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Wednesday, December 14, 1994

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 14, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker,

'Twas the eve of Christmas recess,
And all through the House,
Not a member of the rat pack was stirring, not even a mouse.
The statements were chosen by the Speaker with care,
In hopes that all House members would be fair.
The MPs were nestled all snug in their seats,
In hopes of receiving some Christmas treats.
I rose from my chair to see what was near,
When, what to my wandering eyes should appear,
But the Minister of Transport with no VIA,
But eight tiny reindeer.
With a little driver, so young-like and slick,
I knew in a moment it must not be Saint Nick,
More rapid than a Challenger the cuts they came,
And he snorted and he stomped while shouting,
No train! No train!
But I heard the good people of Saint John exclaim,
Don't worry, Elsie, the PCers will return,
And we will have the VIA train once again.
Merry Christmas everyone.

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CANADA

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is drawing near and I would like to extend to Canadians my very best wishes for a very happy holiday season.

[*Translation*]

Next year might bring the separation of Quebec, and this is why I would like to take this opportunity to tell Quebecers that Canada is a great country and that their presence in Confederation is extremely important because of the cultural dimension Quebec brings, and especially because of what the Quebec people mean to Canada.

I hope that next year will bring the welcome news that Canada will remain united and that this unity will not be challenged again.

[*English*]

Canada must remain united. Anglophones, francophones and allophones must all work together in a harmonious country as Canadians. We cannot erase years of history and camaraderie between provinces. Canada must keep its state of Confederation with its ten provinces and two territories. Our strength is in unity, not in separation.

Today we are also celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Canadian flag. May it continue to be our symbol of unity and harmony.

[*Translation*]

Happy New Year to all.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after 10 successive weekly increases, the central bank rate set by the Bank of Canada went up 71 basis points yesterday. With this decision, the Bank of Canada will slow consumption and investment, and will paralyze the housing market, a sector crucial for the creation of jobs, especially at a time when the reduction of unemployment is a major concern of Canadians and Quebecers.

Unfortunately the employment crisis is not a priority in Ottawa. The government does not have the courage to seriously tackle government spending in order to reduce the deficit and the debt which are responsible for these pressures on interest rates. There is no job creation policy and the Bank of Canada is allowed to maintain an anti-inflationary monetary policy which undermines the economic recovery.

Meanwhile interest rates are going up and the unemployed remain without jobs.

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[*English*]

SAINT-JEAN MILITARY COLLEGE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of months ago I watched in amazement as the government caved in to pressure from the Bloc and Parti Quebecois when it agreed to pay \$34 million to Quebec for the 1993 referendum. The decision was based almost solely on the word of the most distrusted Prime Minister in Canadian history.

For the past month I have been even more amazed as the Bloc and its PQ allies try to force the renegotiation of a signed deal on the military college at Saint-Jean. This is not some vague verbal guarantee from a former politician; it is a signed

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agreement. The Bloc and PQ are being totally hypocritical in their demand. The government must not acquiesce to this absurd request.

The government has finally agreed to Reform's request that British Columbia be treated equally as regards Royal Roads. Let us hope that we have now seen the end of this charade.

* * *

CABLE RATES

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as consumers many Canadians believe that their home cable rates are set by the CRTC.

Due to the complexities of the cable companies' sales vocabulary, the truth is that basic cable rates are controlled but that extended cable rates float at whatever the local supplier demands. Certainly I am not opposed to open market pricing if the market is truly open.

Let me invite all present or who are watching today to call their local cable companies to request the basic cable service as defined by the CRTC and not extended cable service as defined by their local cable companies. Next, try to find another cable carrier in your neighbourhood to give a competing bid.

After you have realized that the marketplace limits that type of competition, get out your chequebook because you are about to pay for six new channels that have been authorized by the CRTC. This is an open market with no choice. Pay up or look for the rabbit ears.

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AIR INDIA FLIGHT 182

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during this Christmas season my thoughts are with the families and friends of those who perished in the tragic bombing of the Air India flight 182 on June 23, 1985.

This will be the 10th Christmas since that tragic day on which 329 passengers and crew lost their lives as a result of the bomb blast aboard the airliner just 120 miles west of Ireland. Although some arrests have been made, this terrible crime remains shrouded in mystery.

As the families and loved ones of those who perished aboard Air India flight 182 face their 10th Christmas since this tragedy, I ask all members to join with me in expressing our deep sorrow at their loss which continues today.

Christmas is a time when we are sharing love. We should make them feel warm.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the former Yugoslav republic, FYROM, in Skopje seeks international recognition as the republic of Macedonia.

Only thirteen states, seven from the former Soviet Union and east Europe and three Asian communist states have recognized the Skopje republic as that. Twenty-six other states have recognized Skopje only as FYROM and another twenty-two have recognized Skopje as FYROM but without diplomatic relations. The remaining 124 members of the United Nations including Canada have not recognized Skopje in any form or opened diplomatic relations.

(1405)

Canada's position is in full accord with the international law on recognition.

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*[Translation]***PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the former ruling party, which is left with only two members in this House and 53 senators, has managed to make the government backtrack on the issue of the Pearson airport privatization cancellation. Both parties, which have mutual friends working for the Pearson Development Corporation, agreed to let the consortium sue for up to \$80 million in possible compensation.

But worse still, we did not get to the bottom of this scandal and taxpayers will never know why the government is getting ready to squeeze all this money out of them for the benefit of its cronies. In view of the vast amount of public funds wasted in this ugly mess, the government must get to the bottom of it and set up a royal commission of inquiry to examine all the aspects of the deal which are still unclear.

The way this government is handling this issue reveals quite clearly the strange kind of ethics which can be found in both the Liberal Party and the cabinet.

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*[English]***GOVERNOR GENERAL APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present my first instalment of the Liberals copy Reform awards.

Just when we thought the only two types of Liberals in Ottawa were the appointed and the disappointed, the hon. member for Durham restored our faith in the political process. In a letter to

the Ottawa *Citizen* the member supported Reform common sense policies when he proposed two solutions for Governor General appointments.

Remember our leader was booed in the House when he suggested this very idea. The first was to submit a list of names to the House of Commons to allow all Canadians through their MPs to have a voice in the selection. The second solution was a vote by all people of Canada in a general election.

It gives all Reformers a feeling of great pride when we hear Liberals choosing to quote the PM from Calgary Southwest and not the PM of Canada.

* * *

RACISM

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, racism breeds intolerance in society. One would think educational institutions in our multicultural society would be the last place where racism would exist. This is not the case.

Three weeks ago Mahendra Gupta, a teacher at Toronto's Humber College, was deliberately pushed down a flight of stairs at the school. He was later found unconscious at the bottom of a concrete stairwell.

It was a cold and calculated attack. School officials were aware of racist correspondence sent to five non-white teachers but chose not to inform students and staff.

Racism still permeates the Toronto school board. According to Rick Kollins, a Toronto board superintendent, the attack was "not a good news story but a sign of moving in the right direction".

Years of inaction and window dressing by the Toronto school board have resulted in a teacher being racially attacked and the attack is perceived as a positive development by senior officials. It is not.

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STRATFORD FESTIVAL

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Stratford Festival, Canada's national English language theatre, on the conclusion of its 1994 season. All 10 plays enjoyed outstanding critical reviews and for the first time since 1990 the season was a financial success.

The festival realized in excess of \$17 million in box office receipts, \$3.5 million through fund raising and received only \$900,000 in federal grants. In return, the theatre generates \$150 million worth of business in the community and generates \$25 million in taxes.

I wish all those associated with the Stratford Festival another successful season. I encourage all members of the House to join

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with us in 1995 when, in the words of the festival's artistic director Richard Monette, the Stratford adventure continues.

* * *

PORT OF VANCOUVER

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand to recognize a jewel in the crown of western Canada, situated in part in my riding: the port of Vancouver.

Vancouver stands as the gateway to the Asia-Pacific. The port of Vancouver is the guardian of that gateway, serving the western regions as a point of entry and departure of all goods to the Pacific.

The port of Vancouver is the largest port on the west coast of North America. Its annual throughput is approximately 70 million tonnes.

As a fully self-supporting crown corporation the port serves all of B.C. and western Canada. It supports 9,000 jobs in the lower mainland as well as another 62,000 employees from the rest of Canada who produce, transport and process the goods that move through the port. The port's cargoes exceed \$38 billion annually.

(1410)

As the sleeping tiger of Asia awakens, the port of Vancouver has the unique opportunity to become the hub of trade for the northwest. The U.S. ports of Oregon and Seattle vie for the prize. Perhaps all western Canadian provinces should claim ownership and mould it to become the Pacific jewel that it can be.

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VENTURE CAPITAL

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government must be committed to assisting innovative small and medium sized enterprises. An industry which may help us to meet our objectives is the venture capital industry which searches out businesses that are young, innovative and operating in a growth market.

The FBDB recently concluded a baseline survey of 259 companies which secured venture capital financing. Despite the effects of the recent recession these venture backed companies still increased the number of people they employed at an annual compounded rate of 40 per cent.

The global economy is becoming increasingly specialized. High tech firms once considered the wave of the future are here today. In order that Canada not be left behind it is essential that the government assist in creating a positive environment for the venture capital industry to support small and medium sized businesses which will have a positive impact on our economy as a whole. The venture capital investment industry is an important

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means by which we can support young companies while ensuring that Canada remains competitive in the global market.

Clearly the venture capital industry provides a great potential. As our government is committed to rejuvenating the economy this is one vehicle that should lead the way.

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[*Translation*]

ROGERS CABLE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Canadian Heritage gave us another demonstration of his now infamous lack of courage. Following the decision by Rogers Cable to change access to its French-language channels TV5 and Météo Média, and to cancel Musique Plus, as of tomorrow, the minister avoided his responsibilities.

Obviously, the heritage minister understood nothing yesterday, neither the question he was asked, nor what is at stake. Francophones in several regions are outraged by Rogers' decision. These channels are an important part of their cultural environment, especially among young people.

We hope that the Pontius Pilate of cable television and francophones outside Quebec will emerge from his torpor and take action so that Rogers and all the other cable television companies do not reduce their services in French.

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[*English*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22, a bill denying the rights of Canadians to due process before the courts, is coming back again. This time it is the Liberals in the other place who are trying to find an eleventh hour solution to the mess which the Liberals in the House now find themselves in.

Our Liberals are in trouble due to their insistence on using the Pearson airport as a smoke screen to hide the real issue: the rule of law. They are trying to rewrite the rules of this land to suit their own purposes. This is a precedent we cannot allow to occur. If it does, what can we expect next? Expropriations without compensation, a change in the basic concept of innocent until proven guilty?

The government needs a conscience. This is often portrayed as a small person sitting on a shoulder. In the case of the Liberals their conscience is sitting on this side of the House.

I offered the Minister of Transport a solution to this mess back in October but he did not even respond to it.

The Reform Party has been consistent on the issue. It is nice to see the Liberals finally agreeing not only with us, but the respected legal opinions throughout this country.

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RURAL POST OFFICES

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the government to maintain its presence in rural Canada through the operation and ownership of federal buildings in these small communities.

In my own constituency at least three communities, the town of Wilke, the town of St. Walberg and the village of Loon Lake, have federal buildings on their main streets that currently house the post office. On several occasions over the last four years these buildings have been offered for sale by the department of public works but no buyers have been found.

It appears that the federal government wishes to jeopardize postal services in these small communities by selling off the buildings that house those post offices giving Canada Post the opportunity to relocate into retail franchises.

The public works department and Canada Post have the same minister. I call on him to support rural Canada.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to the elimination of all forms of violence in our society.

(1415)

In particular, members on this side of the House are truly concerned about the incidence of violence against women which has often been dismissed as unsubstantiated and exaggerated.

The recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada admitting drunkenness as an allowable defence for a man accused of sexually assaulting a 65-year old woman is an indication of the insensitivity that currently exists in the country.

Furthermore, as recently as last week in reference to the incidence of male violence against women the member for Lisgar—Marquette stated they were always taught at home as kids that when they went to get the cattle out of the pasture not to wear red because it would infuriate the bull in the pasture.

I fail to see the connection between violence against women and the herding techniques of the Reform Party member opposite.

It is my hope we will all work toward eliminating this type of insensitivity in our society.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***CANADIAN FLAG**

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago tomorrow, members of the House of Commons adopted the Canadian flag.

[English]

The final date of debate was December 14, 1964 and the final vote was held on December 15.

[Translation]

Her Majesty the Queen gave royal assent in February 1965.

[English]

On this historic day I recite my pledge of allegiance to the Canadian flag as authored by Alexandre Cyr: "To my flag and to the country it represents I pledge respect and loyalty".

[Translation]

Wave with pride, From sea to sea, And within your folds, Keep us ever united. God keep our flag. God protect our Canada.

I am proud to be Canadian. Long live a united Canada.

[English]

Long live a united Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would hope that as much as possible we would abstain from using any props. One usually goes with the other, but I would be hard pressed in any way to say that we should not be proud of our flag.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the past 14 months the Minister of Finance has promised he will reduce the deficit. We are still waiting.

Disappointed by his failure to act, the financial community and investors are becoming increasingly concerned about the government's failure to reduce the deficit. In fact, in a situation where we can expect the U.S. economy to start overheating, failure to reduce the deficit will always cause interest rates to rise in Canada.

Will the Minister of Finance admit that his weak-kneed approach to fighting the deficit and the miscalculations in his own budget plan are increasing concern in the financial commu-

nity and among foreign investors, and that his failure to act is largely responsible for the rise in interest rates in this country?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly prepared to admit that this year, we will reach our goals as far as the deficit is concerned, the first time in ten years the federal government has done so.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is a deficit expert. Everybody knows that. We all know the figures.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gauthier: Would the minister agree that scepticism in the financial community has increased considerably since Liberal members announced that the government would probably be unable to reach its goal of 3 per cent of GDP, which they feel justifies a general tax increase, ostensibly temporary, a proposal the Minister of Finance is still considering?

(1420)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is any scepticism on the financial markets about a government that refuses to deal with its problems, it most certainly concerns the provincial government in Quebec, the PQ, the Bloc Québécois headquarters. Ever since they came to power, they have refused to admit that they have a financial problem and that both levels of government will have to work together to deal with that problem.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe what we just heard. For the past 14 months, the Minister of Finance has been talking about the Government of Quebec. With a \$40 billion deficit, rising interest rates and his policies that have been a complete failure, he talks to us about the Government of Quebec. I cannot believe it.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

An hon. member: Wake up.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, look at them carrying on. And they talk about the Government of Quebec.

The Speaker: Wonderful Wednesday. The hon. member will please put his carefully wrought question.

Mr. Gauthier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this advance appreciation of my question. Would the Minister of Finance admit that by merely coasting along on our economic recovery instead of stimulating job creation as he should have done, he has heightened the lack of confidence in the financial community which no longer believes his promises to reduce the deficit?

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Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last quarter, we experienced 4.6 per cent growth, and in the quarter before that, 6.4 per cent. This year, 400,000 jobs were created. Last month, 95,000 jobs were created in Canada, a record for this country. Congratulations to my colleagues.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Minister of Finance that one month after he tabled his first budget, Canada's rating was downgraded, while, so far, Goldman Sachs and Moody's say that Quebec's credit rating will be maintained.

Some hon. members: There.

Mr. Loubier: The Minister of Finance continues to ignore the proposals and recommendations made by various stakeholders, including the official opposition, to reduce the deficit. His inaction has earned him very poor marks in the eyes of the financial community as this session ends.

Will the Minister of Finance not recognize that before contemplating further tax increases, he should make it a priority to recover the bulk of the \$6.6 billion in unpaid taxes owed to the federal treasury?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Roberval asked us to make cuts. Now, I will ask the Bloc Québécois finance critic for the fifteenth time, where does the Bloc suggest that we cut? We have yet to receive a single note or suggestion. Really! Family trusts? I am waiting for the finance committee report. I think that you submitted your opposition yesterday. But where, where really, should we cut? Make suggestions. Be constructive.

As for Goldman Sachs, the firm has made a favourable report because its people have said that the people of Quebec were obviously going to vote to remain within a united Canada.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we did submit proposals to the minister. As a matter of fact, when will he admit that, had he put a stop to unjustified tax shelters as we suggested, collected outstanding tax accounts as we suggested, stimulated employment as we suggested, in a word, had he taken aggressive action to cut spending over the past year—a year wasted—he would not now be facing a credibility gap, this confidence crisis, and an upward swing in interest rates that will affect everyone in Canada.

(1425)

[English]

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are now enjoying the highest economic growth of any of the G-7 countries. We are enjoying the highest economic growth of almost any of the OECD countries. We are creating jobs. We are reinvesting in the economy. We have the best productivity record of almost any of the industrial countries. Our exports are up. I have been told about 10 times that our exports are up.

Let it be very clear that this has been a very good year for the Canadian economy.

Interest rates are up. They are up because of inflation in the United States. They are up for a number of reasons. The single most important reason for the increase in interest rates this week is the international financial community has said that one of the major provinces of the country, Quebec, refuses to face up to its deficit problems.

I call upon it to do its job.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada rate rose three quarters of a per cent yesterday to over 7 per cent, driving up consumer loan rates. Since April the interest rate increases have added about \$200 a month to payments on a mortgage of \$100,000.

As the finance minister knows, our national house is mortgaged to the tune of \$542 billion, on which we make payments of approximately \$3.3 billion a month in interest alone.

Could the minister tell us what impact these interest rate increases over the past year are having on the national mortgage? Could he give us a precise dollar figure on how much these interest rate increases are costing the federal treasury since the government took office?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of public record and was set out in the House of Commons finance committee. Each one per cent increase in interest rates costs the nation \$1.7 billion on an annual basis.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the average Canadian is faced with a \$200 a month increase in mortgage payments, he or she has only one real option and that is to cut spending in other areas of expenditure. When it comes to meeting increased mortgage payments on the national house we hear, to our dismay, that the ministry is now considering getting the money from tax increases on gasoline, on personal incomes and on corporate incomes.

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Will the minister please tell us that these rumours are utterly unfounded, that there is no truth to the fact, and that he has no intention of taking more money out of taxpayers' pockets in order to meet his increased mortgage payments?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have responded to this question on numerous occasions by simply saying that the government will make its position known in the budget. We are in the consultation process. We are waiting for constructive suggestions from Canadians and from the two opposition parties.

We are waiting for the Reform Party to complete its suggestions for areas in which we should make cuts. For instance, the person in the Reform Party who was concerned with social policy—that is an oxymoron—the member for Calgary North, said she would cut some \$16 billion or \$17 billion out of social policy spending.

We are waiting for the Reform Party to give us its constructive suggestions. We will make our position known in the budget.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the blunt truth of the matter is if the minister cuts spending the way he should, special interests in the country will squeal like stuck pigs. If he tries to fix the deficit with tax increases he will injure the economic interests and prospects of every man, woman and child in the country. He is going to take heat either way.

