member who will substitute for him on Monday. Accordingly I would request the table officers to drop that item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence.

[*Translation*]

The hour provided for Private Members' Business will therefore be suspended and, pursuant to Standing Order 99(2), the House will meet at 11 a.m. for consideration of Government Orders.

[*English*]

It being 1.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent for the following: If a vote by division bell is requested on Motion No. 257 later this day, the vote will not be deferred until Monday but will be deferred until Tuesday at 5.30 p.m.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

RECOGNITION OF THE PATRIOTES OF LOWER CANADA AND THE REFORMERS OF UPPER CANADA

The House resumed from November 1 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today to Motion No. 257 under Private Members' Business. The motion seeks to recognize the efforts of certain important Canadians both in Lower Canada and in Upper Canada. I applaud the initiative because it is important for us to recognize the efforts of those important figures in our history.

It is important to recall the efforts of such people as William Lyon Mackenzie, the great Liberal leader who was the grandfather of a great Liberal Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King. It is very important to recognize the leadership efforts of Louis–Joseph Papineau, an important reform leader in Lower Canada. I applaud that initiative.

Unfortunately where I take some exception to the motion is that it is somewhat incomplete. It ignores the efforts of some important Canadians from the maritime region or Atlantic Canada, most notably the great leader from Nova Scotia, Joseph Howe, who was very instrumental in helping to achieve responsible government in the country. It is absolutely silent on the leadership efforts of Canadians such as Mr. Howe.

One would have to question somewhat the historical accuracy of the motion as I see it before me. It speaks of the Patriots of Lower Canada and the reformers of Upper Canada. Then it equates those to geographic regions as being Quebec and Canada. For those of us who have had an opportunity to study Canadian history that is historically inaccurate. The then Lower Canada is roughly equivalent to the province of Quebec, which has geographically grown many times since becoming part of Canada or since 1867.

(1335)

To equate the then Upper Canada with Canada is somewhat misleading. One would conclude that it is the Canada of today. Indeed that is very inaccurate. It ignores the Atlantic provinces, the two founding members of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As we know, under Confederation we had four founding provinces. This particular historical equation ignores Atlantic Canada and all provinces that subsequently became members of Confederation. It is somewhat historically inaccurate.

Its intention is probably good, but it is important that we recognize in as total way as possible the efforts of all Canadians such as Mr. Howe and others.

I have some difficulty supporting the motion. I can support its main thrust but having noted its inaccuracies I just spoke to and the incompleteness of the motion I would like to move the following amendment. I move:

> That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the words ''democratic government''.

It then becomes more accurate historically. It then addresses the concerns I raised about ignoring the efforts of certain very important Canadians in the fight for responsible government, particularly those from Atlantic Canada and most notably Mr. Howe. I submit that my amendment is an improvement upon the member's motion.

The Deputy Speaker: While the Chair is waiting to examine the amendment, we might continue with the debate and the ruling will be made in due course as to the receivability of the motion.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to discuss the motion put forth by the member for Verchères. It would have the government officially recognize the historical contribution of the Patriots of Lower Canada and the reformers of Upper Canada to the establishment of a system of responsible democratic government in Canada and in Quebec, as did the Government of Quebec in 1982 by proclaiming by order a national Patriots day.

It is extremely troubling for me to stand before the House and unequivocally support a motion dealing with an issue that historians have not even settled on. The hon. member is asking us as parliamentarians to stand and officially recognize the contribution of the Patriotes and reformers. That point is clear. I cannot.

This is an issue which Canadians will have to make an individual value judgment about and the appropriateness of recognizing the extent of the contributions of the Patriotes and reformers. It would be wrong for parliamentarians as a whole to make a judgment about an event in history that is still controversial in the minds of many Canadians.

In fact what lies at the heart of the controversy is the methods used by the Patriotes and reformers. To some they are considered to be great Patriots. Yet to others they are considered to be nothing more than traitors who deserved what they received.

I also state unequivocally that the Patriots and reformers have some legitimate concerns which need to be addressed. I am sure that everyone, and not only in the House but all Canadians, would agree with that.

However we would be doing a great disservice to the idea that it is possible to have the freedom to debate ideas and achieve things through peaceful means, while at the same time lending

credibility to the notion that the end justifies the means, that it would be all right to raise arms against the state when there is a dispute. By no means do I support the idea that violence is a way to achieve a political end.

