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Wednesday, March 15, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 15, 1995

The House met at 2 p.m.

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Prayers
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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Consumer Rights Day as declared by Consumers International, formerly known as the International Organization of Consumer Unions. Throughout the world, consumers are marking this event by taking part in activities stressing their contribution to the marketplace in our society.

Consumers have a vital role to play in maintaining the wealth and competitiveness in this country. Indeed, over 60 per cent of Canada's GDP is attributed to consumer demand. Consumers' voices should be heard and their rights recognized.

Consumers International has a membership of 185 organizations from 80 nations whose fundamental concerns are to protect the rights of consumers and to promote social justice and fairness in the marketplace. The organization assists consumer groups in developing countries and initiates research action on issues such as pharmaceuticals, pesticides, tobacco and baby foods. It facilitates comparative testing of consumer goods and services—

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[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by failing to announce measures to stimulate the mining sector, the latest budget brought down by the Minister of Finance is helping to marginalize an industry that generates major spinoffs for a number of regions in Quebec and Canada, for instance in my own riding and in the ridings of many of my colleagues on both sides of the House.

Through its failure to act and its lack of commitment, the federal government is jeopardizing the operations of an industry that is already experiencing problems. In fact, the Mining Association of Canada refers to the budget measures as both harsh and ineffectual and as a threat to the future of the mining sector.

According to the Association des prospecteurs du Québec, Quebec's mining industry may well consider whether its particular sector would not be better served by a legislative framework under which only the Government of Quebec would have the power to intervene.

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[*English*]

BIG ROCK BREWERIES

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Albertans are demonstrating that they are willing to support the arts without massive federal assistance. Yesterday the Toronto based Council for Business and the Arts in Canada announced the winners of the 17th annual Business in the Arts awards. I am so pleased to announce that Big Rock Breweries from my riding of Calgary Southeast has received the award for community support.

The shrinking budgets in all areas of our economy demand we seek new, innovative and creative ways of accessing funds, including the cultural sector. Big Rock Breweries from Alberta is leading the way as a private sector supporter for the arts. Last year Big Rock provided over \$100,000 to over 40 different arts groups. It views its cultural support as a wise business practice and not as a charitable donation.

Thanks to the support of Big Rock Breweries, groups like the Alberta Theatre Project and the Muttard Public Art Gallery are thriving. Albertans indeed are leading the way in private sector support for the cultural sector. I applaud Big Rock Breweries.

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JAMEL TWINS

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations and appreciation to Mr. S.G.P. Jafry, a prominent member of the South Asian community, and to the Scarborough Muslim Association. Mr. Jafry was the fund raising co-ordinator re-

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sponsible for raising over \$175,000 to offset the costs of surgery and care of the Jamel twins.

These 2-year old children arrived from Pakistan last November to have extremely delicate surgery. Since birth they had been joined at the head. On January 23, 1995 a 23-member team of surgeons at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children performed over 15 hours of surgery.

There have been only 30 such operations performed worldwide and in 60 per cent of the operations only one of the children survives. Young Hira Jamel survived but her sister Nida did not. On behalf of the House, I wish to convey my condolences to the Jamel family. I am sure everyone is hoping for a full and complete recovery for young Hira Jamel.

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[Translation]

FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a speech he made on June 3 at the annual meeting of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, the leader of the Bloc Québécois said, and I quote: "The agenda proposed by the Bloc Québécois for today and for the future includes the active solidarity of your communities with francophones in Quebec, within the space we share".

This statement was noteworthy for its understanding and openness, unlike the statement made yesterday by the Bloc's official critic in response to the position taken by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada. After accusing them of interfering, the Bloc member continued her attack with the following statement, and I quote: "Our message to francophones outside Quebec is clear: Mind your own business".

Once again, the Bloc Québécois has shown it is determined to muzzle anyone who would challenge its separatist plans.

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FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, francophone and Acadian communities are unwavering in their belief in a united, progressive and dynamic Canada. I was very happy to hear that the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada had asked Quebecers to vote "no" in the referendum on separation.

The members of the Bloc Québécois are definitely misleading francophone and Acadian communities when they tell them that an independent Quebec would help the francophone community in Canada to better grow and develop.

(1405)

Furthermore the statement by the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata suggesting that the federal government had bought the francophones and the Acadians is a further insult to our communities.

I would invite the hon. member to publicly apologize for her insensitive remarks to Acadians and all francophones outside Quebec. Canada's francophones and Acadians have every right to speak on the future of our country.

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FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear that the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada unequivocally declared that it is in favour of Canadian federalism.

The FCFA is the second organization of its kind to state that it supports the "no" side. Last February, the Société des Acadiennes et Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick publicly announced its position, and also begged Quebecers to vote no. These two organizations also believe in a dynamic and progressive Canada which is proud to promote both official languages. This outlook on Canada promotes the growth of the francophone culture as a whole.

The fact that francophone establishments and organizations exist across Canada, be they educational, cultural or financial, proves that the French fact in Quebec and in all of the provinces has persevered and is alive.

The federal government has supported the development and growth of the French language and culture in Canada at all times, not just during the referendum debate. It would be a hard blow to the francophone community elsewhere in Canada if Quebec were to leave the Canadian federation.

Therefore, I hope the referendum will be held as soon as possible so that we can get on with solving the real problems.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the repeated attacks on the Immigration and Refugee Board over the last several years have regularly made the headlines. Since the Liberal government took office, these criticisms have become increasingly vitriolic, but the government remains strangely unperturbed.

Again yesterday, two former IRB board members estimated that at least half of their former colleagues lacked the training and expertise necessary for the performance of their duties.

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They alleged, as have others before them, that patronage appointments are at the root of the board's problems.

It is urgent that the government get to the bottom of the matter and hold a public inquiry into the Board's operations. The longer this government fails to take action, the more lasting the damage to the board's credibility is likely to be.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gerry Parsons, a resident of Air Ronge, Saskatchewan, has courageously given his permission for me to use his letter. He writes:

I appreciate your stand on gun control. I approve of reasonable methods of fighting crime and of taking guns from criminals. I will, I suppose, become a criminal when I refuse to register my hunting guns. Actually, I will probably never use my guns again; I am 75 years old and have a lung disorder which prevents me from doing very much of anything. I have never been charged with anything in my 75 years, it's too bad I have to start now. Thanks for your efforts. It's too bad the justice minister is not as honest as yourself.

Does the justice minister really—

The Speaker: Colleagues, even though we are quoting other people in this House sometimes terms which could not be attributed to ourselves, that is to say, questioning the honesty of another member, should not be imposed because someone else said them. I would ask the hon. member to delete any reflection on the honesty of any member of this House and to please finish his statement.

Mr. Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that final sentence.

Does the justice minister really think Mr. Parsons is a criminal? Does he think because a 75-year old man is going to knowingly fail to register his hunting rifles that he should go to jail for up to 10 years? Is the Liberal government going to build more jails to house the thousands of responsible firearms owners like Mr. Parsons? Or is it going to continue to let the real criminals out on the street to make room for those who fail to register their firearms?

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(1410)

[Translation]

FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata, a great champion of francophone rights when it suits her, tap-danced on the backs of francophones outside Quebec yesterday.

She accused the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne of interfering with Quebec's affairs by encouraging Quebecers to vote "no" in the upcoming referendum.

Casting doubt on the FCFA's honesty, the hon. member asked if receiving federal subsidies did not help the federation take a federalist stance.

If francophones outside Quebec have survived for centuries, taking their place at every level and in every sphere of activity in Canada, and if there is such a thing as cultural duality in Canada today, it is no thanks to egocentric separatists.

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FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I object to the remarks made by Bloc Québécois members to the effect that for francophones outside Quebec to oppose Quebec's separation constitutes interference. Such remarks clearly show the Bloc's policy of discouraging debate and silencing any opposition to separation. But the Bloc is ignoring an inescapable fact: you cannot silence a majority.

Francophones from across Canada—Quebecers, Acadians, Franco-Saskatchewanians and Franco-Ontarians—have always actively promoted and preserved their language and culture on this continent where we form a very small minority.

Our efforts have paid off and will continue to pay off because federalism and our political system are responsive and encourage the development of francophone communities. A majority of French Canadians recognize the Canadian federal system as a flexible system that promotes our development.

At the opening of this Parliament, the Bloc Québécois said it was going to—

The Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member. I will now recognize the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

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FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent months, francophone communities in Acadia and Ontario have welcomed the leader of the Bloc Québécois, who is eager to spread his party's message and establish lasting links with these communities.

I was there when the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario received Mr. Bouchard with decorum and civility at its annual meeting last year in Toronto.

Yesterday, the federation of francophone and Acadian communities of Canada said that Canadian federalism was the most

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favourable framework for the development of Quebec society and of francophone and Acadian communities.

Instead of admitting that this statement is based on convictions as strong as hers, the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata responded by telling them to mind their own business.

Francophone communities intend to pursue the dialogue initiated by the Bloc Québécois and, since the future of this country concerns us all, we will mind our own business.

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LA POCATIÈRE EXPERIMENTAL FARM

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the sheep industry in Canada and Quebec was stunned to find out in the last budget about the closure of the experimental farm in La Pocatière, which was established in 1910. Against all expectations, the federal government is slowing down the growth of this booming sector.

These cuts are totally inconsistent with the red book commitments on research and development and defeat the efforts made by research establishments in the last few years.

The federal government must review its R&D financing policy and end blind cuts which unfairly penalize growing agricultural sectors.

We hope that common sense will prevail and that the Minister of Agriculture will reconsider his decision as soon as possible, as requested by the committee for the survival of the experimental farm in La Pocatière.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the justice minister participated in a closed door meeting organized by the Liberal member for Dauphin—Swan River. This meeting was declared a farce by Mike Dudar, a resident, who had to demand a seat in a meeting that allowed only 60 people inside while hundreds of citizens along with the media were locked out.

Why is the justice minister refusing to address the very concerns his gun control legislation has created? Why was the media locked out of the meeting in Dauphin, Manitoba last night? Why is the minister unwilling to explain his gun control legislation to the very people it will have the greatest negative impact upon?

This is not the first time the minister has avoided an open public meeting with the people of Canada. He repeated the same practice while in Calgary last January. The minister's actions

last night were an insult to the people of Dauphin—Swan River and an insult to all concerned Canadians.

(1415)

The minister has a duty to stand before all Canadians and defend his draconian gun legislation and demonstrate—

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[Translation]

LINGUISTIC DUALITY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member representing the federal riding of St. Boniface, as a French-speaking resident of a province and a region outside Quebec, and as a Canadian of French-speaking origin born in St. Boniface, Manitoba, I am pleased that the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada gave its unequivocal support to Canadian federalism.

The federation, like myself, believes in a dynamic and progressive Canada which is proud to promote its linguistic duality and whose government actively supports the French fact throughout the country. We hope that the referendum will be held as soon as possible, so that all of us, including Quebecers of course, can concentrate our energy on building our country, Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

FISHERIES

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canada has just proceeded to release the Spanish trawler *Estai*, after its owners agreed to post a bond of \$500,000. As you know, the European Union had made the release of the trawler a condition for resuming negotiations with Canada.

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans indicate whether in exchange for the release of the Spanish trawler, European trawlers agreed to a 60-day moratorium on fishing for turbot, as requested by Canada?

[English]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question.