(1430)

Why does he not take the political heat for doing the right thing rather than the wrong thing and declare that he will fight the deficit only through spending reductions? Why do you not take the heat, through you, Mr. Speaker, for doing the right thing rather than the wrong thing?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): We are prepared to take the heat, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin: (LaSalle—Émard): In fact we would much prefer to do it that way.

We understand the bulk of the actions that have to be taken must be taken on the spending side. We understand that Canadians have to live within their means and that they expect their governments to do the same. We are going to do that.

We also have had the benefit of a very well thought out report by the House of Commons finance committee in which members on all sides of the House participated. That is an important part

of the consultation process. We intend to take that into account and we will give our answer when we bring down the budget.

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[Translation]

COLLÈGE MILITAIRE ROYAL DE SAINT-JEAN

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

With just 10 days before Christmas, time is running out on the issue of the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean for the teachers, their families and the whole Saint-Jean community. All stakeholders have agreed to discuss the merits of the proposal from the mayor of Saint-Jean, which provides for the gradual conversion of the military college into a civilian educational institution. The only holdout is the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Can the minister promise today in this House to resume discussions on the basis of the proposal from the mayor of Saint-Jean, which provides for a three-year transition period?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the mayor of Saint-Jean yesterday at lunchtime and it is clear that we can come to an agreement. The only obstacle is that the Parti Québécois has not yet agreed on the basis of negotiations. I hope to be notified in the coming days. As soon as I am notified, we will resume negotiations.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs acceded yesterday to the minister's objective of demilitarizing the college. As the minister said to us yesterday, let us stop fooling around.

Will the minister, in the interest of the Saint-Jean community, resume negotiations on the basis of the proposal from the mayor of Saint-Jean, yes or no?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we must indeed stop fooling around, so the Quebec minister, who says one thing on Monday and another thing on Tuesday, should confirm her position to me in writing before I can take action.

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[English]

SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been more than five days since the Solicitor General received SIRC's report on the Bristow affair. Despite the fact that SIRC insists that it wrote the report for

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public consumption, the minister has withheld it not only from the public but from the members of the national security subcommittee.

Could the minister advise the House the nature of the problem that is causing the delay and provide us with a definite time for the release of the document?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my objective is to have the material available to members of the House tomorrow.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, while I am delighted to learn that the report is finally being released, I would like to ask the minister about his response to a question yesterday when he responded that it was his responsibility to decide on the best way to release the report.

Does the minister believe that the best way to release the report is to delay its release so that he does not have to face scrutiny on the contents of the report until February?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the tone of my hon. friend's question.

(1435)

I thought she would be delighted to learn that my objective is to have the material available for her and all members of the House tomorrow. I thought she would give me some applause for that. Again I am very surprised at her question.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Eastern Quebec's main social, community and labour organizations have asked the federal government to take seasonal workers into consideration, rather than let them down, in its social program reform. According to the minister's estimates, close to two thirds of unemployed people who would be considered frequent UI users are seasonal workers.

Will the minister recognize that, since seasonal workers represent close to two thirds of those whom he defines as frequent users, his project to implement a two-tier UI system would essentially target these workers?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversifi-

tion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about two months ago I established a special working group to look at the way seasonal workers could be impacted by the various proposals.

The member knows that in the green book we do not just present one proposal; we present a variety of proposals about how we can change the unemployment insurance form.

The special working group has been going across the country. It has met with several hundred representatives of various working groups, union groups and business groups. I have met with its representatives and they are doing a very effective job of making a proper assessment of how we can be very considerate and very sensitive to the issue of seasonal workers.

Ten years ago only about 14 per cent of unemployment insurance funds were drawn down by those who were frequent users. Today it is over 40 per cent. It shows a very fundamental change in the way unemployment insurance is being used. It is time Canadians have the honesty and the responsibility for taking a look at those changes.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister recognize that regions which depend on industries such as forestry, fishing and tourism, such as eastern Quebec, will be the main victims of his reform and will become second class regions with second class jobless?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member uses words like victim and so on. It shows that he has not read the proposals.

One of the most serious issues facing Canadians is helping those who are affected by frequent unemployment or affected by long periods of unemployment to have better training, better support, better off season adjustment programs so they can get longer term employment.

The whole thrust of the green paper is employability. Get more work for longer periods for more people. That is the whole point of the reform.

By using that kind of provocative language all the member is doing is stirring up reaction as opposed to helping Canadians understand the kinds of choices they can make. I would suggest that he stop doing it.

* * *

BOSNIA

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government is choosing inaction on Bosnia now, but while Parliament is in recess over Christmas what will it do?

Oral Questions

While Reform accepts NATO's protective role for the UN, will the foreign affairs minister stick to his commitment of recalling Parliament for a full debate before Canada considers giving NATO permission to enter into the war in an expanded way?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that we do not intend to change the mandate of our troops in Bosnia.

Canada has accepted participation in the UN peacekeeping mission. That is the mandate our soldiers are fulfilling there. We know that under very difficult circumstances they are performing remarkable jobs, saving the lives of civilians affected by this war, helping humanitarian convoys to get through, and assisting in probably the most difficult UN peacekeeping mission ever under the responsibility of the United Nations.

(1440)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I did not get an answer to my question.

It is interesting that in opposition the Liberal Party had lots to say about foreign affairs policy decisions being made without consulting Parliament. How can it change so dramatically by simply changing the side of the House that it is on?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that there have been three debates in the House of Commons on the subject.

I assure the hon. member that when the decision is taken to renew or to change our mandate we will again consult Parliament.

* * *

*[Translation]***CUSTOMS BROKERS**

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

To comply with the new regulation that takes effect on January 16, 145 of the 269 customs brokers who operate in Canada have applied to Reed Stenhouse, a Toronto company, for the surety bond required by Revenue Canada. As of today, 32 of these customs brokers have been denied bonds, in other words, they have been put out of business. Another twenty or so have yet to receive a reply.

Does the minister realize that this new policy of requiring customs brokers to obtain high surety bonds has already resulted in the loss of at least 250 jobs, and that the losses will be much more substantial if he persists on this course?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my view the figures provided by the hon. member are not accurate. Certainly his projections for the future are inaccurate.

Over the last four years there have been 15 failures of customs brokers leading to very substantial problems for their clients. Their clients of course are the ordinary importers of Canada.

The problem that arises under these circumstances is that the clients are liable for a second time for money they paid to the customs broker. It is vital that we deal with this problem. We must create a fair system of mutual insurance so that the client of the customs broker can be protected. This is what we are attempting to do.

[Translation]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, should the minister not demonstrate the most elementary common sense and reconsider this decision, if he wishes to see these businesses and the hundreds of jobs they represent survive?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly accept the representation of the hon. member to review it. It is not a policy which is yet finally determined. We are examining it at the present time and we will make a decision shortly.

I should point out that the concern I expressed in the House a moment or two ago is a very real one. We must make sure that the customs system in Canada does not result in some importers paying double the amount because of the failure of the agent that they employ as a customs broker.

* * *

*[Translation]***ROGERS CABLE**

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Recently, it came to our attention that Rogers Cable television will no longer provide its subscribers with access to three French language channels.

What is the government's position on access to French language programming for all Canadians?

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. Canada's policy is to promote shows

Oral Questions

and programs in both official languages, French and English, in the distribution and presentation of television programming.

Furthermore, I must say that cable operators are free to decide what they will distribute. The market rules, the market decides. Subscribers are free to contact their cable company to let it know how they feel about it. Also, they can always file a complaint with the CRTC.

* * *

(1445)

[English]

VETERANS APPEAL BOARD

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal red book said that the Tory government “made a practice of choosing political friends” in making appointments. It went on to say that the Prime Minister would fill positions “on the basis of competence”. My question is for the Secretary of State for Veterans Affairs.

Could the minister explain to the House the criteria for appointments to the Veterans Appeal Board?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, competence.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I could not hear the answer.

The answer did not include that several of the 1994 appointments to the Veterans Appeal Board have been long time friends of the Liberal Party, including failed Liberal candidates and former Liberal MPs including René Cousineau, Patricia Landers and Una MacLean Evans who supported the Prime Minister in his bid for the Liberal leadership race in 1990. The Liberal list goes on and on. The major criteria appear to be that one must be a Liberal to get these \$86,000 a year plums.

My supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. When will the government live up to its red book promise and put an end to these blatant partisan patronage appointments?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have looked at the list of order in council appointments. We have made more than 650. I checked and I do not know more than 40 of them. I have not done very well regarding Liberals because I know only 40 of them.

The others I did not know but they were recommended and chosen. I hope that the day has not come in Canada where because some day one has the good fortune of offering one's services to serve Canada as a member of Parliament that one will disqualify oneself forever to serve on a board anywhere in the land.

[Translation]

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Several decisions by the National Transportation Agency allowing CN and CP to abandon lines in Quebec will be implemented in 1995. The Quebec economic development professionals' association is concerned about the devastating impact of these decisions on regional development in Quebec and urges the minister to review these decisions by the agency.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand very well the concerns expressed by my hon. colleague. However, he certainly understands that a minister cannot easily bypass the decisions made by a quasi-judicial agency. That would not be acceptable.

In response to these concerns, we asked CN and CP, whenever the National Transportation Agency allows them to abandon rail lines, not to remove this infrastructure because we want to look for ways to maintain services in these regions. It is important not only in Quebec but across the country. We will try to maintain a moratorium on rail line removal until a national policy is in place.

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not agree that he should review the National Transportation Agency's decisions on the basis not only of cost effectiveness but also of the impact of line abandonment on regional economic development? Should he not facilitate the takeover of some segments by local or regional organizations?

[English]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question posed and even the suggestions contained in the remarks of my hon. colleague are very valid. I believe it is very important to make sure that we all understand the contribution that rail makes to regional development. The work of the Nault commission in looking at the commercialization of CN, the decision of the government to reject the unsolicited bid from CP, and our commitment to announce a national rail policy in 1995 reflects the kinds of concerns that were raised by the hon. member.

(1450)

We will attempt to make sure that by encouraging CN and CP to leave the rail infrastructure in place, even though they have had the right to abandon it on the basis of a decision from the National Transportation Agency, it will help to address the concerns that were raised.

I expect that all members on both sides of the House will want to make a contribution to the exercise that is under way now,

being led by the member for Kenora—Rainy River, looking at the future of CN, particularly commercialization with employee participation.

* * *

AVIATION AND MARINE SAFETY

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, automated weather observation systems are being installed at airports across the country to replace human observers. This is the same technology that is being used with automated lighthouses. I would have no problem with this as a cost saving measure if the system worked, but it does not.

Why is the Minister of Transport prepared to jeopardize aviation and marine safety with unreliable technology that is being asked to do a job it was never designed for?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not unusual for the hon. member to mix apples and oranges but the fact is that the destaffing of lighthouses is based on technology that has been used around the world. For example, in the United States of America there is one staffed lighthouse remaining and it is a historic site at Boston harbour.

With respect to the AWOS concern, which is a very legitimate concern, I reassure the member, members of the House, and the travelling public in general that Transport Canada has reacted to the concerns raised by the aviation community. We are making certain that services are adequate. We have to deal in the light of the fact that the Air Transportation Association of Canada, the Canadian Professional Airline Association, the airlines themselves, would never fly into airports where there was not an adequate level of safety available to them.

As important as the question is, I would not want to leave the impression raised by the hon. member's question that somehow there is an unsafe situation in the aviation industry in Canada.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it happens that several airlines now refuse to fly into airports as alternates that use the AWOS system.

Transport Canada recently agreed to put human weather observers back into Dorval and Edmonton municipal airports. This causes one to wonder why the safety of Canadians using those airports are more important than the safety of those using one of the 48 other AWOS sites and those of the coastal marine and aviation users.

Will the minister agree to cancel destaffing of aviation weather observers and light stations until AWOS systems can be proven to work and are accepted by marine and aviation users?

Oral Questions

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best measure is the support being provided by the aviation industry to the initiatives we are taking. I take exception to the hon. member's comment that some airlines are refusing to fly into specific areas where there are AWOS installations.

I hear the hon. member saying "speak to Canadian Airlines". The hon. member used to be an air traffic controller so we know the system is already working better because he is here.

The representative from Canadian Airlines who made the complaint about the AWOS happens to be a meteorologist. Again, we are trying to do the very best we can. I do not think it helps the situation in any way to suggest that the system in Canada is unsafe. We have the safest navigation system in the world.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal.

Almost daily there are rumours about thousands of cuts in the public service. These speculative reports leave the impression more of a demolition derby than a renewal of the public service.

What exactly is the minister doing to keep our government's commitments to improving moral in the public service, to treating the public service with respect, and to treating federal employees fairly? What is he doing for public service renewal?

(1455)

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and myself would agree that we had and we still have one of the finest public services in the world and that we have to maintain its quality in order for it to be able to perform well in the future.

The government has given a pledge that it would reduce involuntary layoffs to an absolute minimum and it will keep that pledge.

In the program review we are looking at all the programs to make government more efficient in order to cut costs. There is no doubt that government will have to be downsized. However in that process we are always keeping in mind that the public service has to be kept efficient and able to perform its job. It has to be kept in a spirit that will permit it to respond to the challenges that it faces. We will do that.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. In his recent report, the Auditor General mentions that after spending \$26.6 million, the federal government has still not solved an issue related to unproductive rent payments, this after 20 years. Those payments concern a Vancouver lot rented by the federal government, and more specifically by the Department of Environment, where an environmental centre was to be built. However, the project was abandoned in 1976.

Can the minister tell us what action plan her department has to solve this issue, since this useless lot costs taxpayers \$4.4 million a year?

[English]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the member has asked this question because on taking over the ministry I made arrangements to inform the band that future payments after this fiscal year should cease and desist.

We have begun negotiations and in fact expect to conclude an agreement very shortly where in fact there will be no further federal payments made for this land. In a year we have solved the problem.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

On November 29 he produced four orders in council concerning prohibited weapons. Two court decisions should require the minister to lay these orders before the House at least 30 sitting days before their effective date. His date of January 1 would not even be close.

Will the minister explain to the House why he has not complied with the law, section 116 of the Criminal Code?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the orders in council to which the hon. member refers were made not under section 116 of the code, which does indeed require the procedure he has described, but rather under section 84 of the code which does not.

Although there is a judicial decision of a trial court which holds that it is necessary even under section 84 to lay the regulations before the House, that decision is under appeal to the appellate division of the court in Alberta. We have every confidence that judgment was wrong in that respect and that we will succeed in the appeal.

INTEREST RATES

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is with regard to the very unwelcome Christmas present that Canadians got with an increase in interest rates.

Increasing interest rates have affected, as the minister himself said today, charges on the debt and deficit. They influence consumer confidence, farmers and small business. The government has been telling Canadians what they must cut back on. Would the minister consider a public review of monetary policy in the country and a review of the mandate of the Bank of Canada?

Would the minister commit to undertaking such a public review before the budget of that mandate of the Bank of Canada and the interest rate policy?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, approximately one to two months after we first took office, the Government of Canada and the Bank of Canada entered into an agreement whereby we set the inflation targets which is very important in terms of monetary policy in the country and in terms of keeping inflation low.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, keeping inflation low is a major asset toward the economic recovery of the country. What is crucial, if we are going to get interest rates low, is that we get the fundamentals right and that is job creation, investment in productivity, low inflation and the kinds of things we are now seeing within the Canadian economy.

(1500)

We live in an interdependent world. No country is isolated from the effects of that. Getting the fundamentals right and the economy strong and cleaning up the finances of the country are by far the best ways of keeping interest rates low.

* * *

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Every year on the job accidents cost the government and the economy about \$10 billion. In these times of fiscal restraint it is important to find ways to cut costs.

What action is the minister taking to eliminate waste and cut on the job accidents which currently total about \$10 billion a year?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a question which I think is both important and timely. We have noticed over the last several years there has been a trend line downward in the level of occupational accidents and the level of compensation claims. We recognize that with a whole new series

and new kinds of industrial and office based hazards growing, we are going to have to do more.

One thing we did immediately was establish a 1-800 number that works out of the Centre for Occupational Health and Safety in the city of Hamilton to provide instantaneous information for all users of industrial kinds so they can find out what kinds of solutions and programs are necessary.

One of the most important initiatives under the new labour side agreement under NAFTA is that we have now started a series of major conferences on occupational safety dealing with petrochemicals, construction and electronics so we can begin to share the knowledge and information of the three countries and begin to provide new standards.

It is important, especially when we get into new office space hazards, ergonomics and other areas, that we begin to enlist the co-operation of business, labour and all levels of government to provide a new regime of occupational safety in the country.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, during his reply, at which time I expected a lot of rhetoric, the Minister of Transport made a particular remark stating that the air traffic control system was safer because I no longer work for it, because I am here in the House.

I would ask the minister to clarify this point. Is the air traffic control system safer because I am here in the House fighting against his unreasonable measures, or was it a direct personal attack on my abilities, in which case he must withdraw—

The Speaker: I see where we might get into a little more repartee here. I wonder if the hon. member would give me a day to look at the blues to see precisely what was said. I will try to figure out what was meant. I will get back to the House if necessary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a nomination which was recently made by the government.

Routine Proceedings

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(2), it is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour today to present to the House, in both official languages, a letter conveying the government's position and decision on redress.

* * *

(1505)

MULTICULTURALISM

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just tabled the letter I sent to the following groups: the Chinese Canadian National Council, the German Canadian Congress, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India, the National Congress of Chinese Canadians, the National Congress of Italian Canadians, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Canadian Ukrainian Civil Liberties Association.

The letter conveys the government's decision on redress. This is not a decision the government has taken easily, but it is one that after much discussion reflects a commitment to building a more fair and equitable society.

In the letter I wrote that as Canadians we are proud that our citizens trace their origins to every part of the world. Together we have built this country on the principles of fairness, generosity and compassion. Our history records the remarkable success we have achieved by applying those principles.

Our history also records that at times we have strayed from them. There have been episodes that have caused suffering to people.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

In the crisis atmosphere of war, some Canadian ethnocultural communities found their loyalty questioned, their freedom restrained and their lives disrupted.

[English]

In the past Canada enforced some immigration practices that were at odds with our shared commitment to human justice. Canadians wish those episodes had never happened. We wish those practices had never occurred. We wish we could rewrite history. We wish we could relive the past. We cannot.

[Translation]

We can and we must learn from the past. We must ensure that future generations do not repeat the errors of the past.

[English]

Seeking to heal the wounds caused by the actions of previous governments, six ethnocultural communities have requested redress and compensation totalling hundreds of millions of dollars. The government understands the strong feelings underlying these requests. We share the desire to heal those wounds.

The issue is whether the best way to do this is to attempt to address the past or to invest in the future. We believe our only choice lies in using limited government resources to create a more equitable society now and a better future for generations to come.