(1340)

Support for the motion would then also be essentially a stamp of approval for the violence which took place during the revolts of 1837 and 1838. There were many deaths during those quasi–revolutions and I would certainly not want to suggest this is the proper way to bring about change.

Let us now take a moment to look at a few of the major players of the Patriote and reform debate, because I feel it is important sometimes to look at the past as if the lessons learned are forgotten. We are doomed to relearn them.

I also believe there are a number of similarities between the Party Patriote and the Bloc which need to be highlighted. In fact Papineau as Speaker of the House had no qualms about pocketing a large government salary while at the same time plotting his revolution. Interestingly enough we have seen much of the same during this 35th session of Parliament.

Papineau was also quite happy to extract harsh levies from the habitants living on seigneuries in the Ottawa Valley and allowing English merchants to do the same.

Papineau, through his charisma, focused habitant grievances against the English and reflected the fury of the francophone professional class who, as they saw it, had been systematically denied government advancement.

He also headed a party which demanded economic development at the local and regional level. Their concerns seem to be much of the same type of rhetoric to which many of us have listened every day in the House.

It is extremely important to illustrate that the lower Canadian revolution failed not only because of the division of the province into French and English but because of the divisions among the French themselves and of the type of men who attempted to make it. To upset a regime requires more than oratory, more than a prophetic fanatic such as Papineau was. It requires the support of the masses. The Patriotes had none of this.

Joseph Howe was primarily responsible for the election of a majority of reformers in Nova Scotia. He managed to bring about political change and bring about responsible government without having to resort to violence. This would be a good lesson for everyone to remember.

There is a more subtle lesson to be learned from all this, that the politicians might think they know what is best in terms of the best interests of society and those who encompass it, but it is ultimately up to the citizens of that society to determine what is best for them. Politicians better start listening to the people and not their own rhetoric.

Another key problem with the motion is the narrowness of its scope. It does not even attempt to recognize that a lot of people have made significant contributions to responsible government in the country other than simply the Patriots and reformers, many of whom are from western Canada. These other individuals would include William Aberhaart, Ernest Manning of the Alberta Social Credit and Agnes Macphail of the Progressives who was the first woman ever elected to the House of Commons. Let us not forget about the contributions of Henry Wisewood of the Alberta wing of the Progressives during the 1920s.

A final problem we see with the motion is the fact that we already celebrate the contributions of Canadians from the past on Canada Day. It is a time when Canadians can look back and reflect on all those individuals who contributed in some form or another in terms of greater representative democratic governments.

In conclusion, I will not impugn any motive or agenda beyond the motion. Yet many people feel that the motion appears to be the legitimization of a rebellion in the dismantling of the state apparatus, the legitimization of the use of force. Therefore I cannot support it.

As I mentioned earlier the reformers, Patriots and all their followers certainly have enriched Canada's history. In opposing the motion I do not want to belittle their contribution in any way. However I am concerned that if we legitimize the actions of those such as the Patriots we will be sending out the wrong message to those Quebecois who are sovereignists.

(1345)

The PQ seem to be using the battles of 1837 and 1838 to legitimize its struggles against Canadian federalism. A Patriotes in Quebec has become anti–English, anti–federalist. The original Patriots fought for responsible government while the PQ Patriotes seemed to be fighting for the demise of this great country.

It is for these reasons I urge all the members of the House to vote against Motion No. 257.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, I wish to say that the amendment proposed by the hon. member for London—Middlesex is in order.

[*English*]

As it is in order it is therefore an amendment on which we will vote next week.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say to the member of the Reform Party who just spoke that we recognize English Canada and anglophone culture. They are our friends. And now, I welcome this opportunity to take part, at the request of my party, in the debate on the motion presented by the hon. member for Verchères, a motion that reads as follows: That, in the opinion of this House, the government should officially recognize the historical contri-

bution of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada to the establishment of a system of responsible democratic government in Canada and in Quebec, as did the Government of Quebec in 1982 by proclaiming by order a national patriots' day.

The dramatic events known as the Rebellion of 1837–38 have often been depicted in textbooks and travel guides as the actions of a band of criminals who challenged the established order. The purpose of the motion submitted by the hon. member for Verchères is to rectify this perception and to recognize officially the historic contribution of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada towards establishing genuinely democratic and responsible government in Canada and in Quebec.