I want to report to him that this morning the master, or the owner, of the *Estai* posted bond in the order of \$500,000 against his vessel. This is in addition to the \$8,000 bail posted against the captain of the vessel a day or two before.

This is in keeping with the procedures of the Canadian judicial system, procedures that have been followed in similar circumstances with other vessels of similar size, shape and value.

We are very pleased to see that a bond has been posted. As a result the vessel and crew are free to leave at any time.

In addition to the bond being posted, some 130 tonnes of product have been removed from the vessel and is being held by the crown as evidence. It will be held in a storage facility and will be disposed of by the court at the end of the judicial proceedings.

There has been no negotiation, nor should there be in terms of the judicial proceedings themselves. I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition would agree with this. The proceedings have been conducted as they ought to be by the court in the normal manner.

Now that both a bond has been posted and there is no fishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, this may well be an opportunity for talks. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister have given instructions to a negotiating team in Brussels. We shall see.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister whether in connection with the release of the trawler *Estai*, Canada tried to obtain, or possibly obtained, guarantees from the European Union or Spain that their trawlers will not fish for turbot throughout the forthcoming negotiations with Canada?

[English]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a good question. Canada has made it clear since the beginning of this difficulty between Canada and the EU that we will not negotiate while fish are being caught.

I was pleased to note yesterday we had four or five days in a row of no fishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. For a few hours last night one vessel did cross over into the area of the nose but I can report that this morning it had pulled back again.

For the moment, as we speak here in this Chamber, there are no vessels on the nose and tail. Bond has been posted on this particular fishing vessel. It will sail out of harbour. I should point out it will sail out without a net, without the ability to fish. The net was cut.

(1420)

I can also report, and I know the Leader of the Opposition will be happy to hear this, that Canadian technology in global positioning systems—I am advertising now to the planet—were successful in allowing us to find and to retrieve today the net from the *Estai*.

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The net that has been retrieved bears manufacturer markings identical to that on part of the equipment still left on the *Estai*. The fish that were pulled out of the water—we videotaped this—were still kicking. They were alive. This is the net recently cut. The net had a 115 millimetre mesh, which is smaller than the 130 millimetre required by NAFO. In addition, the net in question had an 80 millimetre liner in the net.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether formal negotiations are now taking place between Canadian diplomats and their European counterparts, but I hope so. However, I would like to ask the minister whether Canada has initiated certain discussions so that formal negotiations can begin as soon as possible between its representatives and those representing Spain and the European Union?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the team headed by the Canadian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs is now in Brussels to start negotiations with representatives of the European Union. We are ready and willing, and we want to settle this in a diplomatic way.

There are two things we want to accomplish. First, ensure that the conservation measures we support will be respected, and we therefore hope to reach an agreement with our friends in the European Union on setting up an effective mechanism for surveillance and monitoring. I also want to take this opportunity to say that in a spirit of co-operation, we are prepared to review with European Union representatives the quota share we obtained as a result of the last negotiations.

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CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. In a report made public yesterday, the inspector general of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, better known as CSIS, notes serious irregularities in the use of informants on university campuses and in political parties during elections.

How does the Solicitor General explain his statements that CSIS did not spy on or infiltrate political parties, when the inspector general of CSIS criticizes his failure to issue any sort of guideline on dealing with these political party informants during electoral campaigns?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the report is for a period of more than two years before this government took office. Since that time work has been

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ongoing to deal with the problems and concerns raised in it. This is something to which we are paying close attention.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is no need to go back two years. In December, Michel Robert, the chair of the CSIS review committee, stated that Canadian political parties had not been investigated, and, a month later, the CSIS review committee was forced to contradict him, saying that there had in fact been a file entitled "Preston Manning" on the Reform Party.

I would therefore ask the Solicitor General how he can play down the scope of the report by the inspector general of CSIS, which concludes that there is no justification for the use of informants on university campuses and during electoral campaigns.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the overall conclusion of the inspector general at that time, some two years ago, was that the use of informants by CSIS was professional, of an appropriate professional level.

As I have said, work is ongoing to deal with the concerns raised by the inspector general at that time.

Finally, I remind my hon. friend that he has once again stated something that is not correct. The file referred to by the acting chair of the security intelligence review committee was not about an investigation of a political party but rather about the possibility that a foreign government had made contributions in a way that was not appropriate.

(1425)

Therefore, I hope my hon. friend, if he raises the subject again, will describe the matter correctly. It is about time he did so.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, over a month ago the Minister of National Defence claimed to have been ill-informed by the military chain of command specifically concerning information regarding the airborne videos.

Has the minister satisfied himself that these concerns with information from the chain of command have been addressed? What specifically has he done about them?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a particular incident to which the hon. member refers and that concerns the misinformation in a report on the videos. That matter was dealt with by the chief of defence staff who relieved a general officer of his post as a result of not providing both the CDS and myself with the details.

I have full confidence in the chief of defence staff and the military command who work pretty hard at their jobs, as I have confidence in all of the men and women who serve Canada proudly in the armed forces.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have obtained a leaked report written by Brigadier-General Jeffries and submitted to land force command headquarters.

According to General Jeffries, the troops believe that, quote: "Political agendas and careerism have replaced leadership in the defence hierarchy and, furthermore, that the loyalty and focus of senior military leaders is directed upwards and not down". This is a very serious evaluation of the state of affairs.

Is the Minister of National Defence aware of this report? How does he plan to deal with the leadership crisis in his department?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not privy to all communications that are made between the chain of command throughout the country.

If the hon. member has such a document that he describes, I will certainly raise the matter with the chief of defence staff to see if the concerns allegedly addressed by Brigadier-General Jeffries have been brought to his attention. Then we will decide how to proceed from that point forward.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that an internal report has pointed out leadership problems in the Canadian military. To date, however, the Minister of National Defence has promised only cosmetic changes and has put off major decisions with the promise of future inquiries.

Is the minister prepared to address these failings in the leadership and elsewhere in the military or do we have to wait for more videos?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just made the statement that the government and I have full confidence in the chief of defence staff and all those in command of the Canadian Armed Forces.

With respect to the renewal of any organization, there are changes made every year. I announced a couple of weeks ago we would be streamlining the general officer ranks by about 25 per cent. Some new people have been brought into key positions at

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national defence headquarters. I believe this will allay any concerns the hon. member has that we at national defence headquarters do not have dynamic, vibrant leadership.

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[Translation]

BURUNDI

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The situation is very tense in Burundi since the murder, in October 1993, of the first democratically elected president of that republic. In recent months, some 50,000 people have died in the conflict between the two main ethnic groups, and there is every indication that another crisis is looming. The recent assassination of the minister of energy and mines has exacerbated the situation and there is a great deal of insecurity in the country.

Can the minister tell us about the current situation in Burundi and the means being considered by the UN and Canada to prevent a crisis?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the concerns expressed by the hon. member are well founded. It is sad that the ethnic conflicts which occurred in Rwanda and ended in terrible bloodbaths could now surface in a neighbouring country and trigger a similar tragedy.

(1430)

This is why Canada has repeatedly asked the United Nations, and also the Organization of African Unity, to immediately get involved and try to find a solution to this increasingly menacing situation.

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in committee, the minister informed us of the representations he made, among others, to the UN secretary, for sending additional troops to Rwanda in order to restore a balance in the region. As you know, the Security Council rejected Canada's request.

My question to the minister is: Will he pledge to again ask the UN Security Council to quickly organize the multinational forces required to prevent a conflict?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. In the event that the United Nations are not in a position to intervene, we also contacted the Organization of African Unity to see if a regional approach might be more appropriate. A number of countries concerned by the situation in Rwanda and in Burundi could intervene, with the support of the UN, but they would do so on a regional basis, rather than in the context of a global operation under the UN.

[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that with the contents of the report being so serious the minister might have had them before now.

Further to my colleague's questions regarding leadership, General Jeffries' report says the troops believe: "Senior leaders are seen to be unwilling or unable to speak to soldiers' needs on their soldiers' behalf. For example, the airborne trial by headlines left personnel feeling disillusioned and abandoned".

Has the minister yet realized how serious the leadership problem in his department is? If so, can he give the House some specifics as to how he intends to deal with it?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have to realize the armed forces has been under considerable pressure for the last few years since the events in Somalia became public. This has posed a great problem and a strain.

The armed forces has enjoyed an enviable reputation for many years. The work discharged by the armed forces is exemplary. The Canadian Armed Forces is universally respected.

This week we are preparing to send the first of about a 470 contingent to Haiti. These people are outstanding. They are well led. That does not mean to say that from time to time problems will crop up. Where specific examples of management or leadership are brought to the attention of the government, they are dealt with.

With respect to the issue of Somalia, the whole chain of command and how the troops were deployed to Somalia will be the subject of an inquiry.

For the Reform Party to make blanket accusations about the morale of the troops and about the high leadership of the armed forces is not borne out by the facts. There was considerable disappointment regarding airborne matters and may have been reflected in the alleged report.

The Speaker: I would ask members once again to keep questions and answers short.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is not the Reform Party that is accusing the minister of leadership problems.

The report also says: "Soldiers perceive their interests and welfare are being sacrificed so that senior leaders can be successful in delivering the same bang for much less buck. Unpalatable though it may be, we will have to cut our suit to fit the available cloth if we are to avoid a hollow army and burnt out soldiers".

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Considering the contents of this report, is the minister prepared to institute an immediate inquiry to determine the cause and extent of the problem and propose remedial action to avoid a burnt out army?

(1435)

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it odd that the hon. member wishes me to institute an inquiry based on one memo.

The hon. member was a member of the joint committee of the House and Senate that looked into all aspects and operations of the Canadian Armed Forces. He signed a report concluding that the leadership of the armed forces was top flight.

Now he comes forward based on the contents of one memo, perhaps generated by the very emotional situation of the closing of the Canadian airborne, and wishes to reverse the assessment to which he subscribed less than three months ago. That is not logical.

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[Translation]

IRVING WHALE

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. In December 1993, officials of the Department of the Environment gave their minister an internal document which seriously called into question the conclusions and quality of the study on which she based her decision to refloat the *Irving Whale*.

Was the Minister of the Environment aware of that document and will she tell us why she picked the most risky and controversial solution, which was to raise the *Irving Whale*, despite her officials' advice?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only one who thinks this is a controversial issue is the company that did not land the contract. What is truly unfortunate for the hon. member opposite is that people called her leader regarding this issue when he was environment minister, and he held public hearings into the matter in Halifax, Dartmouth and on Prince Edward Island, yet took no action.

As soon as we came to office, we acted and we hope to raise the *Irving Whale* this summer at the very latest.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking to the Minister of the Environment who, at present, is the only one responsible for the Department of the Environment, and who is the one who must make the right decisions.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Guay: How can the minister explain her steadfast refusal to have an electronic inspection of the barge's hull done before raising it, which the experts say is the very minimum

which must be done to prevent a major ecological catastrophe from occurring if the *Irving Whale* were to break up during the operation?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had read the documents I provided, all of the material in the public domain, including the 1990 report asking the former minister to take action, she would know that we did have an electronic inspection done last June.

[English]

What I find incredibly obscure about the logic of the hon. member is that a few months ago she stood in the House and said we should not wait until next spring. We have to lift the *Irving Whale* this year. Now that we are moving ahead and have gone to tender, she completely reverses the position she took only a few months ago.