Therefore the government will not grant financial compensation for the requests made. We believe our obligation lies in acting to prevent these wrongs from recurring. The government will continue to take concrete measures to strengthen the fabric of Canadian life by combating racism, prejudice and discrimination through education, information and the promotion of the values of fairness.

[Translation]

We have already made progress. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms now guarantees equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination. Through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, we are committed to the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in shaping Canada's destiny.

By passing the Canadian Human Rights Act and upholding the international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, we have taken another step in entrenching the principle of equality.

[English]

The letter goes on to say a further major step forward is the establishment of the Canadian race relations foundation. The government will proclaim the act establishing the foundation in the spring of 1995. The foundation, first proposed a decade ago,

will play a fundamental role in moving toward the elimination of racial discrimination in Canada.

[Translation]

We honour the contribution of all those communities whose members, often in the face of hardship, persevered in building our country.

[English]

Together we must ensure that all Canadians can face the future with pride in Canada, in our values and in their own heritage. We are a nation of inclusion. Our task is to strive together to guarantee that the actions of the country match the principles of its people.

(1510)

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to point out to the secretary of state that we received a copy of her statement barely an hour and a half ago. We think that is unreasonably short notice and the government has a strange way of proceeding, to say the least.

Be that as it may, I am pleased to speak today on this important matter. Indeed, it is wrong to minimize the suffering of several Canadian cultural communities caused by Canada's reprehensible behaviour towards them, as was the case in the climate of crisis due to the war.

Canada shamefully deviated from the principles of justice, compassion and generosity which always guided its behaviour towards all its citizens from all over the world who have contributed greatly to its enrichment.

The government's decision not to pay financial compensation to the cultural communities that asked for redress is totally irresponsible. Instead of excusing the past, the government must face the truth. Some members of these communities were incarcerated in makeshift camps, the property of some was seized, others lost their jobs; in short, their most basic rights were literally violated.

What is the government's response to them? We are sorry for the past and we must now get on with the future. What a response.

Does the government realize that many people still live today with the scars from what happened then? What message is the government giving all those affected by what Canada did? That the country does not face up to its responsibilities and hides behind pious platitudes.

On the contrary, the Bloc Québécois thinks that there should be fair financial compensation for all those citizens who were considered to be outright enemies of Canada. The government must make fair financial restitution to these people and communities. The desire of the leaders of these communities for real

Routine Proceedings

restitution must be respected. The government must immediately go back on its decision.

On behalf of all members of the Bloc Québécois, I wish to repeat how important we consider the cultural communities in Canada and Quebec to be; their contribution to our societies points the way to the collective development of us all.

[English]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this fall I had the privilege of speaking at a symposium in Banff hosted by the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Members of the association were asking the government to recognize injustices that had been taken against their group during World War I.

In the early 1900s thousands of people came to Canada from all over the world. Many of these settlers had come from Austria-Hungary, fleeing their oppressive government. When the first world war broke out these people were declared aliens and were made to report weekly to the government. Failure to do so resulted in arrest and deportation to labour camps.

Unfortunately this treatment was not limited to people from Austria-Hungary. As the minister explained, people from various ethnic backgrounds were treated in a similar fashion and the only reason they were treated so poorly was their membership in a group, in these cases an ethnic group.

I am elated to see the Liberals following the lead established by the Reform Party. They recognize as we do that Canada has never entered a war spontaneously or without great consideration. Canadians prefer peace and mediation to the horrors and atrocities of war. Further, Canadians cherish the equal rights of all individuals in society and recognize that they should not be compromised.

It is not possible to determine who has been negatively affected by these government decisions or exactly by how much. Giving money to these groups to redress the mistakes of the past would not fix those mistakes. We do need to look to today and to the future to ensure that the rights of Canadians are not unjustly compromised. The secretary of state has suggested that she will proclaim the Canadian race relations foundation in order for the government to avoid making the same mistakes again.

Unfortunately the Canadian race relations foundation will not meet this noble goal. The Canadian race relations foundation will cost \$24 million just in an initial capital output and it is suggested that its yearly operating costs will be several millions of dollars.

(1515)

However it is not just because of costs alone that we oppose the foundation. We have some of the same concerns expressed

by the Liberals when they were in opposition. Let me remind the House of some of their earlier criticisms.

The member for Winnipeg North suggested that the foundation should not exist because the responsibility for the program could be accomplished elsewhere. He stated: "Social harmony cannot be created by posters, proclamations or literary contests or even by co-operation between business and government or direct government action. The real challenge is in the hearts and minds of each of us as individuals".

This foundation will have over 30 GIC appointments; yet another opportunity for patronage at its worst.

The member for Eglinton—Lawrence stated: "One of the most important questions is: How do we finance some of the philosophies the minister says this foundation addresses?"

The member for Scarborough—Agincourt when in opposition also criticized the foundation. He said the foundation "gives the minister a great impact on the direction taken by this organization and could lead to it becoming nothing more than a mouthpiece for government policy. It could lead to the assumption that the foundation is more of a political organization than one of a proactive association for the needs of the furtherance of race relations". He continued to say that "the funds available for this foundation will act only as a vehicle for the government of the day to put out its policies and to place into position people who are supporting it. Probably it will be the president of the foundation, somebody who has raised funds for the government".

This foundation is required by law to be housed in Toronto. The Liberals criticized this fact as well. Winnipeg is the most multicultural city in Canada yet it has been given no consideration as a possible site.

The motherhood ideology of multiculturalism and anti-racism is noble. However support for the programs caring for the policies is already in place. Consider the efforts and positive results accomplished by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. This in conjunction with programs in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has taken Canada a long way toward reaching the goals of a tolerant society.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 55th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding selection of votable items in accordance with Standing Order 92.

Routine Proceedings

This report is deemed adopted on presentation.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (FEDERAL AGENCIES)

The Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-65, an act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies.

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

* * *

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-298, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of interest on mortgage loans).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today and introduce my private member's bill entitled an act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of interest on mortgage loans).

The bill proposes that subject to subsection (2) there may be deducted in computing a taxpayer's income for a taxation year an amount equal to the interest paid by the taxpayer in the year to a mortgage lender on the first \$100,000 of a mortgage secured by an individual's qualifying home. Some conditions apply as outlined in this bill.

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

* * *

(1520)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That no Private Members' Business shall be considered on Thursday, December 15, 1994, providing that the item set down for consideration that day shall retain its position first on the order of precedence.

In other words, in order to obtain unanimous consent for private members' hour not to be held tomorrow afternoon, the member in whose name the private member's item is on the order retains his place on the order of precedence when we come back in February.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

PETITIONS

CHILDREN

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present this petition signed by 1,200 students of a secondary school in my riding. It asks one thing only: that the government keep its promise. And I am keeping my promise to the students of this school to present their petition in the House and to read it.

I will be brief. These students tell us that every day on earth 40,000 children die of starvation and illness, and that at the world summit for children the leaders of this country promised to reduce the number of children who leave this earth prematurely. These students also ask the government—

The Deputy Speaker: As the member knows I of course accept his good faith, but has the petition been deemed admissible?

Mr. Sauvageau: It has been accepted and approved.

The Deputy Speaker: Fine.

Mr. Sauvageau: Our whip taught us well Mr. Speaker, and we respect the rules on tabling documents in this House.

The students also told us that every year, on this planet earth, countless numbers of women die giving birth to children. The government undertook to reduce the number of such mortalities.

The government also undertook to help children in war-torn countries, to help children who wanted a normal education, and to respect the work done by children.

For all these promises made by the government, I present this petition, signed by 1,200 students of the École polyvalente Paul-Arseneau.

VOICE MAIL

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a first petition signed by 852 residents of the riding of Châteauguay, which I have the honour to represent. These petitioners from 28 organizations object to the use of voice mail in serving seniors. This much criticized technology is definitely not suited to seniors.

Indeed, seniors are entitled to proper service, especially when they have inquiries to make about income security. I agree with them and together, we call upon Parliament to kindly ask the government to abandon the plan to implement voice mail for seniors.

CFB BAGOTVILLE

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, on behalf of over 10,000 residents of the riding of Chicoutimi, I would like to present a petition on the military base in Bagotville, which is one of the main employers

in the region, providing work to more than 1,500 military and 250 civilian employees. The strategic function of the base is air defence and airspace control in eastern Canada, international contingencies and support for land and sea forces.

The base's responsibilities extend beyond its confines, as it also provides support for local recruiting centres and militia units. Finally, over the summer, the base hosted the air cadet camp attended by some 3,000 young men and women. CFB Bagotville has been a major player in our region, both socially and economically, for over 50 years.

(1525)

[English]

MINING

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition in support of keeping mining in Canada.

In this age of technological transformation, we often forget that mining and natural resources are and continue to be some of the economic forces that sustain our great nation, a nation that is judged to be the best place in the world to live.

The petition asks the government to do all it can to improve the slumping mining investment climate in Canada so that mining will continue to provide jobs for Canadians, continue to be a significant exporter and continue to contribute to Canada's economic prosperity.

I fully concur with the petition.

SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to place petitions before the House today on behalf of the member for Parliament for Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold.

The petitions are signed by residents of St. Catharines, Thorold, Welland, Niagara Falls and surrounding areas.

I join the petitioners in speaking out against the serial killer cards and call on Parliament to amend the laws of Canada to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of killer cards and to advise producers of killer cards that their products, if destined for Canada, will be seized and destroyed.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present three petitions on behalf of my constituents from the Ontario riding.

Routine Proceedings

The first petition calls on Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code of Canada to extend the same protection already enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition requests Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): My final petition, Mr. Speaker, calls on Parliament not to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships, including amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include the prohibited ground of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation, which I concur with.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to rise, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present three petitions from Elk Island and the surrounding area.

The first petition asks that the Young Offenders Act, because it is not stringent enough, be amended to lower the protected age to 12, to provide harsher penalties for those convicted of violent crimes and the release of the names of offenders.

The petition is signed by 1,296 petitioners.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the next two petitions are essentially the same. They request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or homosexuality and not to amend the human rights code to include the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

Together the two petitions contain 1,058 signatures.

FIREARMS

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today. The first petition contains almost 200 signatures.

The petitioners request that Parliament refuse to accept the anti-firearms proposal of the Minister of Justice and insist that he brings forward legislation to convict and punish criminals rather than persecute the innocent. I gladly present that today.

Routine Proceedings

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam.

These residents of Canada request that Parliament ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously.

I certainly support these petitions today.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition signed by the residents of the city of Fort McMurray in my riding of Athabasca.

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

(1530)

[*Translation*]

VIA RAIL'S PROPOSED CUTS AND LINE ABANDONMENTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition signed by 704 Canadians who want the government to continue subsidizing VIA Rail.

Grouped together in Rural Dignity of Canada, these residents of Canada and Quebec demand that the Government of Canada hold public hearings and consultations before making any decision on VIA Rail's proposed service cuts and line abandonments. The people of Quebec and Canada also call for an immediate one-year moratorium to be placed on any line closure.

VOICE MAIL

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling today a petition on the introduction of voice mail service at Income Security. This petition was signed by 157 residents of Brossard, Candiac and La Prairie and members of the following seniors' groups: AFEAS La Nativité de La Prairie, AFEAS Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur de Brossard, Club de l'âge d'or de La Prairie, Joie de vivre de l'âge d'or de Brossard.

Whereas seniors are naturally more at a loss when faced with voice mail technology; whereas seniors are entitled to adequate service, particularly with regard to their income security enquiries; therefore, your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ask the government to abandon its plan to introduce voice mail systems for seniors.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today which have been signed by over 200 Canadians.

The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the fact that discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual Canadians is an everyday reality in all regions of the country. This kind of discrimination is unacceptable in a country known for its commitment to human rights, equality and dignity.

The petitioners call on Parliament to act quickly to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

I am pleased to support these petitions.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present three petitions signed by well over 100 people.

The first petition asks Parliament to act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no change in the law which would sanction the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition requests 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.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition bearing the signatures of 371 people from Edmonton and other areas in Alberta on the issue of euthanasia. It is a very difficult subject and has much interest to the citizens of Edmonton.

Along with recent correspondence and meetings with individuals and organizations, such as the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League who organized this petition, about their views on the topic, we are planning to hold a policy forum on January 20, in

Routine Proceedings

Edmonton East. We will bring together individuals well versed in legal, medical and ethical aspects of assisted suicide.

It is our hope that this discussion will be informative and broad in scope because I really feel the need for the wise counsel of my constituents on this issue before I can make a final decision on how to vote in the House.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition on behalf of 48 citizens of my riding.

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

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present petitions on behalf of my constituents and other British Columbians.

The petitioners ask the government to amend the Divorce Act to include a provision which will give grandparents standing before the courts to ask for access to see their grandchildren. Perhaps no time is more heartbreaking and empty than Christmas when grandchildren and grandparents cannot see or speak to each other.

* * *

(1535)

STARRED QUESTIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Starred Questions Nos. 97, 98 and 100.

[Text]

*Question No. 97—**Mr. Godin:**

With respect to the Kahnawake Band Council (a) what is the breakdown of the \$1,619,076 in grants awarded to it from 1989 to 1994 to help it negotiate self-government and (b) what legal counsel were paid with this money?

*Question No. 98—**Mr. Godin:**

What is the breakdown of the \$2,063,470 awarded the Kahnawake Band Council from 1989 to 1993 for purposes of economic development, economic growth and self-sufficiency?

*Question No. 100—**Mr. Godin:**

What is the justification for the average annual increase from 1989 to 1993 of 13.6 per cent in federal investment in the Kahnawake Reserve?

[English]

Mr. Cummins: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On September 28 I put a question on the Order Paper to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans concerning the possible conflict of interest of members appointed to the Fraser River Sockeye Review Board. The board has started public hearings and I have yet to receive a reply.

The chair of the review board is a public servant who serves at the sufferance of the government. At least two board members have proposals before government departments. One board member is actively promoting his proposal in the hearings. At least two board members sit on various department of fisheries advisory boards.

It is vital for the minister to respond to this question on the independence of his inquiry. My question deserves an immediate answer.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, there are many deserving questions on the Order Paper and I know that ministers are working assiduously to provide competent accurate and full answers to all the questions.

I know that the minister of fisheries will have heard the representations of the hon. member today and I am optimistic that soon we will have an answer for him.

Perhaps we could go back to my original point on Starred Questions Nos. 97, 98, and 100, please. The answers are as follows.

The information held by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on the band council's expenditures is contained in the financial statements supplied by the band. The information is confidential financial information from a third party and as such cannot be disclosed without the band's consent under the terms of section 20 of the Access to Information Act.

With respect to Starred Question No. 98, I should advise that the answer is identical to that in No. 97.

With respect to Starred Question No. 100 the answer is as follows.

It is not possible for us to verify the percentage of 13.6 per cent. The band's budget increased in part as a result of the introduction in 1991 of the new funding formula for the economic development program.

The band's funding for social assistance also increased as a result of the band taking over the delivery of social assistance to all beneficiaries on reserve in 1992. Moreover the funding for the post-secondary program has also increased.

I ask that the remaining questions stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to call Motion No. P-3.

That an Order of the House do issue for a copy of the December 9, 1994, report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee entitled "The Heritage Front Affair", subject only to the removal of that information relating to the amount and management of payments to sources which, if disclosed, could, in the opinion of the Solicitor General, impair the ability of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service to obtain information from sources that is strictly necessary to its duties and functions, and having regard to subsection 18(2) of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service Act and paragraph 8(2)(c) of the Privacy Act.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-3 in the name of the hon. member for Perth—Wellington—Waterloo is acceptable to the government.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Notice of Motion No. P-3 for the production of papers be deemed to have been adopted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you might find unanimous consent that the vote now before the House be deferred until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to defer the vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Therefore, the vote is deferred until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[*English*]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the other Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the other notices of motions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended today by 13 minutes, pursuant to Standing Order 33(2).

(1540)

[*English*]

Because of the notice provision the House would require the unanimous consent of all members to proceed now with Bill C-53. I wonder if there is unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-53, an act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In viewing the motions on the Order Paper this morning I noticed a misprint in Motion No. 12. It should have read: "That Bill C-53 be amended in clause 7" and not clause 4 as it is reported. I would like the assurance that this will be corrected in *Hansard*.

The Deputy Speaker: So done, and I thank the hon. member.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: This is a long ruling and I understand copies will be available for anyone who wishes to have it in writing, almost instantly if not already. There are 27 motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-53.

Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 21 will be grouped for debate but voted on as follows: (a) a vote on Motion No. 8 applies to Motion No. 10; (b) an affirmative vote on Motion No.

8 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 21; (c) on the other hand, a negative vote on Motion No. 8 necessitates the question being put on Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; (i) a vote on Motion No. 1 applies to Motion No. 9; and (ii) a vote on Motion No. 5 applies to Motion No. 21.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 11, 12 and 13 will be grouped for debate but voted on as follows:

(a) Motion No. 11 will be voted on separately.

(b) An affirmative vote on Motion No. 12 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motion No. 13.

(c) On the other hand, a negative vote on Motion No. 12 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 13.

[English]

Motions Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 will be grouped for debate but voted on as follows: (a) a vote on Motion No. 14 applies to Motions Nos. 15, 16, 18 and 19; (b) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 14 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motion No. 17; (c) on the other hand, a negative vote on Motion No. 14 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 17.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 20 and 23 will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 20 applies to Motion No. 23.

[English]

Motion No. 22 will be debated and voted on separately.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 24, 25, 26 and 27 will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 24 applies to Motions Nos. 25, 26 and 27.

[English]

I will now propose Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 21 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 19 to 24, on page 1, and lines 1 and 2, on page 2, with the following:

"4. (1) Subject to subsection (2), the powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend to and include all matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, board or agency of the Government of Canada, relating

(a) to Canadian identity and the identity of Quebec;

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(b) to the values, cultural development and heritage of Canada and of Quebec; and
(c) to areas of natural or historical significance to Canada or Quebec.

(2) The Minister shall not exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by the Act, unless the Minister has received the approval of the government of every province where

(a) the government of the province has enacted legislation or established a provincial program in a matter over which Parliament has jurisdiction under subsection (1); or

(b) the government of the province has notified the Minister in writing of its intention to enact such legislation or to establish such a program."