Perhaps I should make myself clear at this point. We are talking about recognizing the merits of the Patriotes, not about rehabilitating them or obtaining a pardon, as though they were criminals. In fact, we think it is high time the federal government recognized the fact that these events were part of the historic current of social and political unrest that affected both the colonies and their mother countries in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In Canada these events, which occurred at a time of great political upheaval in Western Europe, were centred in Ontario or Upper Canada, in Quebec or Lower Canada, and in Nova Scotia. The goals of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada were threefold. Basically they were fighting for civil and political rights, for the establishment of truly democratic and responsible institutions, and for the emancipation of their respective nations.

Above all, they were seeking recognition of the people of Lower and Upper Canada as nations capable of taking control of their own future. Any colony hopes one day to become the master of its own political and economic destiny. In 1840, the Act of Union completely denied our existence, ''a people without history'', it was said. The confederative pact of 1867 seemed to want to establish a relationship based on the equality of two founding peoples, but in the history of this country, the francophone nation of North America has been confined to the status of an ethnic group, only a little harder to assimilate than other immigrants.

The Patriotes reflected the awareness of French–speaking Canadians that they were a different nation. They wanted to obtain recognition of this fact from London and the other citizens of Canada. However, the definition of Canada in the Constitution Act, 1982, still does not reflect the reality of two founding peoples in Canadian society.

The second goal was the establishment of truly democratic institutions. More specifically, the Patriotes demanded the establishment of the principle of responsible government or, in other words, the creation of an executive consisting primarily of members of the House of Assembly and responsible to it, that is, accountable to the people rather than to the British Crown.

(1350)

Thanks to the action of the Patriotes and Reformers, we have inherited a system of responsible government as well as democratic institutions and traditions of such great value to the Western world.

Finally, the third reason for the Patriotes and Reformers to revolt was, in large part, the civil, political and economic liberties that several nations were starting to exercise. These were commendable motives that left their mark on 19th century history. In fact, the late René Lévesque wrote, in a letter dated November 21, 1982, that the 1837–38 events and all the years leading to these events were undeniably motivated by a genuine and powerful democratic surge, coupled with a stronger than ever national assertiveness.

Arguments against recognizing the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada do not hold water. It was first argued that adding another public holiday to the calendar would be both costly and unjustified. Allow me to point out that, in the mind of my colleague from Verchères, there was never any question of adding a public holiday or establishing a national patriots' day in Canada. It was for information that the hon. member for Verchères referred, in his motion, to the national patriots' day proclaimed by the Government of Quebec.

They then said that the violence associated with the 1837 rebellion should not be condoned. Fine, but we must remember that the Patriotes and Reformers expressed their grievances and demands in pamphlets, newspaper articles, mass demonstrations, pleas and speeches in the House of Assembly for many years before some of them took up arms. This motion is not intended to justify or legitimize the 1837–38 rebellion but simply to pay tribute, regardless of these violent events, to these men and women who believed in the need to establish a system of responsible and truly democratic government.

Some of my colleagues rightly pointed out that the Patriotes and Reformers are not the only ones who helped establish a system of responsible government in Canada. Although the Patriotes and Reformers are certainly not the only architects of our system of responsible government, their very significant contribution should not be ignored.

That is why we, in the Official Opposition and the Bloc Quebecois, are proud to support the motion of our colleague from Verchères and to ask this House to approve it without reservation.

The Deputy Speaker: As no one else apparently wishes to speak, I recognize the hon. member for Verchères.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to go over the comments made during these three hours of very useful and informative debate.

It is my responsibility to conclude the debate on this motion, which I had the honour of tabling in this House, and which merely seeks to recognize the undeniable historical contribution of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada to the establishment of a system of responsible democratic government in Canada and in Quebec.

Although I am a sovereignist, I have no intention of rejecting our common values and experiences. And the chapter of our history which saw the emergence of the patriot and reformer movement is part of those common experiences.

I would like to read you an excerpt from a letter sent to me by a government member from Ontario. I do not think he will be upset, because I simply want to show to what extent these events are part of our common history.

(1355)

He writes: ''If there was a time in Canada's history when French–speaking and English–speaking people joined together to defend democracy, it was definitely during the 1837–38 rebellion which shaped the country as we know it today. The violence which occurred in Upper and Lower Canada was minimal and short–lived, compared to what happened in just about any other country that experienced similar incidents. Since then, Canadians have resolved their differences through debate, rather than with arms. This explains why a separatist party is now the Official Opposition in Parliament, something I am proud of''.