I took a position, unlike her leader. I am going to raise the *Irving Whale* and finally we will get rid of the ticking time bomb that has been there for 25 years.

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LABOUR

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed the government has finally agreed to Reform's demands for back to work legislation in the current west coast labour dispute.

This addresses the immediate problem for Canadian shipping. What is the Minister of Labour prepared to do to prevent further disruptions?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact the situation has worsened in British Columbia ports. As of midnight last night, there was a complete work stoppage, as hon. members are aware. Yes, since midnight yesterday, the transportation of grain and perishable goods has been halted. In the face of the enormous economic consequences of this problem, the government has decided to act and implement back to work legislation.

We are currently negotiating with the various parties to ensure this legislation is adopted as quickly as possible. I hope that we will obtain everyone's agreement.

(1440)

[English]

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on her move.

What is needed now is final offer binding arbitration, as put forward in our private member's Bill C-262. Will the minister make a commitment today to support Bill C-262? If not, will she present similar legislation of her own?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand my hon. colleague's concerns about strikes in British Columbia ports. Today, however, we have a major crisis with grave economic consequences. The government will act as soon as it has the co-operation of the various parties in this House.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Yesterday, the UN Committee Against Torture ruled that Canada's treatment of Mr. Khan, a refugee claimant from Pakistan, violated the international convention against torture, to which Canada itself is a signatory.

Since the decision concludes that this individual would be in danger of being subjected to torture if Canada sent him back to his native country, does the Canadian government undertake not to deport Mr. Khan?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for the question. I am aware of the UN committee's decision.

We have asked the UN committee to reconsider its position on the basis that this individual also had a criminal conviction in Canada in 1993. No longer is this simply a case of protection for an individual. There is also the claim that Canada has every right to uphold the protection of the community and society.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how does the minister explain the fact that the Immigration and Refugee Board apparently did not look into the grounds for Mr. Khan's request, as the UN committee's ruling indicates?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the UN said Canada's system and how it deals with and treats refugee claimants is among the best in the world. With all due respect to the UN, Canada's house is quite clean and quite orderly.

However, it is our right as a country that this decision be not binding on Canada. We have every right to uphold our laws and the protection of our citizens. That is exactly the point we are making to this committee in asking it, even though its decision is not binding, to reconsider the sovereign right of a country to protect its borders and citizens.

Oral Questions

LABOUR

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. I appreciated her response on the grain transportation problem.

I stood in the House on February 7 last year with regard to a similar problem. The government passed legislation to put the workers back to work. Now we are dealing with a similar problem again.

What long term measures is the minister willing to employ to ensure that year after year western Canadian grain farmers do not have to go through similar problems?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand the concerns of the hon. member for Provencher because work stoppages are indeed, might I say, excessively frequent in British Columbia's harbours. I intend to have an industrial inquiry commission look into the various existing collective bargaining procedures with a view to making a very specific recommendation so that we can have—

[English]

Mr. Thompson: A review! Oh no, not again!

[Translation]

Mrs. Robillard: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I am unable to respond, with all the racket the hon. members opposite are making.

[English]

The Speaker: Once again I appeal to members to listen to the questions and answers. It is a matter of common courtesy.

* * *

(1445)

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is confusion surrounding the Liberal position on the electronic transfer tax, otherwise known as the Tobin tax, which seeks to impede the flow of capital around the world.

Last week in Copenhagen the human resources minister said that it was a good idea. He repeated it again in the House on Monday. The finance minister denounced it and now it has been undenounced—

Mr. Young: Undenounced?

Mr. Abbott: Yes, undenounced by the foreign affairs minister.

What is the position? Does the government support the Tobin tax? Yes or no.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for the hon. member to remember

Oral Questions

that we are making a major breakthrough by bringing to the agenda of the G-7 meeting the question of the revision of the international financial institutions.

During the course of discussions a number of alternatives will be discussed. The Tobin tax, which seems to be very interesting to the hon. member, is one of many subjects that will certainly be looked at and discussed at that meeting.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the world today international money traders are looking at Canada. They want some kind of feeling of security on where the government is going.

Why do 1970 ideas keep bubbling to the top whenever the Liberals get into their think mode? Do they support the Tobin tax? Yes or no.

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are supporting a revision and an improvement of international financial institutions. We will be presenting recommendations in this regard at the time of the Halifax summit.

We have asked a parliamentary committee to look at it. I remind the hon. member that his party is represented on the committee. We hope the representatives of the Reform Party on the committee will make valuable recommendations.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal. At a press conference in Quebec City yesterday, the vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada revealed actual instances of public funds being squandered. Apparently, the federal government offered courses on stress management through humour, and defensive driving courses to civil servants who do not need to drive as part of their jobs. Talk about defensive!

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs admit that these glaring examples of squandering show that the government is unable to end the cycle of waste in the federal administration?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not subscribe to government waste. In terms of program review we have gone through in great detail all the programs and services provided by the government.

In order to get our deficit down, in order to get our fiscal house in order, we have made the most major cuts that have been made in government expenditures since the end of the second

world war. That will help to bring about a discipline and ensure more than ever before that we have the greatest efficiency and effectiveness in terms of the spending of public taxpayers dollars.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in light of the minister's answer, I believe he should have his eyes examined.

(1450)

Why does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs turn a blind eye to the many instances of squandering brought to his attention by civil servants? Why does he not recognize that he should clean up his own backyard before hitting civil servants with massive layoffs?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not close an eye to any matter brought to our attention whereby we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and services. Any that have been brought to my attention have been or are being examined very carefully.

We do not take lightly the fact that part of our expenditure reduction program involves 45,000 people having to be removed from their positions in the public service. We intend to treat people fairly and equitably in carrying this out and ensuring that we get the fiscal house of the government in order.

* * *

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Mr. Bill Bauer and Mr. Gary Carson, both former members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, confirmed that half the IRB members may not be competent to hear refugee claims, that some cannot function adequately in either of Canada's official languages, and that members are being pressured to make positive decisions.

Will the minister listen this time, dismantle the IRB and start over, or will he ignore Bauer like he ignored us and other Canadians and even his own employees?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the matter should be put in its proper context.

The government has not accepted the status quo with respect to the Immigration and Refugee Board. We have moved serious reforms both legislatively as well as administratively. Last week the chairman of the IRB responded very comprehensively and very effectively to the Hathaway report.

No one is saying that institution or any institution of government is perfect. Equally so, we should not jump to the opposite extreme and say that everything the IRB does is wrong and every

member of the IRB is incompetent, because that is simply not the case.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bauer made it clear yesterday that the minister's single member panels are a step backward and will worsen the current mess.

Two former IRB members concluded that Canada accepts terrorists as refugees, that some lawyers are scripting refugee claims, and that in Bauer's opinion up to two-thirds of claimants are accepted under false pretences.

Why does the minister continue to put the interests of bogus claimants, refugee lawyers and advocates ahead of the interests of Canadians who pay \$1 billion a year for this disgrace?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member does not know what he is talking about. If competence for membership in the Chamber was any guideline he would not be here.

Now he is talking about a \$1 billion budget for the IRB. I ask the member to have the decency to put forward the facts, to put forward things that we can do better, things that we can do to build the institution, rather than reduce everything to rubble.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The minister just revealed that DFO was successful in retrieving the net of the Spanish trawler, the *Estai*. Congratulations to the minister and his department are in order.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Wells: Would the minister inform the House of the significance of the net's mesh size and the accompanying liner in the matter at hand?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The matter is important to Atlantic Canadians and obviously important to people right across the country, given the support the Reform Party has given to the government in pursuit of the conservation of the fishery.

(1455)

It is extraordinary to see the Reform Party, the New Democratic Party—and I should acknowledge the Conservative Party—and the Leader of the Official Opposition endorse unambiguously the conservation measure in the House on behalf of Canadians everywhere. It is a great moment for Canada. I acknowledge the support of the parties opposite.

Oral Questions

However, let me in answering the question acknowledge the tremendous leadership of the greatest Prime Minister the country has ever had in standing up for the country.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, you want me to come right to the point and I shall.

The Speaker: Yes, I would like the minister to come precisely to the point.

Mr. Tobin: The significance of the 80-millimetre mesh is that it is some 15 millimetres smaller than the official NAFO approved mesh size for this species. Therefore the animals being caught in the mesh are far smaller. They are juveniles. They are immature. They are far smaller than what should be caught if we are to have a sustainable fishery.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. After waiting for several months, the federal government has started distributing a working paper on future anti-scab legislation. The proposals in the working paper are unacceptable to workers, in several respects.

Will the minister agree not to interfere in union matters by requiring, for instance, that 60 per cent of union members must be in favour for anti-scab provisions to apply during a labour dispute?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are reviewing Part I of the Canada Labour Code, and the issue of replacement workers is on the table. We are now engaged in consultations with the various parties, both management and labour. I am prepared to listen to what the various parties have to say. Still, I do hope the member for the Bloc Quebecois is not against this kind of legislation.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow two of Canada's trade negotiators will be in Washington to discuss the recent restrictions placed on Canadian sugar exports. The government has taken the position that GATT takes precedence over NAFTA. That is because we have imposed new tariffs as high as 350 per cent on butter and other supply managed products.

Does this not put us in a very difficult position when arguing against new U.S. tariffs on sugar?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister for International Trade let me

Privilege

say that we are conducting these discussions with a very high regard for Canadian interests which will be defended in all aspects of the continuing discussions.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. It concerns the budgetary betrayal of federal funding promises to B.C. and other provinces with a community action program for children or CAPC, a program for vulnerable and at risk children.

In view of the profound concerns of the B.C. Coalition for Children and the B.C. government arising from drastic cuts in funding for 1996 and beyond, how can the minister justify the decision to cut the deficit on the backs of poor and vulnerable children?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned that children be treated equally and fairly.

The budget did not dramatically cut CAPC. It reduced the actual growth of the program. That program will be distributed equally across the country.

(1500)

We also have other programs aimed at helping poor children in this country. One of them is the aboriginal head start program. We have the prenatal nutrition program and the brighter futures program. All of these programs come into play as well.

* * *

[Translation]

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health.

[English]

Fifteen thousand Canadians suffer from multiple sclerosis. In the U.S., the drug Betaseron has been used to treat MS for over a year. Betaseron is currently being reviewed by the health protection branch and can only be obtained under the emergency drug release program at a cost of over \$17,000.

Can the minister provide information on when Betaseron will be made available to Canadian MS victims at a price they can afford?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the needs of victims of multiple sclerosis.

Unfortunately, the manufacturers of Betaseron chose not to apply to have the drug approved here in Canada at the same time as they did in the U.S. When they did apply we fast tracked the

approval of this drug. The price of this drug is quite high. It is under review at this time by the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board.

The Speaker: My colleagues, this brings to a conclusion our question period. I have a question of privilege from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT—SALVAGING OF THE *IRVING WHALE*

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment stated in this House, when she answered a question on the refloating of the *Irving Whale*, and I quote: "I just wanted to remind the hon. members that the first report proposing salvage measures was tabled in 1989 and rejected by the then Minister of the Environment".

Later on, she also said about the *Irving Whale*: "six years after the first report was presented to the former environment minister—the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean".

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that I resigned as environment minister in May 1990 and that the report mentioned by the minister was tabled in September 1990. Her statement is therefore totally false and inaccurate.