(1545)

[English]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended by deleting lines 6 to 8, on page 2.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended by deleting line 9, on page 2.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended by adding after line 11, on page 2, the following:

"(c.1) copyrights;"

[English]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended replacing lines 16 to 18, on page 2, with the following:

"(e) national historic sites, national battlefields, heritage"

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended replacing lines 23 to 27, on page 2, with the following:

"(g) the promotion of language policies centred

(i) on freedom of speech,

(ii) on recognition of the French language in Quebec and the English language in the other provinces,

(iii) on recognition of bilingualism in key federal institutions, such as the Parliament of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada, and

(iv) on recognition of bilingualism where the number of citizens is sufficient to warrant the provision to them of services in both official languages;"

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-53, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing new paragraph (2)(j), with the following:

"(j) the formulation of cultural policy as it relates to foreign investment;"

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) moved:

Motion No. 8

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That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec) moved:

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-53, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing lines 38 to 43, on page 2, and lines 1 and 2, on page 3, with the following:

"5.(1) Subject to subsection (2), in exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by section 4, the Minister shall initiate, recommend, coordinate, implement and promote national policies, projects and programs with respect to Canadian identity and the identity of Quebec, Canadian values, cultural development and heritage and the values, cultural development and heritage of Quebec and areas of natural or historical significance to Canada or to Quebec."

(2) The Minister shall not exercise the powers and perform the duties and functions referred to in subsection (1), unless the Minister has received the approval of the government of every province where

(a) the government of the province has implemented in the province a policy, project or program referred to in subsection (1); or

(b) the government of the province has notified the Minister in writing of its intention to implement a policy, project or program referred to in subsection (1)."

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) moved:

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-53, in Clause 22, be amended by deleting lines 4 to 8, on page 8.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to discuss the amendments moved by my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata and myself concerning Bill C-53, on the Department of Canadian Heritage.

I do so with pleasure, because the amendments proposed by the official opposition well reflect one of Quebec's traditional demands from the government in Ottawa. Indeed, the very essence of the proposed amendments—and we make no mystery of it—is the recognition of Quebec's cultural specificity and identity.

(1550)

In so doing, we propose that the federal government and the House of Commons at the very least recognize the fields in which Quebec has exclusive jurisdiction. Once it has recognized them, we ask that it respect them.

Bill C-53 as written is seriously deficient, first of all, because it fails to recognize the existence of more than one national identity on Canadian territory. We refer in particular to clauses

4 and 5 concerning Canadian identity, Canadian values, Canadian culture and Canadian heritage.

I have already had the opportunity several times in this House to express my opinion that no unified Canadian culture exists, since efforts are still being made to define, discover and grasp it. We also note a glaring omission in the bill. Indeed, no mention is made of the Quebec and native cultures and identities. Why? For what secret reason is the government systematically ignoring those very real and important cultures? Is it to eliminate them? Is it to better promote a new product, as though this was a mere marketing strategy? There has to be a reason. Maybe some day we, mere mortals, will be worthy of that knowledge.

The vast majority of Quebecers do not agree with this legislation. Let me quote some testimony heard by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

I will quote officials from Quebec organizations which represent a very large number of people, because their opinions carry more weight. I will start with the Mouvement Québec français, whose members are the Montreal Teachers Alliance, the Association québécoise des professeurs de français, the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Fédération des travailleurs du Québec, the Mouvement national des Québécois, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, the Union des artistes, the Union des écrivains québécois and, last but not least, the Union des producteurs agricoles.

Together, these groups represent a very large segment of the Quebec population. Here is what their spokesman, Guy Bouthillier, had to say:

"In this bill, everything related to culture is labelled under the heading Canadian identity. Indeed, nowhere is there any reference to Quebec and its culture. From the federal government's point of view, there are only one culture and one identity: the Canadian ones. This will come as a surprise only to those who still believed that there was some basis—as well as some honesty on the part of those who oppose that notion—for the concept of a distinct society. This bill will at least have the merit of dissipating any lingering illusion. Beyond the fine rhetoric, there is the written word, the legislation, which will prevail in the end".

Needless to say, the Mouvement Québec français rejects this legislation.

François Rocher, an associate professor of political science at Carleton University in Ontario, said this: "The government's approach is part of an unfinished process to build a national identity by denying existing realities in Canada".

He went on to say that the only option that would be both acceptable to Quebec and potentially beneficial to the other

provinces of Canada would be to revert to the duality concept—at least in the case of Quebec—and to accept the political consequences of such a decision.

I may add that Professor Rocher submitted his analysis of the bill in his professional capacity and not as someone representing a nationalist organization from Quebec.

On the other hand, one of the best known organizations in Quebec is the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society of Montreal, also a member of the Mouvement Québec français, as I mentioned earlier.

In their brief, they said, among other things, that they were firmly opposed to Canadian multiculturalism and to legislation that would enshrine intrusions by the Government of Canada into Quebec's cultural life. The culture of the people of Quebec must not be subordinated to the priorities of the culture of another people, the people of Canada. This bill is centralist in design and a threat to Quebec's distinct identity. It was a bill that would be forced down people's throats, over the almost unanimous objections of Quebecers to a concentration of authority over cultural matters in Ottawa and to a view of national identity that was designed to submerge Quebec's identity, according to the brief. It is all there, Mr. Speaker.

(1555)

It is clear that all intervenors from Quebec who examined this bill condemned the centralist vision underlying the federal government's intentions. The problem is not new. It has been with us for a long time. What surprises me is that these people are still willing to come to Ottawa to express their views as Quebecers. After years of struggle, one would expect them to stop trying. However, they are anxious for their friends in Canada to understand the differences that make Quebec distinct, a distinctness that will soon be expressed in a new status for Quebec, that of a sovereign state.

I want to take this opportunity to thank these people for spending all this time and effort to attend the committee's hearings. I want them to know their efforts were greatly appreciated.

I also want to mention the entirely unacceptable attitude of some committee members who consistently stayed away when witnesses from Quebec testified before the committee, which merely confirms the general lack of interest for Quebec's concerns. This attitude is reflected in the wording of the bill and has always been present in relations between Quebec and Ottawa. It is not just a lack of courtesy. It reflects a complete lack of interest and consideration. This is very sad.

Members from Canada had a chance to become better acquainted with their future neighbour. They did not take advantage of this opportunity and as a result may not understand that the purpose of our amendments is the very basis of our determined opposition on this bill. Another perfect example of the

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two solitudes, although the Minister of Canadian Heritage denied this when he appeared before our committee.

[English]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak at report stage to Bill C-53. I have proposed 14 amendments and present these as common sense changes. We are told the bill is a simple housekeeping matter, but I suggest this is not the case. The bill should not be passed in its present form and the amendments suggested will improve it.

The first glaring omission is the requirement by the department to submit an annual report. We have heard all the rhetoric from the Liberal side of the House on how accountable it is to Canadians, yet despite this it has neglected to include a clause requiring the department to explain its actions to Canadians.

The Auditor General has made it clear that Canadians and members of Parliament require more access to information about the operations of government than what was presently received. In light of this it is hard to understand why the government has chosen to move in a direction away from reporting of this kind.

We have heard in response to our concerns on this issue that information on the departments may be included in the estimates. However, this is unacceptable for a number of reasons. First, the estimates are prepared to outline in general terms the proposed spending priorities of the department, whereas an annual report provides information about how the money was spent. This is an important difference.

Second, an annual report will include a description of the plans and priorities for the future and an evaluation of whether former plans and priorities have been met. Such information is not contained in the estimates.

Third, the only assurance the House has that information which was formerly contained in the annual reports will be included in the estimates is a promise from the government—cold comfort indeed.

The bill is meant to streamline government and to get rid of bureaucratic redundancies. However consider the following. The inclusion of parks, natural marine conservation areas, historic canals and copyright create an array of confusion and wasted money.

During the review of the bill at committee we heard testimony regarding parks. The managing director of the association for mountain parks protection and enjoyment provided for the committee a balanced review of parks. His presentation did not promote a vision from either of the extremes on the issue. He did not promote a tree hugger approach to parks, which advocates a zero usage mandate for parks. Nor did he promote an industrialist approach, which advocates unsustainable parks use. The position suggested was one of compromise between industry and sustainability. He said: "Many Canadians have questioned why the government moved Parks Canada from the Department

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of the Environment to a new and seemingly unfocused Department of Canadian Heritage. Over the previous 14 years Parks Canada had established a firm position within the DOE as the leader and innovator in matters affecting the environment. I have proposed an amendment which will delete from the bill all references to Parks Canada. This will allow us to move it to DOE where it belongs”.

(1600)

The same arguments can be made for natural marine conservation areas. Why should the Department of Canadian Heritage be responsible for natural marine conservation areas? It makes no sense. Presently transport looks after historic canals. I fail to understand why we are going to pass a bill that will add jurisdictional headaches, in this case specifically to canals. Again this is needless, wasteful duplication.

I have also proposed amendments which would have the effect of deleting from the bill the references to copyright which it now contains. As the American model demonstrates, the last thing that artists need is a bloated bureaucracy which fights over jurisdiction for copyright responsibilities. The most effective assistance to artists is to take the responsibility for copyright and to lay it squarely within one department. In this instance I believe that department to be industry.

Bill C-53 gives the minister jurisdictional powers over the promotion of greater understanding of human rights, fundamental freedoms, related values and multiculturalism. No one would disagree with the nobility of the intent behind these statements, just as no one would disagree with the statement that racism is bad.

However, our concern remains with the number of ministers responsible for these programs. Presently they are covered by immigration, justice, health, heritage and who knows how many others. This kind of administrative overlap is wasteful and needless.

We have proposed an amendment which would transfer to the regions responsibility for national languages. When reviewing the bill at committee we heard a number of witnesses who criticized the federal government's language policy. The Liberals did not call a single witness to defend the policy. This can only be because it is so hard to find someone to defend it.

Regarding language policy, we recommend the bill include a clause which would read the minister has jurisdiction over the promotion of language policies centred first on freedom of speech, second on recognition of the French language in Quebec and the English language in other provinces; third on recognition of bilingualism in key federal institutions such as the Parliament of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada; and fourth, on recognition of bilingualism where the number of citizens is sufficient to warrant the provision of services in both official languages.

The Prime Minister has stated that in order to help bring the deficit down he wishes to replace duplication within the provinces. The amendment will do just that. It recognizes that the primary responsibility for languages should remain in the regions and the provinces.

Members of my party have been pointing out the wasteful spending of special interest grants since we arrived in this House and for seven years before our arrival. Clause 7(a) of the bill gives the minister the authority to issue grants, contributions and endowments.

The amendment I present finally puts an end to the special interest funding that Canadians have come to resent. The only people who defend these grants are those who receive them. Surely their opinions should be questionable because of an obvious conflict of interest. When we ask Canadians who do not receive these grants how they feel about them their answers are always the same. They do not understand why their tax dollars should be spent on small groups of people with narrow agendas, especially when that money could be spent in better ways like reducing the deficit and debt and to help protect programs such as health care.

Finally, the government has put in the bill clause 8 which will give the Minister of Canadian Heritage the unilateral authority to raise revenues by arbitrarily raising fees for services or facilities. According to the Financial Administration Act, the minister must take such decisions to cabinet. Such a requirement is the minimal process to be followed for the accountability and transparency of fee increases. Now with clause 8 of the bill, the minister will be able to raise any fees he chooses. He must only consult with the relevant party. What does that mean?

Our amendments bring a nominal level of accountability to government. I seek the support of the House to the changes we recommend.

(1605)

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): If we are proposing this many amendments, Mr. Speaker, it is chiefly because the bill, as it stands, is really unacceptable to us.

I would like to address in particular the amendment we have proposed on copyrights, as we would like to have copyright throughout federal jurisdiction brought under the Department of Canadian Heritage. We feel this amendment is essential for the following reason: shared responsibility for copyright by the two departments causes undue delay in reviewing the Copyright Act.

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When they testified before us last Monday, representatives of the artists' union told us that they have been waiting for politicians to get around to amending the Copyright Act for eight years.

On December 22, 1993, the director general of the Montreal artists' union, Mr. Demers, wrote the Prime Minister to tell him that this sharing of responsibility by two departments has led to a two-headed vision, which has resulted in objectives that were more often than not contradictory. The Copyright Act is the only legislation protecting the rights of creative artists. We believe that it should be designed around this priority. Since it is in the interest of creative artists that consumers have unrestricted access to their works, the Department of Canadian Heritage will certainly not lose sight of their unique interests. We need only review existing legislation in other countries to see that protecting the rights of creative artists in no way impedes the circulation of their works, quite the contrary.

Another reason for presenting this amendment is that the Department of Industry is mandated to look after the interests of consumers and corporations, a responsibility that interferes with the interests of creative artists. The cultural industry is like any other industry, according to the Department of Industry.

During the proceedings of the industry committee, the director general of corporate governance at the Department of Industry, David Tobin, testified as follows:

Our view, of course, is that cultural groups are exactly that. They are a cultural industry and we recognize them as that. There are employment and financial considerations. They are adding value to it. When you ask whether we treat them differently, I would argue that we consult with them, we share information with them, and we discuss their concerns. I do not think we treat them any differently.

This raises a doubt in my mind: what will happen in the next rounds of negotiations if we are unable to really defend our cultural industries, if we do not see them at the outset as clearly different from other industries? What will happen then with the GATT agreements we had such a hard time securing, at the very last minute this time around.

Another reason is that the industry minister does have legal responsibility for copyright matters. They tried several times to convince us that the responsibility was shared between the two departments, that the two ministers would address the issue, and that the Department of Industry works with the Department of Canadian Heritage. The deputy minister who testified on behalf of the Department of Canadian Heritage said that they were 100 per cent responsible for drafting the bills.

Some responsible individuals with the same mandate at the Department of Industry told the industry committee that their goal—as Mr. Finckenstein stated—was to consolidate the four old departments into a single one and to combine the four old laws into a single one. That was to create the Department of Industry. This bill reflects the situation that prevailed under the old legislation.

The old legislation included the Copyright Act, which came under the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; responsibility for it has now been given to the Department of Industry. Let me say that the old Department of Communications Act does not contain a single reference to copyright. The only law which refers to it is the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Act. We now find this same reference in the Department of Industry Act.

This clearly suggests that the Department of Canadian Heritage will have no jurisdiction over copyright, despite what we may have been told and what the Minister of Canadian Heritage himself may have said.

(1610)

Another reason is that the heritage department's mandate is to promote cultural development. We saw that very clearly in the brief from the Union des artistes, which said: "Since the role of this department is to look after identity, values, cultural development and heritage, we think that it is logical, fitting and obvious that this department defends and promotes the rights of those without whom the above concepts are meaningless".

Surprisingly, during the election campaign which brought it to power, the Liberal Party answered a questionnaire from the Canadian Conference of the Arts, dated October 4. Two questions drew my attention because the answers were particularly interesting.

The Liberal Party was asked if it would make it a priority to revise the Copyright Act so that this law would really defend the financial and moral rights of writers. The Liberal Party answered that revising the Copyright Act would be a priority for it. "We will ensure above all that writers reap the just rewards of their work at the same time as we facilitate access to material protected by copyright. Liberals understand the importance of copyright. That is why, when we reorganize the administrative structure", which we are now doing with this bill, "we will review the Conservatives' decision to divide jurisdiction over copyright between two departments".

I am really sad to see the Liberal Party, which had made a formal commitment to establish a single department and to correct the mistake made by the Conservatives, perpetuate that mistake through Bill C-53. I am sad to see that it gives priority to the industry rather than to creators. Soon, Canada will no longer be a place for creators, because the industry will have taken precedence over creativity.

Another reason why the government should accept the amendment which we propose is expressed, once again, by the Canadian Conference of the Arts: "The cultural sector has a long experience of the paralysis resulting from the sharing of responsibility in key sectors. Suffice it to mention the dead end in

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which the copyright legislation is stuck, precisely because of this fragmentation of jurisdiction”.

As recently as yesterday, we saw an example of the difference between two departments can be and perhaps what a minister with clout can do. When we pressured the heritage minister on broadcasting and cable television companies, he said: “I cannot intervene”. However, when major companies asked the government to order the CRTC to review the decision to approve a \$2 increase, the government said: “Yes, that decision will be reviewed”. Not because that decision is costly for the poor, but because it affects major companies. That is the problem: When it comes to defending real causes, the Liberal Party does not deliver. It does not fulfill the promises it made on cultural development and copyrights.

I deplore this situation and I hope that, before the end of the debate, the government will have the courage to postpone the passing of this bill, which really does not benefit Canadian culture and creative artists. I also hope that the minister, who probably hears our plea somewhere, will take these factors into consideration for the future of Canada.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was surprised and even disappointed to hear the motions presented by the hon. member for Calgary Southeast, who calls herself a Canadian first but, at the first opportunity, is not averse to lashing out at French Canadian minorities.

(1615)

Bill C-53, an Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage and to amend and repeal certain other Acts, says in clause 4(g), which the hon. member for Calgary Southeast would like to redraft in her image, that the Minister of Canadian Heritage wants to see “the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French and the enhancement and development of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada”.

The hon. member for Calgary Southeast proposes that lines 23 to 27 be replaced with the following: “(g) the promotion of language policies centred: (i) on freedom of speech”. I wonder whether the hon. member for Calgary Southeast realizes what she is saying. Freedom of speech is not about the language you speak but the ideas you want to share with others. She does not even understand the principle of the freedom of speech to which people are entitled in Canada.

Second, she recommends the following: “on recognition of the French language in Quebec and the English language in the other provinces”. This is horrifying, coming from a person who calls herself a Canadian but would like to see only Quebec as

French speaking and the other provinces, and I say the other provinces and not the rest of Canada, as English-speaking.

As a French speaking member from Ontario, a fourth generation franco Ontarian, I say to the hon. member, through the Chair, that her proposals are an affront and an insult. As a French Canadian and a francophone, do I not have the right to speak my own language and receive services in that language? You would take away these rights. It is utterly despicable to want to take away those rights, and to tell anglophones in Quebec: From now on, you will have to speak French if you want services or whatever.

I would ask the hon. member’s colleague to repeat what he just said. Was that a racist comment, sir? Would you repeat what you said?

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I did not hear the remarks. Dear colleagues, this is a very important debate. If all members could just keep their cool and their comments to themselves, this would benefit us all, as Canadians.

I give the floor back to the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester.

Mr. Bellemare: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this reminder. I can assure you that it is rather difficult to keep your cool when your language rights are violated, when you are told that you will no longer be allowed to speak your language, except in the stables or in the privacy of your own home, in the shed or while mowing the lawn. From now on, I would not be allowed to speak French in my province of Ontario that is so dear to me or to request certain services in French when travelling to Calgary. I regret to say that the hon. member is far from kind.

Her third suggestion deals with “recognition of bilingualism in key federal institutions, such as the Parliament of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada”. She and her colleagues from the Reform Party, whom I have observed, especially on the official languages committee, do not understand the first thing about the Official Languages Act, nor do they understand what bilingualism is about.

(1620)

They do not understand what bilingualism is about. They confuse official languages and bilingualism. They are under the impression that laws are made here to force anglophones to speak French for example. That is not it. The hon. member, on the other hand, would like to force me to become, if possible, unilingual and speak English only. There is nothing wrong with being a unilingual English speaking member of Parliament, but personally, as a franco Ontarian, I would rather be francophone,

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franco Ontarian and bilingual, and have respect for English Canadians as well as French Canadians.