Mr. Speaker, this was made possible essentially by the actions of the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada.

Contrary to what the Reform Party member claimed, Quebecers are not using the Patriotes to denigrate their English–speaking comPatriots. Some prominent Patriotes and Reformers were English–speaking, and we are proud that they participated in the Patriotes movement.

My first speech in this House was to explain the relevance of this motion. This second opportunity allows me to correct a number of objections made by members of the other political parties in the more than two hours of debate on this motion.

The first objection was that the Patriotes and the Reformers were not the only ones who contributed to the establishment of responsible government. We were reminded, and rightly so, of the invaluable contribution of the Hon. Joseph Howe, a politician from Nova Scotia, who also contributed greatly to the establishment of a system of responsible government in Canada, and we recognize it. However, that does not mean that we should not also recognize the value of this structured movement which, for years, conveyed the aspirations of many people in Lower and Upper Canada.

The Patriotes and the Reformers were, first of all, honest citizens—business people, politicians, farmers, professionals—who, before some of them opted for armed struggle, had tried to make their point democratically.

We do not deny that they were not the only ones to whom we owe responsible government, but their very significant contribution cannot be ignored. Does the fact that we recently honoured the Canadian heroes who fought on the beaches of Normandy diminish in any way the merit of those who distinguished themselves at Vimy, Dieppe and Monte Cassino? Of course not, Mr. Speaker. It is self–evident.

Then, honouring Patriotes and Reformers will in no way diminish our gratefulness to persons like Joseph Howe, something I wanted to stress in this House.

Second objection. It has been said that it would be costly and unjustifiable to add a new legal holiday. We never said we wanted a legal holiday. We wasted almost an hour debating this, when it is not even in the motion.

With your permission, I will quote from the presentation I made to the Sub–Committee on Private Members' Business, on May 11, to make sure that this motion was deemed votable. Allow me to quote myself: ''—the motion I am presenting to you is not aimed at establishing a national statutory holiday in honour of Patriotes and Reformers''.

That is to say that, even before this matter came to the House of Commons, I had clearly stated that the motion was not intended to establish a national statutory holiday to honour Patriotes and Reformers. Of course, it will be up to the government of Canada to decide how it wants to celebrate and recognize the priceless contribution of the Patriotes and Reformers.

This argument can be explained two ways, it is either due to a blatant ignorance of the facts and of the meaning of the motion, or to a deliberate manoeuvre to derail the debate, something I am not accusing anybody of doing.

As I was saying, it has always been very clear in my mind, and that of my colleagues, that it is up to the Government of Canada to make the final decision, once the House adopts the motion, on how it intends to honour and recognize the historical contribution of the Patriotes and Reformers.

(1400)

Third objection. We were told that the violence of the rebellion of 1837–1838 could not be condoned. Fine, but it must be recognized, as my colleague for Richmond—Wolfe so rightly pointed out, that for years, Patriotes and Reformers had expressed their point of view, their opinions, in speeches at the House of Assembly and at public meetings, as well as in newspaper articles. That is how Patriotes and Reformers had presented their views.

In remembering the Patriotes' actions, one should not choose to recall only the violence some of them ultimately resorted to.

The purpose of this motion is not in any way to legitimize or justify the rebellions of 1837–38. Of course not. As my colleague from Richmond—Wolfe mentioned, the motion simply seeks to pay tribute to the men and women who, notwithstanding these violent protests, believed it was necessary to have a truly responsible and democratic government in this country.

Of the people who believed and took part in this movement, some entered public life and are still highly respected today for their convictions, like Louis–Joseph Papineau, Louis–Hippolyte Lafontaine, Robert Baldwin and George–Étienne Cartier, to name a few.

After the first hour of debate, which was rather deplorable, I might say and where all kinds of objections were used to sidetrack the debate, I sent all members of this House a letter to clarify the situation concerning the three objections that were raised.

In the second hour of debate, we heard new objections. First, we heard mainly from our colleagues in the Reform Party that the bad sovereignists of today are using the actions of the Patriotes and the Reformers to justify their claims. This argument demonstrates a poor knowledge of our history.

I will remind the members that the Reformers, who would be Ontarians today, are included in the motion. It has absolutely nothing to do with the sovereignist movement. That is not why we are presenting this motion. We want to recognize the contribution of the Patriotes and the Reformers to the establishment of a system of responsible democratic government.