Mr. Young: But in any case, you did nothing.

Mr. Bouchard: I hear other ministers say that she was right to lie to the House.

Mr. Young: You did nothing when you were there.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I do not think I heard everything the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, but if the word "lie" was indeed used, I would urge the hon. Leader of the Opposition to reconsider the use of that word.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, I have reconsidered, and I gladly withdraw.

I would ask that, in that same spirit, the transport minister withdraw his remarks that the environment minister was right yesterday to twist the truth around.

Mr. Young: You did nothing.

Mr. Bouchard: It is not over yet.

Mr. Young: That is for sure.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, what happened yesterday is even more serious. It is so because I submit to the Chair that this inaccuracy was stated on purpose. The minister had the report in front of her at the time, and it indicates the date I just gave.

Moreover, the question was asked by one of her Liberal colleagues, the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi, who, as a courteous man, certainly served notice of his question to the minister. She knew what to expect and she was able to prepare an answer.

(1505)

A third point is even more serious than this. The minister altered the official report so that today, *Hansard* does not contain the words she used yesterday. According to Beauchesne, and more particularly citation 1117, no member is allowed to alter *Hansard* the way the minister did yesterday after the blues came out.

If you compare the blues and *Hansard*, you will notice that two substantive corrections were made, so that the words which were so injurious to me yesterday as a member of this House in front of the TV cameras and everybody, while the minister scored political points by heaping ridicule on me and making me look like an irresponsible minister, no longer appear in *Hansard* today. Therefore, those injurious remarks made publicly yesterday in this House, in front of the TV cameras, must be corrected today in a immediate public statement including apologies by the minister.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given the gravity of the accusations of the hon. member, I would have thought he would at least have had the courtesy of serving me notice. Had he served me notice, I would have advised him as I did yesterday, as I did several months ago when I actually gave a copy of that particular report to the House. Unfortunately, his caucus I suppose did not advise him of it.

In fact, the Brander—Smith report to which I referred yesterday in the House was initiated by the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Minister of the Environment. There were several public hearings held while he was Minister of the Environment, including a public hearing that was held in Halifax, another public hearing that was held in Saint John and another public hearing held in Prince Edward Island, which specifically called on the Minister of the Environment in 1989 to act.

In fact, the minister did not act. He did not act; his predecessors did not act; his successors did not act. We acted within 100 days of coming to government.

I would have thought that rather than dragging out the issue—

[*Translation*]

—rather than resorting to petty politics, the Bloc Quebecois would have done better to recognize the fact that we have made a

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decision, a decision that neither the former environment minister, his predecessor, nor his successor made.

I will repeat in French so that he understands clearly. When he was environment minister, in 1989, three public hearings were held at which the refloating of the *Irving Whale* was advocated, and he did not respond. That is what I said in the House yesterday.

[*English*]

I will put my word on the line against his word any time.

The Speaker: My colleagues, the Chair always takes very, very seriously any question of privilege which is raised by any and all hon. members in this House.

We have heard allegations on one side and a rebuttal on the other. We are getting into debate, perhaps on a question of the interpretation of facts. With your permission, seeing that this has taken place over two days, I wonder if you will give me the time to review the blues as to what was said.

(1510)

I will come back to the House as soon as I can to give a decision as to whether indeed any hon. member's privileges have been breached in this case. With the time to think about it a bit, I will bring back a decision as soon as possible. For this question of privilege at least at this time, I would like to take the information I have and consider it for a while.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*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 number of petitions.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-316, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Transfer of Offenders Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce my third private members' bill entitled the Immigration Enforcement Improvement Act.

My bill aims to improve the way in which the deportation of violent offenders is carried out. The proposed changes will enable a court in addition to any other sentence to order the

Routine Proceedings

removal of a non-citizen convicted of a serious criminal offence.

The bill does not apply to anyone who arrived in Canada before reaching 16 years of age, as long as that individual has been free of criminal convictions for a period of five years. The bill also provides for the removal of foreign offenders to host countries willing to accept them by court order.

I am pleased to announce that my bill has received the endorsement of the Canadian Police Association, Victims of Violence and CAVEAT. I would encourage all members of this House to support this important public safety initiative.

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

* * *

(1515)

LABOUR

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion.

I move:

That notwithstanding the usual practices and rules of the House, the government may immediately introduce and propose first reading of a bill entitled, "An act respecting the supervision of longshoring and related operations at west coast ports", and the said bill shall be disposed of as follows:

(1) Immediately after the completion of all items of business relating to ways and means this day, the House shall take up consideration of the second reading stage of the said bill.

(2) After being read a second time the bill shall be referred to a committee of the whole.

(3) Immediately after being reported from committee and concurred in at the report stage, the said bill shall be taken up at the third reading stage.

(4) The House shall not adjourn this day until the third reading stage of the said bill has been disposed of, but the House shall adjourn immediately after completing the third reading stage of the bill.

The Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present petitions on behalf of constituents in the central Algoma area of my riding, from towns like Richards Landing, Bruce Mines, north of Sault Ste. Marie, Goulais River and Echo Bay. These constituents have expressed concerns about government plans to include sexual orientation in Canada's human rights legislation.

It is my pleasure to present these on their behalf.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition from 190 of my constituents. Their concern is the addition of the phrase sexual orientation either in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the Canadian Human Rights Act.

RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions from my constituents.

The first petition requests that Parliament amend the Divorce Act, including the provision similar to article 611 of the Quebec civil code, which states:

In no case may a father or mother, without serious cause, place obstacles between the child and grandparents. Failing agreement between the parties, the modalities of the relations are settled by the court.

Further, they request an amendment to the Divorce Act that would give a grandparent who is granted access to a child the right to make inquiries and to be given information as to the health, education and welfare of the child.

INCOME TAX

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the other petition asks that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes.

I support the petitioners.

[*Translation*]

VOICE MAIL

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table petitions signed by senior citizens in my riding. Because these people are less experienced with new technology, they ask the government to abandon its plan to install voice mail.

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present the first of many petitions organized by Nick Carter and others with the JC-55 Super Country Radio station in Kamloops.

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The petition is signed by 14,000 people living mainly in the central interior of British Columbia. It calls for immediate changes to our justice system, including changes to the parole system to ensure that dangerous criminals not be allowed to return to our communities prematurely.

The bottom line is that they are seeking safety and security on our streets and in our neighbourhoods.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today on behalf of people from Ste. Anne, Steinbach, St. Jean Baptiste, Altona and Plum Coulee in my riding.

It states that whereas the majority of Canadians believe that the privileges which society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships, therefore, your petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

(1520)

GUN CONTROL

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition to present on behalf of other constituents in my riding.

It states that the concerned citizens of the province of Manitoba draw to the attention of the House that the proposed amendments to the firearms control legislation by the justice minister are unduly harsh and waste dwindling financial resources while attacking the rights of law-abiding citizens without affecting crime.

Therefore, the petitioners request that Parliament separate the provisions into two separate issues that Parliament may proceed to strengthen border controls and the criminal use of firearms, but not proceed with the proposed enhanced controls on legal ownership of firearms.

INCOME TAX

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present today. The first is from constituents in the beautiful city of Hedley, British Columbia. They realize that Canadians are already overburdened with taxation due to high government spending.

Therefore, the petitioners pray and request that Parliament reduce the federal deficit by reducing government spending and refrain from any form of increased taxation.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners pray for two things: first, that Parliament ensure that the present provisions

of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously; and second, that Parliament make no changes in the law that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting or suicide or euthanasia.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition concerns section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Under this section the sentence of murderers convicted to life imprisonment without chance of parole for 25 years are able to apply for a review after 15 years.

The petitioners request that Parliament repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition is regarding the current gun legislation before the House.

To date I have presented 3,010 signatures. These petitioners from Osoyoos, Oliver, Princeton and other areas in the Okanagan Valley oppose further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and ask Parliament to provide strict guidelines and mandatory sentences for the use and possession of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime.

I concur with my petitioners.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House a petition containing over 100 signatures mainly from the city of Quesnel in my constituency of Cariboo—Chilcotin.

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

The petition is presented with my concurrence.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have one more petition. I would like to present a petition signed by 134 constituents, again from the city of Quesnel and other areas of British Columbia.

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

This petition is also presented with my concurrence.

Routine Proceedings

CHINESE HEAD TAX

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting two petitions today. The first is signed by petitioners from my constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway as well as other communities in British Columbia.

It calls on Parliament to support an all-party parliamentary resolution to acknowledge the injustice and racial discrimination inherent in the Chinese head tax—it was imposed from 1885 to 1923—and also in the Chinese immigration exclusion act which prohibited Chinese immigration from 1923 to 1947.

It calls on Parliament to recognize and compensate for the suffering of individual Chinese Canadians and the entire Chinese Canadian community that resulted from this legislated discrimination.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by hundreds of residents of Kamloops, the Fraser Valley, Burnaby—Kingsway, other communities throughout British Columbia and beyond.

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

(1525)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of some of my constituents of Trinity—Spadina.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act so as to protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

On behalf of my constituents, I humbly submit these petitions.

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions today from constituents in my riding of Bruce—Grey.

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

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the next petition requests that Parliament 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 or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide, or active or passive euthanasia.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition asks Parliament to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

INCOME TAX

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, just before the budget was brought down I presented petitions against tax increases from all over Canada signed by 20,431 people. Ever since the budget came down, more of these petitions have been pouring in.

Today 16,967 more petitioners, for a grand total of 38,297 people from all over Canada, 11,711 of them from my own constituency, together pray—and unlike some prayers this prayer may be in vain—that Parliament reduce spending instead of increasing taxes and implement a taxpayer protection act to limit federal spending as well.

I could not concur more strongly with all 39,000 petitioners.

The Speaker: I am told that eventually all prayers are answered.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise again to present another petition in this course of action undertaken by constituents who wish to halt the early release from prison of Robert Paul Thompson.

The petitioners I represent are concerned about making our streets safer for our citizens. They are opposed to the current practice of early release of violent offenders prior to serving the full extent of their sentences.

The petitioners pray that our streets will be made safer for law-abiding citizens and the families of the victims of convicted murderers.

SRI LANKA

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been asked today to present two petitions to the House. The first petition is with regard to human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners urge the Government of Canada to intervene immediately in the decade old national ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka with the view to: first, bring about an unconditional ceasefire, preferably verified by the United Nations; second, to bring the parties in the conflict to the negotiating table, preferably with United Nations mediation so that matters under dispute could be resolved satisfactorily and lasting peace achieved; and, third, to suspend forthwith all foreign aid and, if necessary, impose sanctions until cessation of hostilities and human rights violations.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with regard to the Young Offenders Act.

It calls on Parliament to amend the act: first, to lower the age limits which define a young offender to include only those children between the ages of 10 and 15; second, to increase the maximum penalty for first and second degree murder from 5 to 10 years, which has already been done by the government; and, third, to allow the publication of a young offender's name after a second serious offence, and any other changes necessary to ensure that the public interest as well as the needs of Canadian youth are addressed in a fair and balanced fashion.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present three petitions today.

The first group of petitioners request that the Government of Canada not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include the phrase sexual orientation. The petitioners are troubled about not defining the phrase sexual orientation. They have a legitimate concern that such a broad term could include all kinds of sexual behaviour.