Bilingualism, dear lady, is for people who put themselves at the service of others.

The Deputy Speaker: I think it was pointed out at least five times that members should address their remarks to the chair. We would then avoid problems like this. I would ask the hon. member to address his comments to the chair, please.

Mr. Bellemare: Mr. Speaker, you are right, I will address my remarks to you, but I will refer to the hon. member. I know that to the hon. member, who probably does not understand French and certainly does not speak it, the word “madam” may sound very negative and even derogatory. I wanted to pay her a compliment, but she does not want me to. Perhaps she is not a lady. I do not know, but I do know that she is an elected member.

So from now on I will refer to her as the hon. member for Calgary Southeast, who is against bilingualism and against francophones outside Quebec. Bilingualism is for those who want to serve the country. Bilingualism is for those who want to serve the people of their country. Bilingualism is for those who want to do business with other countries, English speaking countries and French-speaking countries alike.

There are about one billion anglophones and francophones around the globe. One billion. People who become bilingual are an asset to Canada, but dear lady—excuse me, the hon. member for Calgary Southeast—is not interested in principles or in Canadian history. I am sure that she does not spend her evenings reading about Jacques Cartier, Champlain or Montcalm. She thinks that Canadian history started when she was born and that regulations should always be based on financial considerations. She does not give a hoot about anglophone minorities in Quebec and francophone minorities outside Quebec. I find her remarks totally deplorable and un-Canadian.

[*English*]

Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand before the House and discuss the report stage of Bill C-53.

Bill C-53, as I mentioned during the first and second reading, is riddled with problems which are quite evident if we look at the number of motions that have been put forward by the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois. Because of time constraints, I will attempt to keep my comments extremely brief and focus solely on the motions before us.

Motion No. 2 deals with the removal of clause 4 in section 2(a). While I am in no way against “the promotion of the greater understanding of human rights, fundamental freedoms and related values”. I am against the idea of having more than one minister responsible for these issues. In fact I wholeheartedly believe that the Department of Justice is better suited to ensure the noble intentions of this clause.

(1625)

Passage of Motion No. 3 would result in the elimination of multiculturalism from the bill. I believe that the continued funding of programs like this will ensure a Liberal defeat in the next election. Canadians want less government, not more. They want to see the government manage its allocation of revenues and stop running up astronomical debts and deficits.

In short, what they are looking for is a government to prioritize its spending programs to ensure that everyone is maximizing the benefits from his or her tax dollars.

Government funded multiculturalism programs do nothing to address this fundamental attitude toward government spending and programs. In fact, the Liberals seem more content to raise Canadian taxes than they are to control spending. We have a spending problem in Canada, not a revenue problem. Therefore not only is multiculturalism financially unsound but in fact it is politically unsound as well.

As a member of the standing committee on heritage I have had the pleasure of listening to witnesses describe the multicultural funded programs as a poor way to promote culture. Moreover, I have heard and talked to many Canadians who believe that multiculturalism does nothing but make us all hyphenated Canadians focusing on what separates and not what binds us together. Its day has come and gone and it is time that the Liberals face up to this fact.

Motions 5 and 21 deal with an issue that is also of great concern to the Reform Party. I am speaking of overlap and duplication. Why should one department oversee areas which should be under another portfolio such as national parks and marine conservation areas, or even historical canals. It should be our goal as parliamentarians to do everything in our power to decrease the amount of bureaucracy and administer services in each department by themselves.

Motions 5 and 21 will be a step in the right direction. They will allow parks and conservation to go back to the Department of the Environment and historic canals to return to transportation.

Historical canals belong to the department of transportation for the simple reason that they are administered by and are subject to the regulations of the department of transportation. A perfect example would be the Ottawa canal. It is a historical canal yet it is still in use and therefore subject to the rules and regulations of the department of transportation. Therefore why is it in the department of heritage?

Motion No. 6 has been clearly stated and illustrated in the Reform Party’s blue book policies. Essentially we believe that there is no need for the official bilingualism policy. We feel there should be a policy based on territorial bilingualism where bilingual services will be maintained and supported where numbers warrant. That is the reason we have recognized the need for bilingualism especially in key federal institutions such

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as Parliament and the Supreme Court which are explicitly outlined in Motion No. 6.

Clause 7(a) of Bill C-53 is of extreme concern to me as it allows the ministers to facilitate the implementation of any program and the minister also to provide financial assistance in the form of grants, contributions and endowments to any person. The concern arises from the idea that the minister may at his or her discretion provide financial assistance in the form of grants, contributions and endowments. Where are the checks and balances? Where is the accountability? Where is the financial control? Where is the openness and transparency?

Another concern relates to the fact that the minister could be allowed to implement other programs, such as multicultural programs, unilaterally. This would not only be unacceptable to me, to the Reform Party, my constituents, but also to a majority of Canadians.

Motion No. 12 would alleviate this concern as far as it relates to clause 7. Directly related to clause 7(a), clause 8 should be eliminated. Clause 8 deals directly with the notion that the minister can fix fees and charges which the minister considers appropriate. Again, what happened to accountability and openness or checks and balances?

(1630)

Prior to the bill the minister was responsible and subject to any regulations that Treasury Board made. After Bill C-53, the minister may or may not be subject to these regulations as set out by Treasury Board. It is unclear and therefore it should be removed.

Although for the most part Treasury Board is no more than a rubber stamp in terms of approval for rate increases or fees or changes, there is still an institutional check on the powers of the ministry.

Motions Nos. 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 alleviate the concerns which the Reform Party has outlined in clause 8 regarding the accountability and powers of a minister.

The last motion I would like to discuss briefly is Motion No. 20. It deals with the inclusion of an annual report which would be brought before Parliament outlining the expenditures and revenues of the department of heritage. I speak in support of this motion because I believe in accountability, openness and fairness.

An annual report would help not only parliamentarians but also Canadians to understand where, why and how much funding was allocated to ensure the best accountability possible. Although I have heard that part III of the estimates will be improved to accommodate the lack of an annual report, I believe it is still in the best interests of Canadians to have an annual

report simply because it would be more accessible and clearer than the estimates.

I appreciate this opportunity and I hope that all members of the House listened carefully to why these motions should be supported. I look for them to support these motions when the time comes for a vote.

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to voice my concern and to basically state that I do not believe this motion should be adopted.

The main reason is, as we have discussed in committee, that the Multiculturalism Act is really a Canadian reality. What we are dealing with here is an opportunity for us as an institution, as a government to ensure that Canadians and those coming from abroad continue to understand the differences that make up this country.

I think multiculturalism helps on the basis of trying to reduce the barriers that exist between us. There are many aspects to multiculturalism that are a new reality in the global sense. That is from an entrepreneurial perspective and business opportunities. I think that when we take into account that the world is becoming smaller with satellites and telecommunications, faxes et cetera, there is an opportunity to encourage our businesses to do more trade which is the fundamental aspect of growth that we in this country are looking forward to.

This act and the Minister of Heritage will continue to increase the understanding of our realism, the Canadian identity as it exists today. We also have to continue to strengthen the cohesion that exists in this country and reduce the lack of understanding that sometimes exists in different regions.

If we take into account the rich human resources and the opportunities that exist for increasing that trade, we will see more Canadians working and we will reduce our deficit problems as the member across stated.

I also believe that multiculturalism policy is an eloquent testimony to our commitment to uphold the values of equity and fairness. It is a visionary statement about the kind of society we are all working to achieve, one in which each Canadian can realize his or her potential, economically, socially, politically and culturally. Multiculturalism is appropriately part of the department of heritage because it is a fundamental characteristic of our Canadian identity.

(1635)

Therefore I believe the motion should not be adopted.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 3, I spoke on Bill C-53 in this House and I rise today to denounce the mandate which the Department of Canadian Heritage is about to give itself. It is unacceptable for me and for

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all Quebecers that this new department's mandate makes no reference to Quebec as a society or to its cultural and linguistic specificity.

Why does the Liberal government again stubbornly persist in wanting to deny the existence of Quebec, its language rights and its cultural specificity? How can the federal government claim that it wants to promote Canadian identity and intentionally omit from its bill any reference to Quebec culture?

Therefore I will support the amendments moved by my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata to include in Bill C-53 references to the specific nature of Quebec's culture, language and identity.

I will continue in the same vein by demonstrating to this House that this new department's mandate is to assimilate Quebec culture, no more or less.

Let us take the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a specific case in point supporting my argument.

The Broadcasting Act says that the CBC's programming should seek to be of equivalent quality in French and in English.

On this subject the law is clear: French and English must be treated as equivalent.

Let me give you another quotation, this time from part of CRTC decision 87-140, in connection with a public hearing of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission on January 21, 1994 concerning the licence renewals of the English and French networks.

Among the long term objectives which the CRTC set for the CBC is the following: to achieve a fair and equitable balance in production, distribution and scheduling of regional and network programs on both networks, English and French.

The CBC's mandate is clear since it is dictated by the CRTC's directives and the Broadcasting Act. The French and English networks must be equally productive and have the same rate of programming.

The two quotes which I just read to you clearly show the federal government's apparent intentions. These views are clearly reflected in the act, as well as in the guidelines published by the Crown corporation responsible for the monitoring and renewal of licences for television and broadcasting in Canada.

The federal government says that it seeks to promote the use of French in Canada. However, the daily reality does not support that claim; in fact, it shows just the opposite.

The government cannot merely tell us about its good intentions: It must also act. It is nice to claim equal status for French and English, but that claim must be supported. These are mere statements of intention with no real basis.

On July 27, 1994, the CRTC approved the budget allocation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in an internal document entitled CRTC Decision 94-437. That document clearly indicates that the CBC allocates 63 per cent of its TV network budget to the English language network, and only 37 per cent to the French language network, this for the term of its next licence.

(1640)

Moreover, the CRTC feels that the CBC is in the best position to decide how to allocate its funds. Thus, the CRTC is satisfied that the corporation's decisions do not violate the legislation.

If you look at the overall programming costs for the two networks, you will see that the proportion for the French language network is now below 40 per cent, its level of six years ago.

Furthermore, in 1970, there was no difference at all between the two networks. I think this proves that the federal government is gradually limiting the scope of its duties and obligations to accommodate a not so subtle policy of assimilation.

The Broadcasting Act and the CRTC required the corporation to give equal treatment to both networks. Furthermore, both the legislation and the CRTC specify that production of programming should be equivalent for the English and French networks.

However, when it is time to share financial resources, the French network gets half the funding that goes to the English network.

This reduction in financing for the French network reflects Ottawa's lack of vision, which has been very harmful to the development and vitality of the country's francophone communities. This is a typical example of the federal government's policy of ignoring reality.

In fact it reflects the policy of cultural and linguistic assimilation favoured by the federal government: legislate fair and equal treatment for English and French, while this is not followed through in the allocation of financial resources.

I will give a few examples of the corporation's disproportionate allocation of financing.

In 1992 the average investment per hour of programming was \$37,496 on the English network and \$18,390 on the French network. In other words, half as much.

The average cost of news bulletins was \$18,000 on the English network and \$7,000 on the French network. Less than half.

The average cost of drama programs was \$90,000 on the English network and \$68,800 on the French network.

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I realize that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the President of the CBC, Mr. Manera, will try to justify what is being done by his crown corporation by saying that Canada has three times as many anglophones as francophones. However, the tv ratings for the French network are three times as high as for the English network.

In fact, ratings for the English network vary from 11 per cent to 13 per cent during prime time. The Chairman of the CRTC, Keith Spicer, even referred to recent figures below 10 per cent. Ratings for the French network, however vary between 30 per cent and 38 per cent.

In other words, the French network reaches the same number of Canadians as the English network. So why are financial resources not allocated accordingly? Why is the French network at such a disadvantage when it manages to reach the same number of viewers as the English network?

(1645)

I would like the heritage minister to be able to reply to these questions, because this looks like a policy of assimilation designed to bring about the death of Canada's other cultural community.

Is it the goal of the federal government to destroy the stronghold of the French language in North America? In any event, that is what I think and what the assimilation rate that grows from one census to the next would seem to indicate. Is this the federal government's covert policy of ignoring reality?

This is an unacceptable situation, especially when Canadian legislation stipulates clearly that the treatment must be equivalent. Not more, not less, but equivalent.

How, then, can the federal government continue to claim that it guarantees the equal treatment and use of French in its federal institutions when there are examples such as those of the CBC and the CRTC?

These facts reinforce the findings of the Official Languages Committee. The annual report on official languages demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that Canadian heritage organizations are in fact agents for assimilating rather than protecting the French speaking citizens of this country.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage must deliver the goods to the French speaking community in Quebec and elsewhere in this country. The federal Liberal government has the responsibility to guarantee the rights of the cultural minority in this country, especially when they are clearly enshrined in its legislation.

I would like to take the opportunity available to me today to denounce the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the CRTC. This department and these crown corporations are giving credence to decisions that

are contrary to the rights of French-speaking communities in Quebec and elsewhere in this country. The federal government has no right to sanction these decisions by the CBC and the CRTC.

The federal government and this new Department of Canadian Heritage deny the cultural identity of Quebec and work against it.

I therefore salute this democratic exercise to which we have been called by the Government of Quebec, in the form of the draft bill on Quebec sovereignty.

This draft bill sets out the political plan that the Government of Quebec recommends in order to resolve, for once and for all, the constitutional problem in which Quebec has been mired for too many years. I think that it is the only way we have left to promote the full development of the people of Quebec.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans—MIL Davie Shipyard; the hon. member for Gaspé—Fisheries; the hon. member for Bourassa—Immigration; the hon. member for Châteauguay—MIL Davie Shipyard; the hon. member for Chambly—Customs Brokers.

[English]

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to discuss Motion No. 5, which deals with national parks. According to the amendment the effect would be to drop all references in the legislation to national parks, historic canals and national marine areas.

I suppose the question arises: Why should we include national parks under Canadian heritage? For those of us who have been interested in the park system it is interesting to note that over the years national parks have been located in different ministries.

The first place they were to be found after their creation in the 1880s was in what might be described as the predecessor to the Ministry of Natural Resources. This indicates that parks in those days were seen to have not only a natural component but also an economic component. They were seen as part of Canada's natural resources.

A subsequent reorganization of government meant that parks found themselves suddenly with Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This new vision of parks suggested that they were to be seen somehow as up there, out there, out of sight, out of mind to some degree. That was because they were in remote places often in the north, often in places where the aboriginal populations could be found. Of course that ignored the reality that there were parks close to centres of habitation, such as the Rocky Mountain parks.

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(1650)

After that the parks structures found themselves in the Minister of the Environment which seemed to make sense. The theme there was one of protection rather than human use. It put the stress on not interfering with the parks which took away the notion of an economic connection with parks.

Now finally with Canadian heritage the circle is to some extent complete. This latest reorganization of government recognizes that parks have different characteristics all of which have to be recognized. They are natural preserves and need protection, but they are also cultural sites. They are also economic sites for activity, for tourism for example.

By putting them into a new ministry this bill tries to recognize the complex way in which we now look at parks. In this bill we recognize that history, culture and nature are intertwined in some fundamental way. This is simply to pick up on what is happening internationally under conventions such as that of UNESCO concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. In UNESCO's eyes cultural and natural heritage are inevitably linked and so they are in ours.

Parks are also a crucial element of our national identity. They go with the vision that Canadians have of themselves wherever they live, of being in some close harmony with nature, some respect of nature and some awe of nature. It was Margaret Atwood who once described the common theme of Canadian literature, *si c'était en anglais ou en français*, as survival in the face of nature, survival in the face of difficult forces.

Those who are concerned that by having parks taken away from the Department of the Environment should rest assured that the environmental concerns will not be diminished by having them in Canadian heritage. They will continue to be respected. It will continue to be the case in our international agreements, such as under UNESCO that parks will be fully protected.

The reason that parks are being put in Canadian heritage is to respect their role as part of our system of values, part of our history, part of our culture, part of what it is to be a Canadian.

As I mentioned earlier, there is an appropriate return to where we first saw parks because there are economic reasons as well to link together national parks and national historic sites. That is because tourism of all sorts is of continuing and indeed growing importance for this government. As members of this House will recall, we have a major \$7 billion tourist deficit and parks have their role to play in correcting that, as do national historic sites.

These are terrific assets, our parks and historic sites. It makes sense for them to be kept together. We think that indeed for those who worry about the environment having parks located in the

Department of Canadian Heritage simply means there is one more environmental voice at the cabinet table.

It is also the case that it is a commitment of this government to complete the national parks system, that system which was so much expanded in the 1970s by our present Prime Minister. To this we are adding a new kind of park under water parks, the national marine conservation areas which this amendment would have us locate in some other place. These are the parks of the future; these are the parks which respect our complex marine life. They too belong in the same package with the national parks and national historic sites.

Finally, it seems to us that having subjected the national parks system to so many reorganizations and having had it put in so many different places over time that Parks Canada has done well in the new Department of Canadian Heritage. It has found a new place to call home. It would be both counterproductive and extraordinarily disruptive to move it yet again after a mere year and a half.

For those reasons we are opposed to this amendment. We think that national parks and indeed canals and national marine conservation areas belong properly with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

(1655)

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I think you might find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That 15 members, three staff and three interpreters from the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food be allowed to hold hearings in relation to the committee's study on the future of Canadian agriculture in St. Hyacinthe, Victoriaville, Quebec City, Florenceville, Halifax and Charlottetown from January 22 to January 28, 1995; in Kelowna, Camrose, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, London, St. Catharines, Brockville and Alfred from February 5 to February 15, 1995.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Hermanson: No, Mr. Speaker, I will not give unanimous consent. I believe there is some disagreement among the committee as to the benefit of this trip.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House to speak on Bill C-53. Before getting to my opening remarks, I would like to start by giving a definition of bilingualism. This is my own personal definition but one that I believe is shared by many Quebecers. This is for the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester who talked about bilingualism and its importance. He has used this term over and over.

I think that, for a Quebecer, bilingualism simply means that a French-speaking Quebecer learns English. We are not so sure that it works both ways. As far as we are concerned, for us, it means learning English, and for the English, being able to understand us. There are of course exceptions, colleagues whom

Government Orders

I wish to congratulate, in this House, on our committee and around us.

The importance of the multicultural dimension of Canadian unity has been mentioned. Not so long ago, we had the opportunity to travel to western Canada with the environment committee. Much to my surprise, be it in Winnipeg, Edmonton—and I call this to the attention of the hon. member for St. Boniface, champion of the French fact—or Vancouver, we were unable to find French-language newspapers in the hotel, airport or convenience store. Nowhere in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Vancouver was I able to buy *Le Devoir* or *La Presse*. But you could get *USA Today* and magazines from New York City. There were all sorts of magazines and newspapers but none in French. And we are told that the French fact is very well championed just about everywhere. I have my doubts about that.