I must also remind hon. members of something I mentioned in the first hour of debate, namely that there are groups in Ontario which support our initiative and encourage us to bring the House to recognize the invaluable contribution of the Patriotes and the Reformers.

Let us not forget that the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau even went to Australia to unveil a plaque honouring the Patriotes of Lower Canada and that another Canadian government official unveiled a similar plaque in Tasmania to honour the Reformers of Upper Canada. There has never been formal recognition from the government, and that is what we are seeking.

Of course, it is possible to make a connection between the actions of the Patriotes and the actions of today's sovereignists. But if we had wanted to give that meaning to the motion before us today, we certainly would have excluded any reference to the Reformers of Upper Canada.

The hon. member for Calgary Southeast said in her speech, and I quote:

> If this House is seriously fighting for a strong Canada, it would be hypocritical for its members to vote in favour of this motion.

What a pity to make such a narrow and restrictive interpretation of the motion before the House. I say to her that if this House rejects this motion, it will be more than hypocritical. Not to admit a historical reality for purely partisan reasons is beneath the dignity of this House.

During the second hour of debate, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell presented a new objection to the motion. He opposed the wording of the motion where it says the Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada contributed to the establishment of responsible government in Canada and in Quebec. Using a geographical subterfuge, it was argued that we could not talk about Canada and Quebec since we were talking about Upper Canada and Lower Canada and that we should therefore talk about Ontario and Quebec.

(1405)

I would simply like to say to the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that, putting aside the matter of Ontario and Quebec, we must admit that the action of the Patriotes and the Reformers was such that we can now enjoy freedom everywhere in Canada and a democratic and responsible government. The action of the Patriotes and the Reformers cannot be limited to Ontario and Quebec.

The question I asked myself was this: Why then, if he really intended to support the motion—because I must recognize in all honesty that the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell agreed with the substance, the principle of the motion, though he was worried about its wording—why then did he not support the motion? He had the right to do so. Our colleague has just proposed an amendment which after all does not change the meaning of the motion.

We would have been very disappointed if our colleagues opposite had continued to oppose this motion only, it seems, because of its wording. We are happy to see that we may come to an agreement so that this House finally recommends that the government recognize, more than a hundred years later, the historical contribution of the Patriotes and the Reformers to the establishment of responsible government, of which we are so proud.

If they had continued to reject this motion only because of its wording, they would have disappointed many groups in Ontario and Quebec as well as elsewhere in Canada that have been supporting us in this process from the beginning.

If they had continued, for disgraceful and base partisan motives, to try to deflect a supposedly level–headed debate on the recognition that is more than due to the Patriotes, Liberals and especially Reformers would have shown how low they could go. But, fortunately, government members are much more open today.

Refusing to recognize the invaluable contribution of the Patriotes and the Reformers to the establishment of responsible government, something we are so proud of today, is an insult to the memory of great men like Louis–Joseph Papineau, George–Étienne Cartier, William Lyon Mackenzie, Robert Baldwin and Louis–Hyppolyte Lafontaine. Not all Patriotes took up arms but we owe it to all of them that we live today in a free and democratic society today.

I would invite hon. members, my Reform and Liberal colleagues, to reflect on this before voting on this important motion.

I would like to conclude very briefly by thanking members from all sides for taking part in this debate. I would also like to express my particular thanks to Mr. Onil Perrier, of the Patriotes du pays, provided food for thought, and research material throughout the process.

In closing, I would like to thank—and I am sure that you will agree with me—my assistant and colleague, Catherine Beaudry, who did most of the research. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you agree with my words of thanks to her.

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, since the right of reply closes the debate, I must put the question to the House.

[*English*]

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment adopted.

Amendment agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is now on the main motion as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the order made earlier this day, the motion stands deferred until Tuesday, December 13 at 5.30 p.m.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Would it be possible, since we have already gone through the procedure and voted on division, to go back and ask for a recorded division?

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has a duty to be fair to all members. I know, as the hon. member just indicated, that there are certain rules. It seems to me we have already had a division. When I put the question, I was told they intended to rise.

Since they did, I must be fair to all members. They are entitled to ask for a division, and as the hon. member just said, I think they intended to do so.

Any further comments on this point?

[*English*]

It being 2.10 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 2.10 p.m.)

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