(1530)

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the subject of Bill C-68, gun control. The petitioners state that the target for all gun control laws in the Criminal Code of Canada must be the criminals who are a danger to the public safety and not law-abiding, responsible firearm owners.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): The third petition is very appropriate. It deals with budget '95.

It is quite timely. It was collected by small businessmen from my riding including Mr. Brent Stief, Mrs. Neillie Murray, Mr. Phil Walker, Mr. Arch Brown and Mr. Bill Schwartz.

The petitioners request that with Canadians already overburdened with taxation due to high government spending Parlia-

ment reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes and I wholeheartedly agree with all three petitions.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and present three petitions today signed by people from West Guilford, Haliburton, Eagle Lake, Minden, Wilberforce and Tory Hill in the riding of Victoria—Haliburton.

They draw the attention of the House of Commons to gun control and ask Parliament not to pass any law that would prohibit the legitimate use of firearms.

A further petition concerns gun control and supports the present legislation before the House.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present petitions on behalf of my constituents and the immediate neighbourhood of Winnipeg North.

The petitioners are concerned about physician assisted suicide and euthanasia, concerns that I share. They are concerned about the negative impact of such a move on families as well as loss of respect for human life and far reaching negative implications in society.

They therefore pray that Parliament continue to reject euthanasia and physician assisted suicide; that it continue to enforce section 241 of the Criminal Code prohibiting the commission of assisting suicide; and that it consider expanding palliative care accessible to all dying persons knowing that such care is compassionate and therefore will result in the relief of pain and suffering without the danger concomitant with assisted suicide.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleague from Fraser Valley East in presenting a petition from nearly 1,000 people in my riding of Calgary North requesting that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes and also that Parliament implement a taxpayer protection act to limit federal spending.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief point of order with respect to the presentation of petitions. I have noticed that a practice seems to have grown in the House of members' indicating their concurrence with particular petitions.

This is a matter of debate. I wonder whether the Speaker might provide some guidance to the House on this matter because the practice has been growing.

The Speaker: The hon. member raises a very valid point. As a general statement the Chair would not encourage whether a member concurs with the presentation of a specific petition brought to the floor.

Routine Proceedings

I would encourage all hon. members to desist from saying whether they are for or against certain petitions.

I have been letting this go for some time. Hon. members will understand that sometimes hon. members are put into positions in which they do not really want to say whether they are for or against a petition but it is their duty to present petitions to the House.

The point of the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway is well taken and I would encourage all hon. members to desist saying whether there is concurrence or not.

* * *

LABOUR

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 work stoppage in west coast ports has dangerous implications for the economy of western Canada and therefore legislation is urgently required to reopen the ports.

Therefore I move, pursuant to Standing Order 53:

That the 48 hours notice be waived in order to permit the Minister of Labour immediately to introduce a bill entitled an act respecting the supervision of longshoring and related operations at west coast ports and,

That the House not adjourn this day except pursuant to a motion by a minister of the crown.

(1535)

The Speaker: Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

Fewer than 10 members have risen to object, pursuant to Standing Order 53(4) the motion is adopted.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

WEST COAST PORTS OPERATIONS ACT, 1995

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-74, an act respecting the supervision of longshoring and related operations at west coast ports.

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

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read the second time?

Some hon. members: Later this day.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STANDING ORDER 53

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was looking at Standing Order 53, the provision

under which the motion was presented to the House. I believe the motion presented is actually in contradiction of the intention of Standing Order 53.

Standing Order 53(3) says:

Proceedings on any such motion shall be subject to the following conditions:

(a) The Speaker may permit debate thereon for a period not exceeding one hour;

The intention of Standing Order 53, when it was passed by the House was not to allow debate to exceed one hour. The minister and government have proposed we ignore the intent of this regulation and continue debate until such time as a minister of the crown deems the day is over.

I believe this is specifically against the intention of the Standing Order. I would like the Chair to review this before we proceed any further along these lines.

(1540)

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I understand the provisions of Standing Order 53, this is a matter of a very urgent nature in which the normal rules of the House are suspended.

In this instance clearly we are talking about overriding collective bargaining rights and moving directly to a bill. As I understand it, before the question is put on the motion, members of the House should at least be given an opportunity to be heard on whether this matter is of sufficient urgency to should proceed under the extraordinary provisions of Standing Order 53.

This is a very serious matter. I spoke with the president of the Longshoremen's Union Local 514, Doug Sigurdson. He indicated they are currently in conciliation on this matter. The government wants to short circuit the collective bargaining process and move directly.

If that is to happen, the Chair should allow members of this House the courtesy of being heard under the provisions of Standing Order 53. That was not done and I would appeal to the Speaker to reconsider his position and to give us an opportunity to be heard.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, what has happened is perfectly proper.

On the motion the government introduced, there seem to be two points raised by the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway and the hon. member for Battlefords—Meadowlake. The points are separate and so I will try to deal with them separately.

The first one is that somehow the motion proposed extends the debate on this motion which has been disposed of by the House for more than an hour. That is not correct. The debate is over. No one who rose to debate the motion when the motion was put to the House.

Routine Proceedings

The Chair put the motion to the House and everyone was sitting in their seats. I looked around to see if anyone was rising in debate and not a soul rose.

The hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway was glued to his seat. He did not want to debate this matter. Then he suddenly realized he made a mistake by not getting up.

The debate is over. The question has been put. There could have been a one-hour debate. The hon. member knows this. No member rose to speak. Therefore the question was put and disposed of by the House.

The motion simply allowed the introduction of the bill which has now been introduced to the House. It has received first reading in the House. We have an additional order that says the House may continue to sit this evening past the ordinary hour of adjournment until a minister of the crown moves adjournment.

That is all we have and that is the way the matter sits at the moment. Members should be content. We will see what develops in the course of the afternoon.

The Speaker: I wish I could say I am completely blameless in all of this. When I put the motion, I paused after the word “and”. I did not see anyone rising in their place for debate.

It could be said that I should have called for debate. I did not but I understood that if there was going to be debate, hon. members would have risen at that time. That is why I went on to the second part of the motion. I put before you that I am sort of caught in a bind here. Perhaps I should have said the word debate, but I thought I waited long enough.

(1545)

If an error has been made it surely has not been made by anyone but your Speaker. I do not know what the resolution of this should be. By the rules we have, the motion is deemed to have been adopted and carried and the matter cannot be reopened.

I would hope hon. members would give enough leeway to the Chair. I wish I was blameless. I wish I had used the word debate. I understood that hon. members would rise if they wanted to debate, so in the absence of anyone rising I am going to rule in favour, that the motion is now carried. I am going to rule that the matter cannot be reopened. I am hoping for the understanding of hon. members. Perhaps you would give your Speaker a little leeway.

I do not want to prolong this. If the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake has something to add, I know it is probably against the rules but I will hear him out.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand the dilemma you are in because I face a similar dilemma at this end of the House. With all due respect, I believe you are aware that this is the first time

in this Parliament the government has seen fit to utilize this section of the Standing Orders.

Therefore, when the minister rose to state that he was rising under section 53 of the Standing Orders, I immediately reached into my desk, pulled out the Standing Orders I have here, and was reading the Standing Orders as you were reading the motion.

It took me a couple of moments to realize that there was a debate on the motion itself. I like many members of the House take some time to understand the full implications of every standing order. With respect, I think it would have been appropriate had the word debate been used to prompt individual members to their feet should they have wished to debate the issue.

Having said that and understanding your position, Mr. Speaker, and given the nature of the debate, the fact that there is much information about the dispute the government is introducing legislation on, perhaps members may wish to reflect upon it.

I would ask for unanimous consent of the House to allow for this hour of debate to carry forward and therefore allow some of this to be discussed prior to putting the motion itself.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, consultation taking place at the moment on the issue to determine whether or not this would be advisable. If and when the House decides to revert to that, this would be no reflection upon the excellent ruling of Mr. Speaker. It would only be because of unanimous consent of the House to revert to that, should the House decide to do so.

While consultation is going on I reiterate for the Chair a further point. On reflection of the issue raised by the hon. member some moments ago, there seems to have been confusion about the fact that the motion as proposed by the minister discussed provision for the hour of adjournment tonight. That seems to have given way to some confusion between that and the one hour to debate the motion itself. I believe that was perhaps the cause of the confusion in the hon. member's mind.

Nevertheless, consultation having been achieved, I am pleased to report that we are prepared to consider unanimous consent.

(1550)

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, on second reflection we will have to wait for that to happen.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having done the negotiating, I think you would find, in light of what has happened, that we are quite prepared to ensure when the bill comes up for debate that time be permitted to the New

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Democratic Party to participate in the debate on the bill which otherwise might be jeopardized by some other arrangement.

I undertake to ensure in all negotiations about the debate on the bill that time be permitted to the NDP to participate in the debate. I think that will solve the problem. We need not reopen the issue.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, in light of what has taken place here, I think out of consideration we would accept the offer put forward by the hon. member.

However I wish to stress that the point of the intervention was that the use of the standing order in this case was not introduced properly either by the government or in our understanding of the ability to debate early.

We realize even in the event of the debate carrying on through the evening that New Democrats would likely have an opportunity to speak. However the problem that exists is that the legislation the government is bringing forward, which the government is scheduling to pass this evening, may not be necessary given what is happening on the west coast. Therefore we should debate that process prior to debating the motion itself.

The Speaker: The dilemma that we face in the House seems to have at least a reasonable chance to be resolved without reverting in any way.

The hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake has made his point clear. I personally thank him for his understanding. I probably should have said the word debate. I assure him that the next time I will use the word debate.

My ruling would be that the motion is carried. I want to put the matter to one side, understanding of course the agreement of the governing party that hon. members will have a chance to fully participate in the debate. It would seem that there is unanimous agreement. Is there unanimous agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I thank hon. members for their help.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the hon. member for Wild Rose, requested that you consider an emergency debate tonight on the very issue that will be dealt with in the bill. That confirms the feelings of the hon. member that it is a very serious matter which needed to be discussed by the House.

In light of recent developments the hon. member should withdraw the request. It seems redundant to ask for an emergency debate when we will actually be dealing with the legislation we called for yesterday in the House.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. House leader of the Reform Party. I am sorry I will not be able to hear my hon. friend for Wild Rose. I was looking forward to hearing what he was going to say to the House.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from March 14 consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

(1555)

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House to speak today on a matter of great importance to the economic and social future of the country, namely the budget presented by the Minister of Finance two weeks ago.

In order to fully understand the measures taken by the Minister of Finance, it is useful to recall the fiscal and economic reality that confronted us upon taking power just 16 months ago. Unemployment and interest rates were high. Corporate profitability had plummeted. Business failures were at record levels. Many Canadians had quite literally lost hope. We were confronted with a huge national debt and growing deficit that threatened our economic and social futures.

It was a daunting challenge. However we tackled it head on and made job creation, economic growth and fiscal responsibility our top priorities.

[Translation]

The Speaker: My colleagues, if you have some things to discuss, I would ask you to do it behind the curtains. I now give the floor back to the Secretary of State.

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[English]

(1600)

Ms. Blondin—Andrew: I thank hon. gentlemen on the other side for observing the decorum accorded each speaker on such an important issue as the budget debate. I hope I did not lose any time.