The amendment to clause 4, presented by my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata, would simply recognize Quebec's identity in Bill C-53. It is an essential clause. It is indeed essential to recognize that Canada was built by two founding peoples, a fact that this bill denies. That is why we cannot support it. These two founding peoples are the francophones and anglophones of this country.

I do not think that a single Liberal member would knowingly contest the fact that Canada was built by two founding peoples. This is what the Minister of Canadian Heritage is simply denying with this bill. That is why we are opposed to it.

I therefore urge the minister to recognize the two founding nations and to accept every amendment proposed by the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata, which recognizes Quebec's identity, so that every motion should include the word "Quebec" or "the identity of Quebec". Otherwise, we cannot approve Bill C-53, as it denies an obvious reality in this country.

If I may, I would like to read from the report of a Canadian royal commission that was written a number of years ago. This is a rather long excerpt, but I will tell you afterwards when it was written and by which royal commission, and you will see that the problem goes back a long way.

(1700)

Here is the excerpt. The dominant majority in politics—like the federal government and the anglophones—often takes its advantages for granted and does not appreciate the disadvantages suffered by the minority, especially when this minority enjoys or appears to enjoy some degree of cultural freedom. However, the minority, as long as it regards its collective life as an entity, may want control over it and look beyond cultural freedom. It then questions its political status. It feels that its future and cultural development are somewhat precarious and perhaps limited in a political environment dominated by the other group forming the majority. As a result, it leans towards greater constitutional autonomy. Ideally, the minority wants this

autonomy for the whole community but, when this objective cannot be reached, it may focus its efforts on a narrower political stage where it would be in the majority.

We think about sovereignty. It is personal. This excerpt is from the 1967 Laurendeau-Dunton report on bilingualism and biculturalism.

The recognition of the French fact, of francophone minority rights goes back to at least 1967. One francophone and one anglophone on the same royal commission signed this report recognizing minority rights. It is therefore imperative to recognize these rights.

According to the brief submitted by the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, it is important to see how this conclusion has evolved over the years, how political parties have learned to live with the findings of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. I am talking about biculturalism and not multiculturalism.

Twenty-five years later, in 1991, another look at this issue of culture and the French fact in Quebec and Canada led to the following conclusion: The two levels of government also compete on the last element of the analysis, culture, resulting in overspending, conflict and inefficiency.

An hon. member: Come on.

Mr. Sauvageau: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, for going on and on about the French fact, but it is important to us, although you may be tired of hearing about it.

The federal government has played a major role in cultural life through several institutions: the National Archives, National Gallery, CBC, Canada Council for arts and research, National Film Board. Some fields of exclusive federal jurisdiction have major repercussions on Quebec's cultural sector, for example, in communications. Given the importance of culture to the development of Quebec's identity, we could not overemphasize the urgency of taking back jurisdiction in this field. Quebec must exercise exclusive jurisdiction in all areas related to culture and communications.

This conclusion comes from the report of the constitutional committee of the Liberal Party of Quebec, not the Parti Québécois, but the Liberal Party of Quebec, in 1991, on page 32 of the report entitled "a Quebec that is free to make its own choices".

Twenty-five years later, we in Quebec have not deviated very far from the position that Quebec culture, to be well defended, must first of all exist and second be managed solely and exclusively in Quebec.

Does this date from 1967? No. Long before that, royal institutions recognized this distinction between the French fact and the English fact in North America. Let us review some constitutional history. In 1791, the Constitution Act recognized Upper and Lower Canada. Since 1791, a distinct society of French-speaking people in North America has been recognized.

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Why did the crown agree to divide the territory then? To please the Loyalists? Why were the Napoleonic Code, the seigneurial system, the French fact and the Catholic religion recognized? Quite simply, because there was a distinct society in North America then. It still exists and it is found mainly in Quebec.

(1705)

Later, in 1840, they tried to bury that minority with the Union Act. They tried to bury it when anglophones formed a majority. Following the Durham report, they thought that if the two colonies, Upper and Lower Canada, were joined, francophones would be in a minority situation and would quickly disappear. Therefore the problem of the French fact would be solved.

Luckily for us, we are still here to take care of ourselves. In 1867, we managed to create a province, Quebec, primarily to protect our rights. However, this bill would eliminate everything for which we fought in the past.

Throughout their history, francophones have preserved their distinct society in North America, and that must be clearly recognized. As my colleague mentioned earlier, a member of a group represented by the Société nationale des Québécois de l'Outaouais came to talk to us. He gave examples of how francophones were treated unfairly, here in this country. The financing of Radio-Canada is one such example.

As the Société nationale des Québécois de l'Outaouais said, "Radio-Canada is another example of cultural discrimination by the federal government. If the two languages and the two cultures are truly on an equal footing, and if Canada is bilingual and bicultural, the two networks should receive equal financing. Yet, the French language network receives 37 per cent, compared to 63 per cent for the English language network. To justify this discrepancy, the CRTC said, on January 21, 1994, when the TV licences of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation were renewed, that if the allocation of money were based on demographics, the ratio would be three to one in favour of the English language network".

The figures support the CRTC decision to allocate 63 and 37 per cent respectively to the two networks. However, if you take the ratings into consideration, you will see that they are comparable. Radio-Canada is indeed treated unfairly.

I conclude with a quote from a great Quebec historian, Denis Monière, who submitted a brief to the committee. I trust I can quote him verbatim in the House. He said: "The establishment of the Department of Canadian Heritage, which is the most thorough and perverse Canadian imposture, follows the numer-

ous attempts made since 1867 to deny the existence of a people which is distinct from the Canadian people and which refuses to be integrated into an alienating entity. This project reflects a Canadian cultural imperialism bent on eradicating Quebec's national identity and following a long tradition inspired by the Durham report. Since that report, all those who believed in a bicultural Canada were proven wrong by Canadian history, and misled French Canadians besides".

For all the reasons which I have tried to express without being put off, we oppose Bill C-53.

[English]

Mr. Pagtakhan: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this afternoon the member for Calgary Southeast stated: "We have some of the same concerns expressed by the Liberals when they were in opposition. Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, of some of their earlier criticisms. The member for Winnipeg North suggested that the foundation, referring to the Canadian Race Relations Foundation"—

The Deputy Speaker: This is a perfectly legitimate debate and there is time for the member to debate. From what I have heard thus far it is not a point of order. If the member wishes to debate he is perfectly free to sit down and rise again on debate. Is the hon. member for Winnipeg North on debate?

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker. The member for Calgary Southeast said: "The member for Winnipeg North suggested that the foundation", referring to the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, "should not exist because the responsibility for the program should be accomplished elsewhere".

(1710)

For the record of the House I would like to state that on May 29, 1990, to which the member was referring, I stated on page 12020 of *Hansard* with reference to the Canadian Race Relations Foundation:

I support this bill, which is to contribute to the elimination of racism and all forms of racial discrimination in Canadian society.

On the following page I said again:

I support this Canadian Race Relations Foundation based on the preamble that we will support and reaffirm our support for the international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination; that we will henceforth reaffirm our belief and support in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; that the Canadian Multiculturalism Act would assume greater and greater meaning.

The record speaks for itself. What the member for Calgary Southeast did was not only take my statement out of context but misrepresented my statements. Therefore to me it was a dishonourable thing.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair is having great difficulty. Having ruled that the member was not speaking on a point of order but on debate, the Chair therefore is hoisted on the same petard.

The hon. member for Calgary Southeast has already spoken on this matter and does not therefore have the right to speak further.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member for Winnipeg North called my colleague a dishonourable member. I would ask that he withdraw that statement from the House.

The Deputy Speaker: I listened carefully to the hon. member for Winnipeg North and I think the member said that what was done was a dishonourable thing. The thing was dishonourable, not the member. Perhaps the member for Winnipeg North would like to clarify that.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, if I said dishonourable member, I would withdraw it. What she did in her speech was dishonourable.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that what the hon. member for Winnipeg North is insinuating is that the hon. member is dishonourable, and that is wrong. He can couch it in different words but he is actually referring to the member. I would ask that he withdraw that statement.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, never in my mind is the member dishonourable. I regret that she said it but the statement was made and it is with pain that I received the statement. Therefore, to that extent I would like you to consider that the statement lacks honour.

The Deputy Speaker: I wonder if the hon. whip of the government wishes to make any intervention on this matter.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I know that in the cut and thrust of debate we sometimes make references to one another which are unfortunate. I do believe that the hon. member meant that the statements were unacceptable. I hope it was not a reflection on the hon. member. I am sure she is most honourable, as all other members are.

The Deputy Speaker: It is virtually Christmas Eve. I am sorry we are reduced to this. We are obliged to call each other hon. members every time we refer to each other. Because that particular word is used so often in this House, I would invite the hon. member for Winnipeg North to reflect on what the effects of his comments here this afternoon have amounted to.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that the member for Calgary Southeast is honourable.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. House leader of the Reform Party have any further intervention?

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for clarifying that for us. I appreciate it.

(1715)

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 8.

[*Translation*]

All those in favour of the notion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(1) a recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 10.

Before proposing group No. 2, I must remind you that: Motions Nos. 11, 12, and 13 will be grouped for debate and voted on as follows: Motion No. 11 will be voted on separately. An affirmative vote on Motion No. 12 obviates the necessity of a question on Motion No. 13. A negative vote on Motion No. 12 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 13.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-53, in Clause 7, be amended by deleting lines 11 to 13, on page 3.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 12.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(8) a recorded division on the Motion No. 12 stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

I will now propose the third group of motions.

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, we do not know whether we are voting on Motion No. 13 or Motion No. 14, because you started off saying it was Motion No. 13 standing in the name of Mrs. Tremblay, and now you mentioned Motion No. 14. Could we have some clarification?

The Deputy Speaker: It is pretty complicated, because in some cases we need to divide on one motion to apply the results to another.

(1720)

[*English*]

When we get the result of Motion No. 12, we will then know what happens to Motion No. 13.

[*Translation*]

We will now proceed with the vote on Motion No. 14. I am sorry, but this is complicated for the Chair as well.

Mr. Laurin: Yes, but when do we vote on Motion No. 13?

The Deputy Speaker: After the vote on Motion No. 12.

Mr. Laurin: I see.

The Deputy Speaker: We will now proceed with the vote on Motion No. 14.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting new Clause 8.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting new Clause 8.1.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting new Clause 8.2.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-53 be amended by adding after new subclause 8.3(1) with the following:

“(1.1) The Minister shall, at least 60 days before the date on which the Minister fixes or increases a fee under section 8, 8.1 or 8.2, cause to be published in the *Canada Gazette* by such appropriate electronic or other means that the Treasury Board may authorize by regulation and in no fewer than two leading newspapers in each province a notice clearly indicating

(a) the products, services, rights, privileges, regulatory processes, approvals or use of facilities provided under these sections; and

(b) the fees to be fixed or increased pursuant to these sections.”

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata on a point of order.

Mrs. Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we were given a piece of paper which says: votes on Bill C-53. It says that after Motion No. 14, we would go on to Motion No. 20. You mentioned Motions Nos. 15, 16 and 17. According to this paper, we were supposed to go from Motion No. 14 to Motion No. 20.

The Deputy Speaker: Motions Nos. 14, 15, 16 and 17 have all been discussed. We will now vote on Motion No. 14. The results of the vote on Motion No. 14 will apply to Motions Nos. 15, 16, 18 and 19. Is that clear? Does the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata agree?

Mrs. Tremblay: Yes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting new Clause 8.3.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting new Clause 8.4.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 14 which will also apply to Motions Nos. 15, 16, 18 and 19. 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.

Government Orders

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(8) a recorded division of the motion stands deferred.

(1725)

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-53 be amended by adding after new Clause 8.4 the following new Clause:

“8.5 The Minister shall cause to be laid before each House of Parliament, not later than the fifth sitting day of that House after January 31 next following the end of each fiscal year, a report showing the operations of the Department for that fiscal year.”

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-53 be amended by deleting Clause 33.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 20. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(8) a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-53, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing lines 11 to 13, on page 9, with the following:

“by such committee of the House of Commons as may be designated or estab-”.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 22. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(8) a recorded division stands deferred.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-53, in Clause 35, be amended by replacing line 22, on page 11, with the following:

“with the government of each province and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, shall”.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-53, in Clause 36, be amended by replacing line 31, on page 11, with the following:

“Minister after consultation with the government of each province and the Minister”.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-53, in Clause 37, be amended by replacing line 38, on page 11, with the following:

“ter after consultation with the government of each province and the Minister of”.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-53, in Clause 38, be amended by replacing line 8, on page 12, with the following:

“government of each province and the Minister, shall undertake a review of the pro-”.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 24. 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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(8) a recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The House will now proceed to the taking of deferred divisions at the report stage of the bill now before the House.

Call in the members.

Private Members' Business

[English]

and the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The government whip has requested the matter be deferred until tomorrow at 10 a.m. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The House resumed from November 17 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is gratifying to know that the spirit of Christmas has fallen upon this House. It was interesting listening to the debate this afternoon.

Earlier this year Information Commissioner John Grace included in his annual report 43 recommendations to close loopholes in the 10 year old Access to Information Act. Mr. Grace stated: "The first decade has shown that the government bent on secrecy can certainly diminish the effectiveness of the access law".

Mr. Grace goes on to say that he wants the new government to have the self-confidence to be scrutinized and the fortitude to be forthright.

Motion No. 304 gives the Liberal government that golden opportunity to take this first crucial step toward restoring Canada's faith. At the top of page 92 of the red book which starts by talking of initiatives to "restore the confidence in the institutions of government", it certainly seems like the Liberal government in the spirit of this motion would have to agree with Motion No. 304.

The information commissioner's recommendation No. 43 states that the access act be extended to all federal government institutions including special operating agencies, crown corporations and wholly owned subsidiaries, any institutions to which the federal government appoints a majority of governing body members, the Senate, the House of Commons, the Library of Parliament and all officers of Parliament.

During debate on motion 304 of November 17, I was listening very carefully to the member for St. Paul's. He made a couple of comments in his address to the House that I would like to repeat.

He said: "At the time of the act"—it was passed in 1982—"there was careful consideration to which institutions should be included in the coverage of the act and which should not". Later in his address he went on to say: "We cannot assume that these were frivolous decisions as to who was included and who was excluded". I thought to myself it was worthy of doing some research on. Was it carefully thought out?

We went to the Library of Parliament to see if we could find out some information about those debates and the reasons why some corporations were excluded and some were not. An article from the *Hill Times* printed March 17, 1994 is headed: "Parliament's exemption from information access act perplexing".

The reporter went back to the key people who were involved in the drafting of the act in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Strangely enough, all of the people who were contacted said that they could not recall an actual reason for the exclusions. Then the reporter went back to the person who should really have all the information on this, the man responsible for drafting Bill C-43, Liberal minister Francis Fox. He was posed the question, why were these exemptions made? How did he respond? "You got me". That is what he said. He did not know.

We wanted to dig a little deeper into this. We went to Robert Auger, the Privy Council adviser to Mr. Fox and posed the same question. What was the reason for these exemptions? He said: "It is some kind of philosophical assumption that nobody questioned". Nobody has ever questioned this. That comes back to the debate of November 17 and the comments from the member for St. Paul's. I am certain that he did not intend to mislead this House.

Certainly the testimony I have presented today would indicate that there was not careful consideration at the time. At least we should ask questions and maybe even assume that some of these decisions were frivolous and without basis.

Crown corporations have not been open to public scrutiny and this continues to fuel the fire of voter cynicism. Canadians are demanding accountability. They want open government. Is there anything wrong with accountability and open government? It is high time that the government takes action.

Why are crown corporations exempt from the Access to Information Act? Let us look at a couple of them. In the case of the CBC and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, there are concerns that competitors would be able to gain an advantage in their respective markets through access requests.

These crown corporations continue to exist because they are financed by the Canadian taxpayer, not because they are profit making players in the competitive marketplace. This is a pretty strong argument for wanting accountability and access to information on how these corporations are operated. The taxpayers want to know how their hard earned dollars are being spent. Provisions could be made that could protect commercially viable information. Therefore that argument is also put to rest.

Private Members' Business

(1735)

There have been numerous examples of the need for public access to information on crown corporations. Earlier this year the National Arts Centre spent \$250,000 on a proposal to submit an application for a performing arts television network. If it had not been for the Auditor General's report, Canadians would have been kept in the dark about this ridiculously expensive proposition. The Auditor General said: "The activities of and the expenses incurred for this broadcasting project are beyond the objects and powers of this corporation".

In addition the Auditor General obtained legal opinions supporting the view that a performing arts network was outside the NAC's mandate. If the National Arts Centre had not been exempt from access to information, a private citizen might have been able to come forward with this information, an elected official of the House, or maybe even a journalist would have easily exposed this ludicrous proposal before some \$250,000 taxpayer dollars were spent needlessly.

Canadians currently pay for half of the NAC's annual operating budget of \$40 million. Do they not have the right to ask certain questions about the operations? The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is financed by Canadians to the tune of \$1.1 billion, and yet it operates under the same veil of secrecy as the other crown corporations. Access to information would allow Canadians to question just how that \$1.1 billion is spent. Canadians have the right to know.

Again I would remind the House that provisions could be made to protect the commercially viable information that needs to be protected.

According to CBC staffers, costs of production are kept secret, even within its own organization, to avoid jealousies among producers whose shows are given different budgets and to keep writers and others from knowing how little of the pie they actually receive. It is a shame.

Instead of going to Parliament the Auditor General's report on the CBC will be submitted to the CBC's board of directors and made public if and when the board sees fit. The true owners are being deprived of this information on the CBC. Who would they be? The people of Canada.

Access to information would eliminate this cat and mouse game. Again I would like to reiterate this because it is important. Provisions could be made to ensure commercially viable and valuable information would be protected.

Perhaps a crown corporation should file an access to information request just to find out for themselves what access to information really means. When information is kept secret, bureaucrats and politicians could be tempted to do things that

they would not do if they were made public. The more information available to Canadians the better off the country will be.

I will give some more examples of the kinds of abuses that I am talking about. There have been abuses throughout history. Perhaps the most famous was that of the Aberdeen Marina, the Hong Kong club where Canada's foreign offices spent some \$773,000 on memberships for 34 diplomats and family members. That was back in the early 1980s. Or maybe it was the so-called bridge to nowhere. Members may recall the \$2.1 million structure erected in the riding of a federal Conservative cabinet minister. The only problem with the project was that the bridge when built was not connected to any road.

A more recent example, and we may never have the answer to this one, is much taxpayers paid to chauffeur, entertain and put Haitian leader Jean Bertrand Aristide in hotels during his recent six day visit to Ottawa in January.

(1740)

A local Ottawa newspaper reported that it requested the information under access to information. It was refused by foreign affairs which claimed Aristide's hotel bill was too sensitive and could lead to squabbling among other foreign visitors because they may receive lesser treatment. Do the taxpayers of Canada not have the right to know this information? I think they do.