We tackled the issues head on and made job creation, economic growth and fiscal responsibility our top priorities. The new budget is the latest step in our ongoing drive to restore Canada's fiscal health and reinforce investor confidence. When completed this drive will make Canada a magnet for investment, which will in turn encourage economic growth and create the jobs and training opportunities Canadians need to cope with the technological revolution under way.

The measures announced by the government on budget day were more than a cost cutting exercise. They represent a major restructuring that will redefine the way government operates and what role government will play in people's daily lives. The budget represents a basic restructuring of Canadian society as a whole.

As the Minister of Finance stated in his budget speech, government must only do what it does best and leave the rest for those who can do it better. This presents Canadians with an incredible opportunity to step forward and have a direct impact on the way their lives are shaped and the way their communities develop.

As we debate the merits of the budget today and the necessary actions the government must take to get its fiscal house in order, we must remember we are not in a unique position in Canada. Other countries have waited too long before taking adequate measures and have in a sense hit the wall, while others have taken strong and affirmative actions and as a result have positioned their economies to compete aggressively in the new global marketplace.

We can learn a lot from those examples. New Zealand is a case in point of a country that found itself with debt and deficit that became too large for its economy to sustain. Over the course of the past eight years New Zealand has gone through a dramatic and painful restructuring that saw whole government programs cut, eliminated or commercialized, user fees introduced for many aspects of government services, and the introduction of new tax measures such as the GST.

As a result of these measures New Zealand has drastically restructured its government and improved its fiscal health to the point where it posted a deficit of 1 per cent surplus of deficit to GDP ratio. However the painful lesson learned by New Zealanders and one we must not ignore is what happens when we wait too long to take these measures and what happens when we essentially hit the wall. When this happens countries quickly discover that decisions on social spending are no longer theirs to make but instead made for them by investors and international agencies.

Sweden, a country that has been long looked at as a successful model of society with a highly successful social safety net is on the verge of hitting the wall. In 1994 Sweden's debt to GDP ratio was an alarming 93 per cent while its deficit to GDP ratio was at 11.2 per cent. The year before, Sweden's deficit to GDP ratio was at an all-time high of 13 per cent.

The government there is facing enormous obstacles to overcome and put its fiscal house in order. Because Sweden has waited so long to restructure how its government operates, the very social programs that are the envy of the world are threatened simply because it has lost many of its options to manoeuvre.

This is a situation we must avoid in Canada. On the other hand, there are shining examples of countries that have identified the need to reform before it is too late.

Australia has taken a systematic and measured approach to restructuring how its government operates. It has been done in a way that not only brings down the expenses of government but also makes its programs more efficient, more effective and more relevant to the people who really need help and support. In 1994 Australia posted a 34.4 per cent debt to GDP ratio and a deficit to GDP ratio of 4 per cent.

That is why we have to act now. Our debt to GDP ratio has consistently been rising from 17 per cent in the mid-1970s to more than 71 per cent today. In order to ensure that we remain the masters of our own destiny, of our own ship, we must change. We must adapt.

Last year the government spent nearly \$58 billion on social programs. During that same period \$38 billion went to pay for interest on the public debt. If we do not get our fiscal house in order now, these interest payments on the debt will be greater than what we spend on social programs. If unchecked, we as other countries have, will hit the wall.

That is what this budget is all about. It is a major step in restructuring the government so that it can give us the kind of strong foundation we need upon which we can build strong social reforms which truly reflect and address the needs and priorities of Canadians in the 1990s.

Initiatives contained in the budget actually support Canada's social policies by creating an economic and fiscal climate conducive to job creation. This budget reflects the sense of balance expressed by a man from the Northwest Territories who responded to the social security reform workbook. He said: "There must be a basic safety net for those who, for whatever reason, are unable to provide the encouragement and the opportunity for people to become self-sufficient".

Some people have been concerned about how the budget might affect Canada's social programs. This is not surprising given the vast amount of speculation and misinformation which

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surfaced prior to the release of the budget. No doubt most of this has now been laid to rest by the budget.

For those who might still have some lingering doubts, the best evidence of the government's unwaivering commitment to protecting our social programs comes from the social security reform initiative currently under way.

This initiative seeks to improve our current system by helping Canadians respond to technological and workplace change. It seeks to assure them of the jobs training and security they require. It does this by improving the efficiency of the system, thus guaranteeing its sustainability in the future.

At the same time, our government has no intention of waiting for the benefits that will flow from this budget and social security reform. Instead, we are acting now to ensure that all Canadians have the job and training opportunities they need to enter the mainstream of this country.

Here I think especially of those programs directed toward some of the neediest people in this country, the aboriginal people who have traditionally faced barriers to obtaining access to employment, training and promotions.

(1605)

Pathways is a program designed for aboriginal people by aboriginal people in partnership with the Government of Canada. It is currently being reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of the aboriginal people in labour market training.

In addition, the new Canada social transfer, CST, will not affect aboriginal peoples living on reserves since there is no relationship between the CST and funding arrangements for social assistance and services delivered on reserves. This is because the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provides funding on reserves through arrangements that are separate from the current Canada assistance plan. These arrangements will continue to be separate from the CST.

As well, the CST will not alter the existing responsibilities of the provinces for social assistance services to aboriginal peoples living off reserve. This goes for the government's program review as well.

While the program review will affect all aspects of government operations, the government is committed to providing programs and services to aboriginal peoples. We will continue to live up to our commitments in such areas as human resources development, aboriginal strategic initiatives, First Nations and northern communities child care and the pathways strategy which I mentioned earlier.

In preparing for the budget the government used a series of overarching principles to guide its course.

First, it was critical that government get its own house in order. The budget must focus on cutting spending, not raising taxes.

Second, every dollar counts. Governments do not have money. They are given money and with it they must act like every dollar counts because every dollar does count.

Third, it had to be fair and equitable, fair among our regions and fair among individual Canadians. In this essence the north has not been spared in the budget, but has shared equally and responsibly its burden of fiscal restraint.

As an example, the territorial formula financing payments to the Government of the Northwest Territories will be frozen in 1995-96 and reduced by 5 per cent in 1996-97. This will result in \$8 million less in the first year and \$58 million less in the second year. It should be noted that the majority of the population of the north is aboriginal.

Weather offices will close in Yellowknife and Inuvik, eliminating seven positions. There too, a bit of innovation and imagination is needed. It opens up an opportunity perhaps for the private sector to look at the possibility of offering this kind of service, maybe in partnership with learning institutions to train the individuals necessary to provide that service.

The Geological Survey of Canada office in Yellowknife will close. Considering the amount of activity in that area with diamond exploration, gold and a whole array of mineral exploration going on, it has been difficult to do that, but I think there is a commitment from the industry itself to pursue interests in that area. It is something we are living with.

The Canada-N.W.T. forestry co-operation agreement will not be renewed when it expires on March 31. The federal excise tax on gasoline and aviation gasoline increased by 1.5 cents, increasing the price of goods and travel in the north. We already have prohibitive costs since for the most part the first choice and option for travel is by air. We do not have a highway system. Most of the isolated communities are off the transportation grid.

The tax on airline travel increased by \$5 per flight from \$50 to \$55, increasing the cost of air travel which is so important to northerners. We do not have the luxury of just getting into our cars or vehicles and driving out onto the highway. The highways we do have are in need of repair and are being repaired constantly by the Government of the Northwest Territories with ever depleting resources.

It shows, that every part of the country was affected, including that part of the country. It is the whole effort of getting back

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to basics. People are taking another look at how they do business, how government runs its administration, its bureaucracy and delivers services.

(1610)

The elimination of the public utilities income tax transfer is not just a problem for Alberta or some of the other provinces. It is a problem for different communities in my area. It will mean the elimination of \$700,000 in transfers to consumers of private utility companies.

This is a very hard pill to swallow. In this country we have a partnership with individual Canadians to get our house in order and this is what this is all about.

As difficult and painful as it is, cuts in budgets and programs to aboriginal friendship centres will affect how the friendship centres in the north operate and deliver their programs. However, northerners are resilient people. Like every Canadian, they recognize the importance of getting our fiscal house in order.

Northerners also see opportunity in this budget. Occasions like this one when new arrangements are to be forged and new relationships to be established create positive opportunities for the territorial government to have greater flexibility and for northerners to have a greater say in developing and administering the programs and services which address their needs.

This is an excellent opportunity to see the successful completion of the northern mineral accord. This can give the territorial government along with its other partners the aboriginal groups greater responsibility and autonomy over the economy and fiscal situation in the north. Greater autonomy also means greater flexibility over the programs and services required to meet the needs of northerners.

Every part of this country wants to become self-sustaining and the Northwest Territories is no different with all of its complex diversity of cultures. Its population is not just one race or one group of people, but it is a whole mix of people. Greater autonomy also means there is greater opportunity for co-operation, for consensus building and a whole range of human dynamics that must be considered.

Restructuring through program review, the territorial transfer or the CST also presents the opportunity for constructive dialogue in a process that is inclusive. It is a process which gives a greater voice to all stakeholders and not just government, including community leaders, activists, social workers, youth organizations. It is a comprehensive and inclusive process. It is an opportunity that can lead to greater independence from government, to become increasingly self-sufficient and self-empowering, to become masters of their own destiny and masters of their own ship.

The fourth principle used by the Minister of Finance is that we must have priorities as a country that mirror our needs as a people. These priorities must be reflected in the way government defines its role. It is that principle I would like to expand on and what this will mean on how government will operate in the future, but more important, on what role government will play in the lives of people.

In order to ensure that the needs of Canadians are met, to ensure that programs and services remain relevant and to ensure our continuing economic sovereignty, the budget measures also included a major restructuring of government through program review. Its main objective was to review all categories of federal government spending in order to bring about the most effective and cost efficient way of delivering programs and services to Canadians.

The exercise of program review is not simply a way of bringing down how much government costs. It also makes government more competent and more relevant to the people who really need help and support.

It is time for government to get back to the basics and to reflect the priorities of people. As the Minister of Finance stated in his budget address: "We are acting on the new vision of the role of government in the economy and in society. In many cases that means smaller government. In all cases, it means smarter government".

This government restructuring will have implications on what role government will play in the daily lives of people. To a certain degree government restructuring also means a restructuring of society, and that is where the real opportunity lies in the budget. As government gets back to the basics there are opportunities for Canadians to step forward, to rethink and redefine their values and responsibilities to themselves, their families and their communities.

(1615)

Governments do not have all the answers and solutions. In redefining its role in Canadian society, the government will need people to step forward and share the burden of responsibility. Where governments have failed in the past, individual Canadians will have to stand up, play positive roles and contribute not only their knowledge but local solutions to local problems and also their sweat equity, their sweat, blood, and tears, to ensure success.

The government is calling on Canadians to participate and to be part of a process that is going to set the future straight for years and generations to come, to ensure a future for our children. This commitment will need to be ongoing even with restructuring; government can only go so far.

I conclude by saying that in the end active participation is the ultimate challenge of the budget. It is a challenge and a

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responsibility not only to members of the government and members of the House, but to every person in the country.

As the Prime Minister stated, the key—

The Deputy Speaker: I have given the minister extra time already. I am sorry, her time has expired, unless there is unanimous consent that she be given more time.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to my colleague's speech. The problems she described in her region sound pretty similar to those in mine, except that the solutions she offers are almost unacceptable, and I will tell you why.

If I understood correctly, she is telling the poor, people with major problems, the unemployed, people on UI and income security that they must show more imagination and initiative.

I also heard the other day one of her colleagues on the other side of this House say that a former member of Parliament who has been without a job for eight years is having a very hard time finding work even though he is well-known. Yet, he is not lacking in either imagination or initiative.

Whenever the poor—whether it is a single person, a couple or a family with a father, mother and four children—are unemployed, they are asked to show initiative and imagination. Yet, when a person whose salary was much higher has trouble finding another job, we commiserate.

The budget may also hit seniors next year. In my region, farmers face cuts of 15 per cent this year and 15 per cent next year for a total of 30 per cent, which represents about \$2,500 a year for the average farmer. This leads me to ask my colleague if we are looking for revenue in the right places or if we simply get the money from the pockets of the most disadvantaged and the poorest.

My colleague did not say that these people were lazy, but she said that they should show more imagination and initiative. Seventy-five per cent of the time, they are full of imagination and initiative, but they are still without jobs. I would like her to explain this to me.

(1620)

[*English*]

Ms. Blondin-Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague that anything I said certainly was not prejudicial to the people who are poor or people in different wage categories. We understand we have equality of opportunity. Everyone has the opportunity to participate. Everyone has the opportunity of freedom of speech, to be mobile, to move, to look for the

opportunities. Sometimes it is more difficult. I agree that can be a problem.

When I talked about innovation I was not just talking about the consumers of government programs or people looking for jobs. I was talking about all sectors of society. It is a process where government will participate but sometimes people or organizations can do it better so we will defer to them because it will be more cost efficient and more effective.

As for opportunities for people, we cannot step back and be ashamed of the fact that we have managed to create 400,000 jobs. One hundred thousand of those were directly related to government initiatives. Many of those jobs were in Quebec. We are not ashamed of that. We are quite happy to recognize that and affirm that we have a commitment to continue helping people.

It is not just government's responsibility. People want us to change the way in which government works so that they will have the opportunity to be active participants rather than to have a passive role. They are dying for the opportunities. We want to make those available to them.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the remarks of the Secretary of State for Training and Youth she commented quite extensively about programs for aboriginal people and the ability of aboriginal people to participate in our economy as a result of budgetary measures.

She mentioned a number of programs but I notice she did not mention the aboriginal economic development program, something that is absolutely essential to provide assistance to aboriginal people who have difficulty in achieving financial commitments from existing financial institutions to develop the economic means by which to create self-sufficiency within their own communities.

The aboriginal economic development program, just when it is needed most, has received a more than unfair reduction in commitment from the federal government, a reduction of approximately 30 per cent as I understand it.

I wonder if the secretary of state could comment on the need for the aboriginal business development program and what her thoughts are about this unfair cut or reduction in federal commitment to that program.

Ms. Blondin-Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I was not speaking just to aboriginal issues. I was speaking to those within the department that I work in. I was not speaking to the ones in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs or Industry. I am not ashamed to speak to those issues. I am not afraid and I am not reluctant. I just did not mention it.

There was a 25 per cent cut. Part of the effort in the program review and looking at the way we deliver services to people is to make these programs more efficient, more effective, more directly related to delivering services to the individuals, to the

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people they serve rather than developing an administrative bureaucracy which would tend to serve the industry itself rather than its clients.

Yes, we have made cuts. I just finished saying in my speech that every Canadian is going to share the responsibility in this exercise. I know. I am no stranger to the poverty of those people. Those are my people. I understand that.

Every Canadian is going to share the responsibility. Let us weigh things fairly. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs which serves aboriginal people was the only department that has an \$8 billion budget that is going to have an increase of I believe 6 per cent when all other departments were cut.

(1625)

I acknowledge that there have been cuts to some aboriginal programs but there have been cuts to almost every program and service across the board in every department and crown corporation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with my Bloc colleague, the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane.

The Minister of Finance tabled his budget on Monday, February 27. I rise today in this House to state my position, my concerns and my disappointment in reading this budget. I will also share with you my personal analysis of the negative impact this budget will have on the participation rate of Quebecers in the Department of National Defence. While this budget is well received by the business community in general, and foreign investors in particular, the fact remains that once again low and middle income taxpayers are the hardest hit.

The government wants us to believe that Canadians from every walk of life, including the wealthiest, are affected by its budget cuts, but there is a world of difference between the finance minister's claims and actual fact. The fact of the matter is that the wealthy have until 1999 to convert their family trusts, to shield them from the minister's cuts and not pay any tax on their accumulated and future wealth. Also, the Liberal budget completely ignores the recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada in his last report which made reference to \$6.6 billion in unpaid taxes. The federal government does not propose anything to recover that money.

How can the government pass up so much money without immediately taking the necessary measures? Is \$6.6 billion not enough money to spur it to take concrete and effective action?

Let me give you another example which illustrates the inconsistency of the budget and fiscal strategy announced at the end of February by the minister, and which shows that the minister's

goal of tax fairness is merely an illusion. This example is also taken from the Auditor General's report: In Revenue Canada's opinion, 470 accounts of over \$100,000 each, representing a total of \$350 million, were at the collection letter stage, which means that no collection officer was involved, except in terms of reviewing the risk of loss.

By not taking action in this specific case, the Liberal government is sending the message that it is easier to get the money from low and middle income taxpayers, than from corporations or wealthy individuals who do not pay their fair share. This system is supposed to be fair, but who profits from it?

In my opinion, the 1995–1996 budget plan includes other examples of unfairness. Take a look at the summary of the Main Estimates, by department and agencies. Two thirds of the departments and agencies will see their budget reduced, while the other third will be getting more money.

Who will get an increase in 1995–96? The Senate, with a total budget of more than \$42 million; the Governor General, with a budget of over \$10 million; the Department of Indian Affairs, with an increase of \$327 million; Treasury Board, an increase of \$32 million; Finance, an increase of more than \$9 billion, \$9 billion to service the debt; the Privy Council, which is responsible for defending the “no” side in the Quebec referendum, will have an increase of nearly \$5 million; and the list goes on.

(1630)

And even worse, the federal government's total estimates will increase by more than \$3.7 billion, which will bring total spending up to \$164.8 billion. Incredible. With a deficit of \$37.4 billion for 1994–95 and a projected deficit of more than \$32.7 billion for 1995–96, we are sinking deeper and deeper into the hole.

By the end of the current fiscal year, the net federal debt will be \$578.8 billion. Incredible. The federal government's present financial situation is a reflection of what the future has in store. Furthermore, the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance contains no prospects for jobs in the short and medium term. Where are the jobs we were promised in the Liberal red book? Ask the federal public servants who believed those promises.

The steps taken by the federal government to put this budget together fall far short of the expectations of taxpayers in Quebec and Canada. These measures are an outright breach of our social contract.

Now for a few words about the Department of National Defence. The budget announced cuts totalling \$1.6 billion over three years. The Bloc Québécois, in the minority report of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's Defence Policy, insisted

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on additional cuts of 15 per cent, which would put the National Defence budget at \$10 billion as of the first year.

I question the federal government's strategy, since additional cuts could have been made in certain budget items in the Department of National Defence, including capital expenditures, materiel and new equipment purchasing policy, the armed forces organization and, finally, program management.

For the same three year period, the Bloc Québécois proposed cuts of \$4.8 billion—three times the government's figure. Unfortunately, the federal government preferred to slash transfer payments to the provinces and cut the federal public service this year.

In this regard, I would like to recall the commitment the Liberal Party of Canada made in its famous red book, which it did not keep. It said that, once in power, it would set up a defence conversion program that would have attractive spinoffs for private enterprise. This was their promise.

What did the budget say about defence industry conversion? Not one word—nothing. For the past 15 years, the federal government and the Department of National Defence have failed in their role of equitable allocators of military expenditures for Quebec.

In a study for the *École nationale d'administration publique*, made public in February, the author revealed a shortfall of \$650 million a year for Quebec.

The situation is very clear. Unfair treatment in the allocation of military expenditures has had disastrous consequences for a number of areas of economic activity in Quebec. Although Quebec contributes 25.4 per cent of the budget for national defence, it gets back a meagre 17 per cent in military spending. It has been the same old story for the last 15 years. This very unfavourable distribution continues to cost Quebec jobs and investment dollars.

Quebec is even worse off when it comes to the funds that the Department of National Defence allocates for research and development.

(1635)

In 1990–91, Quebec received only 12.45 per cent of this spending—12.45 compared with the 73 per cent that went to Ontario. The situation has not changed since then. In addition, francophones have great difficulty rising through the ranks of the Canadian armed forces. While francophones occupy between 22 and 29 per cent of the lower-ranking positions, they occupy only 10 to 13 per cent of the higher ranks, according to the latest statistics. It is not difficult for francophones to enlist in the forces, but it is very difficult for them to become generals. It always has been and still is.

In 1994, the Minister of National Defence took away the country's only French-language military college, the military

college in Saint-Jean. What a decision! Once again, the federal Minister of Finance is asking Quebec to do its share in his budget. The government is closing the military base at Saint-Hubert. Over 600 people will lose their jobs. It is cutting another 285 jobs on the Bagotville base. Before the cuts, less than 15 per cent of all federal military facilities were located in Quebec. What is left? Not much.

What should we tell taxpayers in Quebec who feel that the federal government costs them too much money for the return they get on their investment? If Quebec were to patriate the power to tax and to spend—about \$30 billion is in question here—we would be able to set up a system which really is fair and we would make our own decisions. That is how Quebec will best be able to develop and grow.

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks. They were spoken with such passion they left me almost breathless.

I would like to put a question to my colleague which will take him a little beyond his remarks. It is probably well known to him as it is to many members in this House that I have an interest in special interest groups.

The budget did introduce for the first time the concept that new guidelines would be brought in for the funding of these special interest groups which receive direct grants from government with very little accountability for what are often advocacy groups.

Does he feel this is an area of reform for the government applicable to Quebec? Should groups which have these special agendas see their funding cut as we hope to see elsewhere in the country?

[Translation]

Mr. Leroux (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague for his question. All I can say is that if we look at the budget as a whole, the federal government faced a \$37 billion or \$38 billion deficit last year, compared with a \$33 billion deficit forecast for this year. The government is saving money on the backs of the provinces. Since the provinces will have less money, they will have to cut spending for post-secondary education, health care and other services under provincial jurisdiction. That, in my opinion, is tragic.

I would also like to go back to the closure of the military college in Saint-Jean. I think that this is an appalling decision. It is appalling for Canada, because Canada has always maintained that it is a bilingual country and tried to give that impression. However, by closing the military college in Saint-Jean—as we can see, enrolment is already way down, a drop of 40 to 60 per cent this year—the government is simply telling us that, at the end of the day, bilingualism is not important.

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(1640)

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on February 27, the Minister of Finance tabled his budget in this House. This event extensively covered by the media was preceded by a fear-mongering effort to scare the public. They said the budget would hurt all taxpayers, but they did not tell us the most important part.

And that is that the creditors to whom the Canadian debt is owed wanted to make sure Canada would be able to pay the interest on its debt in the years to come. That is what the problem was. It was also most important to let it be known that the federal government was waiting until after the Quebec referendum to make major cuts, once again deceiving the people.

When I was first elected to this place by the residents of the riding of Matapédia—Matane, I was sure I was coming here to serve the interests of my region and that is what I have been doing ever since: serving the interests of my fellow citizens. But since February 27, I have had to admit that it is not really the hon. members and ministers opposite who run the country, but rather big financial players.