The Liberal government red book talks of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government. Gosh, that sounds good. According to my research, the government should do so soon. It has an opportunity right now. Freedom of information builds faith like few other policies build faith in the Government of Canada. It slows the build-up of dirty laundry that a future government will only be too happy to wash.

My Liberal colleagues could well learn from the information commissioner's scathing criticism of the Mulroney government's attempt to put roadblocks in the way of citizens trying to find out about how the government made decisions and what those were.

The final piece of evidence that I have today is from a gentleman by the name of John G. McCamus who was involved as a witness in the second reading of Bill C-43 in 1980. He said: "As many critics of the bill have observed, there is one highly visible category of federal agencies which have not been included in the schedule—the federal crown corporations engaged in the supply of goods and services. The exclusion of commercial crown corporations from the access scheme is, in a word, indefensible".

In closing, Motion No. 304 is about openness and accountability. The government owes it to all Canadians to have the self-confidence to be scrutinized and the fortitude to be

forthright. The passage of Motion No. 304 will help to regain the public confidence in this institution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege and an honour for me to represent the people in my riding of Shefford, who elected me in the last federal election and who expect a high degree of integrity from us.

It is my opinion that the Access to Information Act should be extended to all government institutions, as tabled in Motion No. 304 by the member for Red Deer. The purpose of this motion is to make the whole Canadian federal administration more accessible and open.

This transparency is necessary if we are to win back the confidence of the taxpayers, particularly in this period of economic austerity, when the federal government is preparing to make cuts in a multitude of social programs, when, at the same time, the heads of Crown agencies are getting rich on taxpayers' money and enjoying privileges beyond the reach of the average Canadian, and when this same government is making thousands of partisan appointments, with no public control.

Nevertheless, in his Speech from the Throne last January 18, the Prime Minister stated that integrity and public trust in the institutions of government were essential. In addition, he said, and I quote: "The Government is committed to enhancing the credibility of Parliament. Changes will be proposed to the rules of the House of Commons to provide Members of Parliament a greater opportunity to contribute to the development of public policy and legislation".

The time has now come for the federal government to table legislation designed to ensure that its institutions and Crown agencies excluded from the Access to Information Act are more transparent.

(1745)

The Bloc Quebecois particularly wants to stress the need for federal institutions such as the Senate and Crown corporations to be transparent. The public should be able to scrutinize the actions of these bodies which are undemocratic because non-elected and more likely than not using taxpayers money.

For the sake of democracy and to make the current system more transparent, the Bloc Quebecois can only concur in the March 1987 report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, which recommended that the Access to Information Act apply to all federal institutions, including administrative tribunals, the Senate and the House of Commons.

This committee recommended at the time that the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act apply to all 53 parent Crown corporations and their 127 wholly owned subsidiaries.

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These corporations and their subsidiaries had assets tens of billions of dollars in assets over which the public has absolutely no control.

On the other hand, these recommendations did not apply to other corporations, including 140 subsidiaries that were not wholly owned by Crown corporations and 26 joint ventures and mixed enterprises, of which the capital stock is jointly held by the federal government and other levels of government or organizations.

The report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General states that there are certainly other entities with no capital stock for which the federal government has the right to appoint, directly or through a Crown corporation, one or more persons to the board of directors or similar body, with the public being systematically excluded from the process, except to foot the bill.

Canadians pay for all that. Therefore, they have a right to know. Since these are theoretically Crown corporations, the taxpayers of Quebec and Canada are entitled to and should know how these corporations are administered. That is why they must be subject to public scrutiny.

I would like to ask a question in this House: Why are some Crown corporations subject to the Access to Information Act while others are not, when they all receive public funds?

The burden of proof rests on the federal government. The Liberals—yes, the Liberals—must keep their word and restore trust in public institutions.

You will tell me that we all want to see positive changes and ensure that our political institutions and Crown corporations operate with honesty and integrity.

I know for a fact that these issues were raised by the Liberals when they were in opposition. Now that they are in power, I hope that some of them will remember the importance of making public institutions more open, accountable and honest.

Quebecers and Canadians have never been so disillusioned with federal institutions, public administration, politicians and the public sector.

The people must be able to trust those in power. Obviously, they have little confidence in the federal government, while the credibility of public institutions is steadily eroding.

This disaffection may be attributable to several factors: some elected officials committed indiscretions while others governed arrogantly, it must be said.

(1750)

Citizens are unhappy because they are not really consulted, because their views are ignored, because public affairs are dealt with behind closed doors as soon as they become crucial.

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Quebecers and the people in the rest of Canada are disappointed and unhappy with the poor quality of many public services, given government overspending and the tax burden imposed on them.

Although Quebecers and the people in the rest of Canada attach great importance to social programs and our democratic heritage, they are annoyed by the apparent confusion among the various public powers. Likewise, duplication in federal government services is unacceptable to all our taxpayers.

I agree with the essential part of the motion proposed by my colleague from Red Deer, that all publicly financed government institutions should be subject to the Access to Information Act.

[*English*]

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everything to my hon. colleagues in the opposition, particularly in the third party, seems simple and very easily fixed. I suggest that this shows a lack of imagination and a lack of understanding of the complexity and sensitivity of much that we in government have to deal with.

My hon. colleague from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt leaves the impression that everything that is secret is somehow evil, that nothing which is personal or concerns individual Canadians is or should be confidential.

I would remind him that even public boards like boards of education and municipal councils at the local level deal with personnel, legal and property matters in camera and not in public.

However, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Red Deer for putting this motion forward at a time when Canadians are losing trust in their political institutions, or were. All of us must be active in finding ways to promote more open and accountable government.

However, in searching out these various ways to promote more open and accountable government, we must recognize that our institutions face a variety of other challenges equally important to Canadians.

For example, Canadians want government to cost less, to be more efficient and to operate in a more business like manner. In some cases it may be necessary to balance the value of openness with these other values.

Although I find the objectives behind this motion laudable I cannot support this motion for three reasons. First, we must be concerned about the impact this motion will have on the competitive position of crown corporations. I do not say the impact is great or small, merely that before adopting this motion I would want to hear directly from those crown corporations on this issue.

Second, in times of fiscal restraint we must stop and ask what will this motion cost the taxpayers? How will those costs be paid? The fact is that processing access requests requires an access to information bureaucracy and costs money.

The third reason I cannot support this motion is that it fails to distinguish between different kinds of crown agencies and different institutions of Parliament.

The motion is too broadly worded and as such disagrees with the findings of the 1986 parliamentary committee report "Open and Shut" and with the most recent report of the information commissioner.

Returning to my first reason for opposing this motion, I am not convinced it has struck the proper balance between the competing values of open and accountable government on the one hand and smaller, more efficient government on the other.

The motion asks that crown agencies be subject to the scrutiny of the Access to Information Act. There are presently more than 130 crown agencies subject to the act. I assume that the hon. member means by crown agencies those crown agencies not yet subject to the act. In particular, I assume he is referring at least in part to crown corporations.

(1755)

It is with respect, particularly to crown corporations, that the balance between efficient, competitive business like crown agencies and open, accountable enterprises becomes most important.

The basic question is whether crown corporations which have mandates to operate in a business like fashion, sometimes in competition with the private sector, should have to work under different rules than their competitors. If you believe that crown corporations should act like businesses, why would you impose a different set of rules on them?

If you believe crown corporations should not be competing with the private sector at all, that is a completely different question. Subjecting crown corporations to the scrutiny of the Access to Information Act will not terminate the crown corporations if that is your goal. It will simply make them less competitive, more expensive and less efficient.

I would not want to make a decision on the motion before the House until I know more about the implications. I am not prepared to support the motion at this time.

Another reason why I do not support this motion is that we do not have enough information about what the potential cost to the taxpayer will be. The fact is processing access requests costs taxpayers money. The most recent report of the information commissioner says that the annual cost of processing access requests is \$20 million and that the current fees are not designed to recover costs, but merely to deter trivial requests.

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Adding institutions to be covered by the Access to Information Act is saying that the government needs to spend more money. Where will this money come from? How much will it cost? Whatever it costs we know that it is a cost that private business does not have to incur and therefore will make crown corporations less competitive, at least to the extent of the cost of processing access requests.

I do not say that the cost of processing access requests cannot be justified. The information commissioner says that \$20 million is a bargain for such an essential tool of public accountability. He may be right. All I am saying is that we should not adopt motions based on good intentions without first asking the basic questions of how much will it cost and who will pay.

Also, I am reluctant to support this motion because of the report of the parliamentary committee that examined the Access to Information Act in 1986. Its report is called "Open and Shut". That committee considered a broad range of entities which might be made subject to the Access to Information Act. It concluded that it would not be appropriate for all crown agencies to be made subject to the act. It thought a definition of crown corporation should be developed and should be limited to corporations in which the crown has a controlling interest and which provide goods or services to the public on a commercial basis. It thought there should be special exemptions for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, mentioned significantly by my hon. colleague, in relation to program material.

With respect to Parliament, the parliamentary committee was of the view that the offices of senators and members of the House of Commons should be excluded from scrutiny of the act. It said the relationship between such elected and appointed officials and the electorate is sometimes described as akin to solicitor-client privilege, and parliamentary privilege is involved. Therefore, the committee suggests their continued exclusion from the scope of the act.

The committee thought that the Access to Information Act should not apply to the judicial branch of government and therefore not to the Federal Court, tax court, Supreme Court of Canada. Perhaps surprisingly, the committee thought the act should apply to administrative tribunals which perform quasi-judicial functions.

The committee recognized that the federal government is involved in joint ventures with others, notably the provinces, and in those cases thought it would be best if there were negotiations with the provinces before making such joint ventures subject to the Access to Information Act.

Here we have a parliamentary committee that studied the issues very carefully.

(1800)

The considered conclusion was that it would go too far to include all crown agencies and at least in the case of the CBC it saw merit in examining the special circumstances of crown corporations that would become subject to the act. It saw merit in excluding courts, MPs' offices and federal-provincial joint organizations.

I am not prepared to say that parliamentary committee was wrong in making these judgments. I think it goes too far to say in a sweeping statement that all of Parliament and all crown agencies should be subject to the Access to Information Act.

In conclusion, I support a comprehensive, careful review of the Access to Information Act and I will support amendments aimed at improving access to government information. I may well support extending the application of the Access to Information Act to crown agencies not yet covered by the act, but I cannot in all conscience support a motion that fails to distinguish between various kinds of crown agencies that might make the correspondence I receive from my constituents automatically subject to the act and that is voted on without hearing from executives of crown agencies not presently subject to the act.

I think the better approach is to take the Minister of Justice at his word that it is time for a review of the Access to Information Act. Let him draw upon all of the expertise we can acquire and use the full parliamentary procedures, including committee hearings, to produce the best set of amendments possible.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by saying that committee would decide many of those things which the hon. member has just talked about.

I am sure he, as a fine parliamentarian, is also aware that a private member cannot initiate a motion or a private member's bill which is going to cost the government more money. Therefore, I think it would be appropriate for the member to make sure that he gets on the record at some point that he well knows what the purpose, plan and policy of private member's motions and bills is.

I would like to make a few comments about Motion M-304 which my friend from Red Deer brought in. I think it is excellent, quite frankly, because the government has said it was going to do all kinds of things with access to information but here we are well over the one year birthday and precious little has happened again in that vein.

Let me just refresh your memory, Mr. Speaker. I do not know where you were on July 11 but I was in the bush in Beaver River having a wonderful time getting some rest and relaxation. I do not get the Ottawa *Citizen* out there nor do I get Canada's national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*. Nonetheless, let me

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look at some of the things that were going on while you and I were away from these hallowed halls on July 11.

The Ottawa *Citizen*, July 11 stated: "Justice Minister Allan Rock is promising an overhaul of the federal Access to Information Act so it is more in line with public expectations of openness in government". We have read about openness in government in the red book and in any number of places. He thinks it is now out of date, very much in need of an overhaul. My friend just suggested that it certainly is in need of an overhaul, but when? When are we going to see any changes in this thing? We have been promised all kinds of legislation. We have had take note debates on just about every subject we could dream of and yet there is no action.

We have been in the House now almost a year in this new session and we have seen precious little come forward in terms of tangible, get your teeth into it kind of legislation.

Mrs. Brushett: You cannot keep up with the action.

Miss Grey: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across might be surprised at how I could keep up to the action.

The justice minister says the present act reflects the state of the art as of the mid-1970s. We are not in the 1990s. Before he gets it together, dear knows, we will be into the next century and into the 2000s, I am not sure how we will say that. However, he says people's expectations of government are different. There is a need for more openness. For heaven's sake, that is absolutely right, the Ottawa *Citizen* is bang on.

There is a word here that is going to go through my comments over and over again, a motif, and that is the word secrecy. If anything would disgust the Canadian public it is a government that sits in here and does not talk about secrecy but acts secrecy. That is really frustrating for people.

(1805)

Members of this House are all aware of the need for accurate, complete and timely information. The Access to Information Act which was brought in on July 1, 1983 talked about openness and making sure that people had access to some information if they really needed it, not just for fun. It is time consuming for people to dig up information as well as expensive because you are paying people to dig up that information. The bottom line on that is what is the cost if we do not do it?

If we ignore access to information, if we do not go ahead and process people's requests and have them accessible to the information that they really need, that people are demanding, what is the cost if we do not do it?

I think there are some long term costs there that the hon. member might think about, especially when he is campaigning in the next election.

We take this as a right of the Canadian people. Along with rights that we all have come responsibilities. We as parliamentarians have responsibilities to the Canadian public, after all it is paying our cheques.

Many companies, crown corporations, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, cabinet ministers' expenses, if the public is paying the bills, why should it not have some of this information at its fingertips? It seems ludicrous to me that we would say sorry, there are certain parts of the act that are exempt and so we do not have to tell you.

If anything is going to frustrate people—and on a school board as well, as my hon. friend mentioned earlier—if anything frustrates the parent teacher association it is going to a meeting and demanding that they look at the minutes, because they are paying those bills too. When I was participating with school boards in my teaching career it would be ridiculous for people involved in the school system to say we do not think you should have access to that information.

I taught in a small school in a small town and nothing would run you out of town faster than a parent teacher association or the parent advisory council saying "what do you mean, you are not going to tell us? We are paying your salary and you had better let us know some of this information".

There should be few state secrets at any level.

Speaking of secrecy, in the *Times Colonist* from November 17, 1994, very fresh, a few weeks ago, the title of an article was "Weak Government's Lapse into Secrecy". Freedom of information works great when things are going well for government but it is a different story when the going gets tough. That is for sure.

This person says government information in the electronic age should be preserved as a national resource. Government should help people gain access to it and should be held in easily obtainable form. In other words, people should be able to have access to this with computers and the electronic highway and everything else that we have. There should be absolutely no reason for secrecy.

The *Ottawa Citizen* on January 22, 1994 said that not only is it so secretive but that once you do crack through on that on access to information, if you are going to get any information out of it, it is slower than molasses in January, when this article was written. This person says that one of the most common complaints about access to information is that it is slow and getting slower. If there is anything we need in this bureaucracy it is not slow and getting slower. That is for sure.

Ten years ago almost 79 per cent of requests were completed in 30 days or less, while 6.3 per cent took more than 60 days. Now only 57.5 per cent are completed in 30 days and 21.4 per cent take longer than 60 days. This looks vaguely familiar, what

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I see every day across the way, a government that says it is bringing in legislation on this and that and the next thing.

I have been tallying what was an actual government sponsored, initiated, carried through to fruition bill in this House. It was not something from Kim Campbell that was held over and was going to be updated and change the name of departments and move ahead with this and that. The Tobacco Smuggling Act was something that this government could take credit for because it started it, carried through and finished it, whether it was good or bad is immaterial. Everything else was something left over.

"Public information, political property", from the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper, July 5, 1994, when we were out of the House again. Public information, should it be public property? Of course. Is it? No. It belongs to the government and it keeps its claws and talons right into it. Heaven help anyone who tries to find out anything. From Toronto *Star* last January 29: "This law errs on the side of secrecy. When you get into thorny areas, it gets very cumbersome".

(1810)

If there are people who are finding this tedious, perhaps they could mention this to the hon. justice minister and he could perhaps get something through here. I would hate to think we were keeping anyone up.

In 1983 the Liberals were the government and I was not here. The Toronto *Star* says: "When the act was passed 33 statutes were exempted, cabinet discussions and tax information, for example, under section 24".

Under the Conservative government in 1986 the Liberals were here too: "In 1986 a parliamentary justice committee said section 24 should be repealed because it was undemocratic". Imagine such a thing in this institution.

Let me finish by reading an article from November 18, just a few weeks ago. This was from the Ottawa *Citizen*: "Canadians don't enjoy an open and accountable federal government". It could not have been a Liberal that wrote that article surely, because they have told us for months now that they have an open and accountable government: "Instead they are saddled with a bureaucratic culture only marginally less secretive than a decade ago", we know who was in power a decade ago, "when the principle of access to information held by government was first enshrined in a new federal law".

I do not want anyone to think we are making light of this, surely. Only some of the faces are a little different over there and you and I looked at them all in the last Parliament, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately it seems many of those faces are the same. The names have changed. If anything shrouds this piece of legislation which has been in place for years now, if anything is going

to send us on our Christmas recess and make it look like this place has not changed a bit, it is if this government is not really committed to changing the Access to Information Act.

We welcome real, substantive changes to that. We look forward to 1995 and hope that we have far more substantive legislation in place that we can support.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak on the motion from the member for Red Deer, since the very essence of this motion is in line with what the Bloc Quebecois has been asking for and I should say that it is also what my constituents in Chicoutimi expect.

The objectives of the Bloc and the official opposition are clear and precise. We want greater transparency and openness in the management of public affairs and respect for the taxpayers' acquired right to know what the government is doing with public funds.

This motion says that Parliament and crown agencies should be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act. At present, the Access to Information Act, passed in 1982, gives access only to federal government documents. Under this law, therefore, government institutions must make their documents available.

Nevertheless, there are exceptions. Some of the 112 federal crown corporations and several government agencies, including the House of Commons, the Senate, the Library of Parliament and officers of Parliament are not subject to this law.

The Bloc Quebecois believes that the Access to Information Act must be extended to any government institution financed with public funds. In a democratic system like ours, public affairs must be run as openly as possible. That is what our constituents want. Openness, yes, but it is a word which frightens my colleagues opposite.

(1815)

We see it in the way they have run the affairs of state for a little over a year. Need we mind you of their reticence and great lack of openness on many issues? First, on Bill C-52, concerning the Department of Public Works and Government Services, the Liberal government persists in blocking any amendment which would make this department's awarding of government contracts more open. It is hard for members of this Parliament to obtain relevant information on their riding from this department.

Members of Parliament are the last to find out about the reorganizations going on in their riding. In Chicoutimi, a reorganization of post offices was announced to the public after the fact. Moreover, firms of consulting engineers or architects were never told why they could not bid on certain contracts.

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A public inquiry might shed some light on how these contracts are awarded, but I imagine they are reserved for friends of the regime. You will also remember this whole episode when the Minister of Canadian Heritage wrote to the CRTC about an application. Some said it was a lack of ethics, others talked about a lack of transparency, while others concluded that it was patronage. The government did not follow the principle of transparency, and was caught in the act. It is Bloc Quebecois members who dared to reveal that the Minister of Canadian Heritage got personally involved in issuing a broadcasting licence.

And the Prime Minister did not even take any sanction against that minister, who had intervened. The Prime Minister even had the nerve to excuse his minister by saying that other Cabinet members had also been involved in similar patronage activities. The government also objected to the bill on public financing for political parties. That speaks volumes about their desire to ensure transparency. Past experience tells us that the main financial backers of political parties are usually the ones who get lucrative government contracts. These people are called friends of the regime.

Then there are the reports of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which are submitted to the Solicitor General. However, the solicitor refuses to let the parliamentary subcommittee on national security have access to these documents. Why was that subcommittee set up if it cannot have access to the reports tabled by the agency responsible for monitoring intelligence activity?

Given this lack of transparency, which is becoming more and more prevalent, the Access to Information Act remains one of the only means for elected members of this House, and Canadian taxpayers, to obtain information on the operations of departments and government agencies, including crown corporations.

Thanks to that act, MPs were able to have access to the findings contained in a SIRC report. SIRC concluded that the inquiries conducted by one of the branches of CSIS are not related to threats to Canada's security, as defined in the act but, rather, to threats to the security of private businesses. In conducting such inquiries, CSIS duplicates the operations of the federal and provincial police forces.

(1820)

As my colleague from Bellechasse pointed out a few days ago in this House, it is unfortunate that parliamentarians are the last ones to be informed of such allegations. Without the Access to Information Act, this government would not reveal anything, either to the official opposition or the citizens of this country.

This time around, the government cannot deny the public its right to scrutinize the management of public affairs, which are financed in large part through the taxes it pays.

The Bloc Quebecois supports the objective of making the whole federal administration accessible and transparent, for the sake of fairness and equity.

We have been elected by our fellow citizens; our mandate is to report to them on the activities and functions of the public administration.

Moreover, the Access to Information Act should also apply to the Senate, an institution which is appointed, not elected.

However, the act should not apply to government agencies and crown corporations which hold confidential information for the purpose of competition, insofar as that information is concerned, but the act should apply to them in the case of general information such as expenditures, budgets, trade practices and personnel management.

In view of the many examples I have just listed, the Bloc Quebecois will vote in favour of this motion since it promotes more transparency. Let us hope that our friends opposite will know enough to take advantage of this opportunity.

[English]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise and speak in support of the motion in the name of the hon. member for Red Deer which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Parliament and Crown Agencies should be subject to scrutiny under the Access to Information Act.

This is a timely motion. Yesterday afternoon I attended the public accounts committee of which I am a member and regularly attend. We have been having problems getting some information from the government regarding a \$2 billion loss this country has suffered. The taxpayers are out \$2 billion and we have been trying to find out who actually caused the loss. Was it the Ministry of National Revenue? Was it the Minister of Finance, or was it the Department of Justice?

Officials were in front of the committee and we were trying to determine who was responsible. Was it bad advice from lawyers? Was it bad decision making by revenue and finance?

When the Minister of National Revenue was in front of the committee he gave a complete and detailed report. He said that the public accounts committee had every right to read the legal opinions which had been obtained from the Solicitor General's department on a particular case but we were not getting them. He was prepared to say we had every right to have them but as far as he was concerned we were not getting them.

Now we are debating access to information. I think access to information is a fundamental part which goes to the very heart of democracy. We on behalf of the taxpayers should know and have every right to know. When the taxpayers lose \$2 billion they have every right to know who made the mistake. Therefore,

access to information is more fundamental than most people think.

Think of other situations. A couple of months ago we were all distressed to find out that the Commissioner of Official Languages was driving back and forth between Ottawa and Montreal in a chauffeured limousine courtesy of the federal government, just because he would rather live in Montreal than in Ottawa.

Access to information would help us to find those things out earlier. It is the taxpayers' money. Not only is he being driven in a chauffeured limousine between Ottawa and Montreal because he likes to live in Montreal but works in Ottawa, but we have also given him an apartment that I think costs \$15,600. We are paying that because he likes to live in Montreal but his job is in Ottawa and he needs a place to hang his hat while he is here. We find these things out.

(1825)

The chairman of CN Rail needed a place to hang his hat too so he got a \$300,000 interest free loan from CN. Who owns CN? The taxpayers. Does CN make a big profit? CN is subsidized. There is a major loss of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money but the chairman said: "I am worth it. I do a good job for this organization. I need and should have a \$300,000 interest free loan in order for me to do my job better".

I am sure many taxpayers would agree with the idea that they could do their job better if they had an interest free loan of \$300,000 but they cannot have it. There is a Liberal member over there who suggests that perhaps he could also do his job better if he had a \$300,000 interest free loan. Only one, his seatmate, disagrees but that is by the way.

The point we are trying to make is that if we had the information, people would be a lot more careful about the way they spend taxpayers' money than they do. If it is secret they do not have to answer to anybody; just keep it under the table and everything will be fine.

I looked at the Access to Information Act. I opened it up and looked at section 13. The subject in subsection 2 is that the head of a government institution shall refuse to disclose any record. This is the Access to Information Act. I thought that must be an aberration. Section 13 deals with information obtained in confidence, but that is okay. He could perhaps refuse that one.

How about federal-provincial affairs under section 14? The head of a government institution may refuse to disclose any record requested under this act. How about section 15, international affairs and defence? The head of a government institution may refuse to disclose any record requested under this act.

On it goes. Under section 16 on law enforcement and investigation, the head of a government institution may refuse to disclose any record requested under the act. In section 17

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concerning the safety of individuals, again may refuse to disclose.

By the time we get through to section 24 we get to statutory prohibitions. Virtually every document is protected and not open to information, to scrutiny, nor to the taxpayers who pay millions of dollars for this organization. The House of Commons has a budget of \$243 million. That does not include the Senate. That is for here. Think of the mountains of paper we produce, all secret.

The Reform Party in the last election said to cut \$300 million or \$400 million out of subsidies to crown corporations. That gives an idea of how much money they are losing. It is in the billions every year and nobody has the right to find out how they are losing the money, what kind of service they are producing, or anything along those lines.

Surely the taxpayer who is footing the bill has the right to know. That is all we are asking. It is not very much. They are forking out about 40 per cent of their income every year in income taxes and it is all secret. The government denies them access. It does not get back to them to say what it is doing with their money.

The honourable thing to do would be for the government to support the motion. The member for Red Deer put this motion forward seriously thinking that we would take note of the fact that Canadians need to know and want to know and government will work a lot better if they do know.

(1830)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, do you want me to start right now? It is not on MIL Davie but on fisheries.

Excuse my English. I was just trying to maintain a good relationship with my colleagues. I hope the people will forgive me. I want to reassure French speaking Canadians, I am not

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being assimilated. I was just practising my English. After all, at least 15 per cent of my constituents are English.

I am pleased to rise this evening to address a question I have asked in this House concerning the repatriation of fisheries management. This question was put to the Minister of Fisheries on December 6. As usual, I was not satisfied with the answer and, therefore, intend to ask the question again this evening.

On November 16, I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans whether or not he intended to make changes to administrative responsibilities regarding fisheries, as requested by the Quebec fisheries minister at the federal-provincial conference of fisheries ministers held in Victoria on November 1.

I also asked the minister if he intended to comply to this request along the lines of what Quebec is asking for.

The minister's answer was very clear. On November 16, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans indicated that he had been asked this question by several provinces weeks or even months earlier.

The minister understood the demands made by the provinces in order to improve administration of this resource and to eliminate unnecessary overlap in the fisheries sector.

Indeed, Quebec had reached this conclusion several decades earlier. Unfortunately, since another Liberal government was in power at the time, in 1983-84, it decided to repatriate management. Today, in 1994, we still have to enter into negotiations merely to recover what was taken from us.

The minister went on to say that he intended to respond directly to reorganizing the fisheries sector and that he looked forward to continued good dialogue and discussion with all of the provinces. He even added, "including Quebec". You will understand why I was anxious. Finally, we had someone who was willing to take action.

I raised the matter again on December 6. At that time, I asked the minister why he had not responded to the request from the Quebec government, because the Quebec government had expressed, through a letter, its desire to make official the claims that had been made at the federal-provincial conference.

The minister responded to me in a way that I would qualify as boastful. I expected something else from a minister. He said that it was a shocking thing that fully 35 days had passed. But when a minister is getting ready to table a fisheries plan that will affect all the Atlantic provinces, I think that 35 days is a long wait.

Thirty-five days of silence, it is a long time, when Quebec is putting forward a serious and important proposal, asking the minister to start the negotiations.

My message is: Does the minister intend to table in this House a planned schedule for meeting with his provincial counterparts, and to inform the population of Quebec and Canada of it?

He has been a minister for 14 months now, and nothing is happening. All I am asking him is: Does he have a plan, an agenda to meet with his counterparts from Newfoundland, Quebec and British Columbia?

(1835)

[English]

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member for Gaspé that the issues raised by Minister Landry are serious and require careful consideration.

He should also know that the whole question of federal and provincial roles and responsibilities and the management of marine fisheries is of key concern to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Far from ignoring the Quebec government's proposal I can assure my hon. colleague that the questions raised by Quebec are being carefully analysed. I do not believe that the hon. member would expect an immediate response to a proposal that calls for a fundamental restructuring of federal and provincial roles and responsibilities in the marine fishery.

I understand that the Quebec government is seeking increased responsibilities in marine fisheries management and has devoted a great deal of energy to formulate its proposal. However, given the multilateral nature of the Atlantic fishery and the federal government's responsibility to ensure the conservation of the resource, I believe that his request needs to be addressed in the context of multilateral discussions of fisheries.

For example, it is essential that we strive to reach a federal-provincial consensus on historic shares that will meet the needs of all stakeholders before we can move on to consider specific proposals.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has also indicated that in order to consolidate the views of all stakeholders on licensing reform and processing capacity reduction he will be launching an Atlantic round table in early 1995.

I trust that this series of round table consultations will offer an opportunity to the Quebec government as well as to the other Atlantic provinces to play a constructive role in the design of the fishery of the future.

Finally, I would like to respond to the comments made to the Quebec government regarding overlap and duplication in federal and provincial programs and services. As part of the government wide program review exercised, the Department of

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Fisheries and Oceans has undertaken a thorough review of its programs with a view to maximizing efficiencies and eliminating costly duplications.

Extensive consultations have led to the establishment of important co-operative agreements in the fisheries sector which demonstrate that federal and provincial fisheries programs can harmonize without putting at risk local interests with tangible benefits to taxpayers and clients.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans remains firmly committed to the path we embarked on some months ago which is designed to achieve new efficiencies and forge new and productive partnerships of all the stakeholders in the fishery.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on November 24, I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration a question on an order to deport Mrs. Thérèse Sabadin and her two children to the Seychelles. Mrs. Sabadin had suffered physical violence and had received death threats from her husband, who was convicted and subsequently deported to the Seychelles.

Although this was a very sad case, Mrs. Sabadin was deported with her two children to Barbados and then sent back to Canada. This involuntary trip was very expensive for Mrs. Sabadin.

Finally, as a result of numerous representations by the Bloc Québécois and several women's organizations, the minister agreed to allow Mrs. Sabadin's application for permanent residence to be processed in Canada.

Mrs. Sabadin now has to wait several months before she can get a ministerial permit. Until then, she will have no status in this country and will not be able to work. Without official papers, she will also have trouble obtaining social assistance and will have to wait at least a year before she can get permanent residence status. To apply, Mrs. Sabadin had to pay \$700, which she did not have, in administrative costs. She had already paid \$650 for her initial application. Action réfugiés Montréal, a community organization, paid the fee on her behalf.

In this House, I have often criticized these fees as arbitrary and unfair. Recently, even the Liberal member for Winnipeg North was critical of this abuse of people in need by the Department of Immigration.

I would ask the minister to be more sensitive to the plight of women who claim refugee status on the grounds of fear of persecution because of their gender.

It is now ten days until Christmas and two weeks before the end of 1994, and I want to take this opportunity to send my best wishes to my constituents in Montreal North, especially those of ethnic origin, the Italians, Haitians, Arabs, Latin Americans, and so forth.

(1840)

I also want to send my best wishes for health, happiness and peace to all new Quebecers and new Canadians. Despite the feelings of hostility that are apparent in some sectors of public opinion, I believe that most people still support immigration and opening our doors to refugees fleeing persecution. To the thousands of immigrants and refugees in Canada and Quebec, I want to send a message of support, understanding, solidarity and hope.

[*English*]

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration confirmed for the hon. member on November 24 in this House that this case was being reviewed by immigration officials.

The minister had previously advised a colleague of the hon. member on November 17 that immigration officials conduct an additional review in cases where there may be new information that may or might alter a decision to remove a person.

Such reviews may be conducted when in keeping with the authority delegated by the minister to managers, a manager of a Canada immigration centre determines that there might be additional information.

In this particular case a manager in the CIC in Montreal granted a two week reprieve in this case to give the individual an opportunity for further review.

I am pleased to advise the hon. member that the additional review has been completed and immigration officials have determined that the individual and her children should be allowed to remain on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. The individual and her counsel have been advised of this decision.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Since the hon. member for Châteauguay has to leave immediately, we will hear the hon. member for Chambly.

CUSTOMS BROKERS

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in reply to two questions I recently asked in this House about the new regulations increasing bonds to be posted by customs brokers, the Minister of National Revenue referred me to the Canadian Association of Customs Brokers which seemingly supported his approach in this matter.

First of all, let me say to the minister that the picture is somewhat different from what he told us then. On November 24, the association held a meeting where 883 members gave their opinion on the advisability of these new regulations. The results of the vote were 803 against the regulations, 74 in favour and 6 abstentions. Because larger brokerage firms have multiple

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voting rights, the final result was 135 against the regulations, 141 in favour and 7 abstentions.

A study conducted by Brian Hull and Associates, a well-known economist from Ottawa, for the coalition of small and medium size brokers, shows that the new regulations unduly favour the larger brokerage firms. If they were to be subjected to the same standards as smaller brokers, they would see their security bill jump \$1 million in one case, and between \$150,000 and \$180,000 in other cases, while they now pay only \$30,000 for a maximum security of \$10 million.

We can see the advantage given to these larger brokerage firms by this new administrative policy. Does the minister know that small and medium size brokers, those who broker 20,000 imports or less per year create 2,500 direct jobs in Canada and that their disappearance by a stroke of his pen would have a dramatic effect?

Does the minister know that with these new standards only 19 brokers would remain in Canada thanks to the privilege he would be giving them by instituting a ceiling of \$10 million for the security they must post.

Let me quote the conclusions of Mr. Hull's study.

[*English*]

The effect of this new ruling by Revenue Canada for account security and the disproportionate burden of its impact as between large and small firms is to place the Government of Canada in violation of the basic principles of conduct on which the Competition Act of Canada is founded.

(1845)

The effect of the new formula is to, first, impede the efficiency and adaptability of the Canadian economy; second, restrict opportunities for Canadian competition in global markets, while discriminating on behalf of foreign competition; third, seriously impede the opportunity for small and medium sized enterprises to participate in the Canadian economy; and, fourth, to reduce the choice of competitive prices and services available to Canadians.

[*Translation*]

A \$10 million security on a monthly invoice of \$250 million is only 4 per cent, while a \$1.8 million security for smaller brokers is 100 per cent of their monthly invoice.

Does the minister, who is trying so hard to protect importers, realize that large brokerage firms are just as likely as small ones to go bankrupt? I would even go so far as to say that large diversified companies, with interests in transportation, storage, handling, run a higher risk. Take real estate development, for example, Campeau Corporation, the Reichman brothers and

others went under before all the smaller companies disappeared. In the insurance business, did some large companies not go bankrupt before many small ones?

If the minister is really committed to protecting the public, here is my suggestion: First, he should go back to the formula where everyone had ten days to pay duties and taxes, the way it is in the United States and the way it was in Canada before these interim payments, which are at the root of all our problems, were instituted. He should keep security at 100 per cent of monthly billings and make all brokers, large and small, equally responsible.

[*English*]

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the department is considering increasing the security requirement for obtaining release prior to payment of duties and taxes to 100 per cent of the average monthly invoice up to a maximum of \$10 million. This action is being considered in direct response to the number of cases where brokers fail to deliver to Revenue Canada funds received from their clients, the importers.

Since importers remain liable, they have had to pay a second time to the department. As most brokers' clients are small businesses the department needs to ensure increased security to protect them and the jobs of the more than one million Canadians they employ.

Extensive consultations have been undertaken with the Canadian Society of Customs Brokers that negotiated a master bond program to make it easier for their members to meet the new security requirements. Discussions have also been undertaken with the Canadian Importers Association. Whatever is decided I do not believe any financially viable broker will be forced out of business.

Brokers are already provided with the flexibility to arrange for some of their clients to post their own security or to deliver interim payments to the department. Although many brokers have few assets in their companies they may also restructure their financial arrangements by using personal assets to obtain security.

A recent enhancement has been discussed that would assist both brokers and importers in obtaining security. The requirements for importers posting their own security, whether or not they use a broker, would be based on an amount equivalent to the duties and taxes payable on a monthly basis, less the goods and services tax.

This enhancement could make it easier for brokers to arrange for some clients to obtain security and enable them to protect the remainder of their clients from the consequences of default. As well, the cost of doing business for most of the 8,000 importers who deal directly with the department would not increase.

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In conclusion, this enhancement is being discussed with the Canadian Importers Association and the Canadian Society of Customs Brokers, both of whom are contributing positively to resolving this issue.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we adjourn this evening, I would like to say a few words on a more personal note.

[*English*]

Chief senior page, André Frechette, has now worked most capably in the House for forty-two and a half years. Imagine, forty-two and a half years of putting up with members of Parliament.

Tomorrow our Speaker will, I believe, pay tribute to Mr. Frechette and his long years of capable service to the House. Unfortunately I cannot be here and I would like to do so now.

Can you imagine how many thousands of services Mr. Frechette has done for so many hundreds of members over those many years? We are all deeply in your debt, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, all of us in the Bloc Québécois wish to join you in extending our best wishes to Mr. Fréchet on his retirement and say how much we have appreciated his work here in the House. I have had that privilege for the past ten years, and I want to say that although we will miss you very much, you truly deserve a wonderful retirement.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), a motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 6.50 p.m.)

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