What are the ministers and members across the way doing here if they let their Minister of Finance table a budget like this without saying a word? I must admit that certain members did stand up and denounce this budget and I am proud of them. I only wish others would follow suit.

What power do these members and ministers have in this House? I hope they are not mere puppets. When the creditors of a country tell its finance minister what to do, it means that the country has lost its monetary and financial independence.

Who has led us into that tunnel? None other than the Prime Minister, when he was the Minister of Finance. The process started with him. That farce shows a serious lack of respect for Canadian taxpayers, particularly those from Quebec, for whom the big cuts will come after the referendum.

Why not tell the people the truth? Why not tell them now what they are in for? Stop hiding your despicable and partisan goals. The Minister of Finance's action lacks any consistency and is a monumental hoax. I can tell the minister that Quebecers will remember him and his party on referendum day. My constituents in the riding of Matapédia—Matane will not be fooled.

The federal budget will hit them very hard. Let me give you a few examples. There will be cuts at the Maurice Lamontagne Institute, in Sainte-Flavie, in the Supply and Services division in Matane, and in the offices of the Department of Human Resources Development; fishermen will be hurt by the service charge in fishing ports and harbours; cuts will also affect

farmers and milk producers; finally, there will be a gas tax increase, in a region where gas is already more expensive than elsewhere. Last year, Rimouski residents blocked a road in an attempt to have the price of gas go down. It did go down one cent, but now it is going up one and a half cents.

Since the budget was tabled, the only ones to speak in favour of the government's strategy were the creditors, and even they had mixed feelings about it.

(1645)

A few days later, we were again faced with rising interest rates and a falling dollar on financial markets, a quick response to the minister's budget.

Blaming Quebec for this country's financial situation shows an unprecedented lack of logic. If Quebec were to blame, would members opposite not tell us to become sovereign as fast as possible?

The impact of this budget will be shocking, and pretty soon the minister will tell this House he can no longer control the deficit or stop the growth of the debt.

In the days following the budget, we saw that Canada's provinces, including Quebec, rejected the minister's vision, and today, everyone openly condemns that vision, especially Ontario.

And now for a closer look at the disastrous impact this budget will have, starting with the catastrophic impact the spiralling federal debt will have on job creation and corporate investment.

For people who do not have a job and those who will be affected by unemployment insurance cuts, the future is very bleak. Because of the poor economic climate, consumers will spend less, and businesses will postpone investment projects because of the high cost of borrowing.

It is clear that this government, which promised hundreds of thousands of jobs, has missed its target by a mile. It misled everyone. I would say it practically lied to the entire population. It has turned its back on its commitments.

In addition to letting the debt grow at an alarming rate—everyone is saying it will reach \$603 billion in 1996—the government has just cut 45,000 jobs in the Canadian public service. This government is now producing unemployment instead of encouraging job creation. How many of these government employees will join the ranks of the unemployed? And there are hundreds of indirect jobs that will disappear in the process.

In the outlying regions, these job losses will have a disastrous impact on an economy already weakened by a recession that is still smouldering.

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The government has just created a feeling of uncertainty, which will have very serious repercussions on the performance of the public service as a whole and on other related areas of activity.

There is nothing in this budget for the 800,000 unemployed and people looking for work in Quebec. On the contrary. Fortunately, the Government of Quebec knows how to create jobs.

The only good federal program is the infrastructure program, and it is being cut by \$200 million.

We are all aware that Canada's debt has mortgaged the country's future. Quebecers have made this point repeatedly. At the hearings on the future of Quebec, everyone where I come from fears the worst, because it is clear that the ship is leaking and the captain has abandoned his duties. The people of Quebec will give a clear response to this government in the upcoming referendum, and neither fear nor threats will change the course of history. After the victory of the "yes" votes, the other provinces will have to decide what sort of country they want. I am sure that others will want to follow the road the people of Quebec are preparing to take.

In concluding, I would say: Long live Canada without Quebec, and long live Quebec without Canada.

(1650)

The Deputy Speaker: It seems that I must split the time. First, the hon. member for Durham.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's comments. Every time we get into this debate somehow Quebec seems to be a very interesting place with no debt problems but a simple examination of its financial record indicates quite the reverse. I believe the province of Quebec's deficit is currently about \$70 billion. This was done in Quebec by Quebecers. It continues to expand and if my memory serves me correctly, it is probably expanding a lot faster than the federal government's deficit.

While the leader of the Government of Quebec is out talking about sovereignty, he is not dealing with the very problems of his own province. It costs \$5 million for a sovereignty debate that nobody wants. This is irresponsible. I do not believe the people of Quebec are going to be happy with this expenditure or with the continual pushing of Quebec into a deficit situation.

Bonds are a big financier of government debt. Quebec government rated bonds continue to escalate their interest costs. Why? Because people have many misgivings about where this is going.

The hon. member talked about job creation. Job creation and job losses are an absolute. They must be netted together. Sure, there will be job losses in the civil service. Everybody in Canada, including Quebecers, have said how necessary it is that governments downsize and become more efficient.

I have heard my colleagues from the Bloc say those very things. Stop duplication. When the government stops duplication they say: "You should not lay these people off". The reality is that 433,000 new jobs were created in Canada last year, net job creation. That is positive and it includes Quebec.

Finally, \$78 billion of the federal government debt is held by Quebecers. They believe in Canada, but what is their future with this crazy concept they have? How are they going to get reimbursed in this strange emulation of a new country? There is \$78 billion that Quebecers hold in Canada.

I would like to have the hon. member answer those questions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Canuel: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. You talk about duplication. I want to know what duplication has been eliminated over the past few years. None.

Another point. I agree that Quebec has a high debt. However, for years and years, decades and decades, the federal government has been transferring money to Ontario and to other provinces for research and development, while the money it has been transferring to Quebec has been in the form of unemployment insurance benefits. One thing is sure: when one region is without work while research funds are sent to another, there is something wrong.

Regarding sovereignty, I want to say that even though our debt is high, we can handle it, and that we are prepared to pay part of Canada's debt, because we are part of it and we have a moral obligation to do so. If I were on the other side of the House, a government member from Ontario, the maritimes or the west, do you know what I would say to the Bloc? I would say: "If you want to leave, go".

Why try holding us back? Why tire yourselves out in the effort? We are convinced, I am convinced that we are able to manage our debt intelligently and at the same time help to pay off yours.

(1655)

Then what more do you want? I, myself, have never understood why the rest of Canada is saying: "Why not you stay with us. This is terrible. It is going to cost you". We are going to spend a few million dollars on the referendum. But how much are you going to spend? I rephrase my question. If we are so poor and have so many problems, why are you so desperate to keep us in the federation?

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[English]

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Davenport.

Many Canadians are concerned with Canada's future prosperity and with maintaining our quality of life. The finance minister's February 27 budget is a key element in maintaining prosperity and Canada's way of life.

The budget is a plan that will bring this country into the 21st century. It demonstrates our commitment to reshaping government to meet the needs of Canadians and to deliver on our promise to get our fiscal house in order. It supports our primary economic objective to sustain growth and job creation by cutting our deficit. It demonstrates our commitment to fiscally responsible government.

I will not make any bones about it; I believe that the budget is tough, very tough, but fair. The budget is tough but fair both in what it does but also in what it does not do.

Like many members of Parliament, I took advantage of the finance minister's opening up of the budget process. The government held the widest and most open prebudget consultations ever held. To ensure that my constituents had their say, I held two prebudget meetings in my riding of Essex—Windsor. The actions of the finance minister proved that this was not a cynical exercise. My constituents and many Canadians asked the finance minister to tackle the deficit in real terms. That is what this budget does.

This government is the first government in years to set deficit reduction targets and to meet those targets. Let me reassure the House that the deficit will be brought under control and our deficit targets will be met. The government has shown that it has the resolve and commitment to Canada's long term future to do what is necessary to meet our targets.

By 1996–97 Canada's deficit will be at 3 per cent of gross domestic product. That is \$24.3 billion. If the economy keeps growing, and it will, this figure may be even lower. The bottom line is close to a cut of \$7 in spending for every dollar for new revenues over the next three years.

To ensure fairness, both business and individuals are being asked to share the load. Recognizing that individuals' income taxes have increased over the last decade at a much faster rate than corporate taxes, the budget includes measures to address that inequity.

The large corporation tax rate will rise from .2 per cent to .225 per cent, an increase of 12.5 per cent. The corporate surtax, which is currently 3 per cent of the basic corporate tax rate, will

increase to 4 per cent. There will also be changes made to strengthen Revenue Canada's ability to enforce the law and ensure that all Canadians pay their fair share of taxes and to reduce unfair competition for businesses that do play above board, that play by the rules.

Banks and trust companies are also being asked to contribute further toward deficit reduction during the next year and a half. They will contribute \$100 million through a special tax on deposit taking institutions.

Big business has often stated that it does not need or want the level of assistance it receives from the federal government. Accordingly, the government has listened and taken these claims at their word. We will reduce spending on subsidies for big business by close to 60 per cent over the next three years.

However, the government, unlike the last one, realizes that a successful tackling of the deficit requires a two track approach, as was advocated in our red book. To eliminate the deficit, the government must also create a climate that creates jobs.

This budget recognizes that small and medium sized businesses are the cornerstone of Canada's economy. They are the number one job creator. To further help small business we intend to work with Canada's banks and trust companies to establish clear rules so that small business loans are easier to get.

(1700)

In my prebudget consultations many of my constituents recommended Canada re-examine our commitment to foreign aid in view of needs in Canada. The government has done this and will reduce foreign aid by 20 per cent over the next three years for savings of over \$500 million.

Many of my constituents also questioned the need for so many agencies, boards and commissions. As a result of the government-wide review of these government bodies, decisions have been made affecting 120 of them: 73 of these will be closed, 47 will be streamlined and restructured. The result will be 665 fewer government in council positions, fewer ministerial appointments and savings of \$10 million a year.

In my prebudget consultations my constituents had many suggestions on what action the government should not take. Do not eliminate RRSPs, they said, and we did not. Do not increase personal income taxes. We did not. Do not introduce a health or dental tax benefit. We did not. Do not eliminate capital gains exemptions for farmers and small businesses. We did not. Do not introduce a tax on casino winnings. We did not.

I have said that this budget is tough but fair. Many of the reviews have also been tough but fair. A Windsor *Star*, editorial of February 28 stated: "What we can applaud in the budget is the vow to create a smaller and smarter government. The 14 per cent reduction in the civil service over the next three years combined

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with the \$10 billion in cuts to departments will result in a fundamental reshaping of government”.

The Windsor *Star* also reported that Windsor’s business community was encouraged, shocked even, by the wide swing of the minister’s budget axe.

The Windsor Chamber of Commerce chair, Othmar Stein, was quoted in the *Star* as saying of the finance minister: “He’s got the message. A lot of this was overdue. A lot of the subsidies are gone, even for business”.

Mr. Stein, a vice-president of Chrysler, concluded: “Overall I’d say it’s a very realistic budget, quite positive. It’s one of the first budgets in a number of years that has not been smoke and mirrors.”

Aron Gampel of the Bank of Nova Scotia says it is a strong fiscal statement that meets all the tests.

The *Wall Street Journal* reversed its editorial stance regarding Canada, summed up in its headline several weeks before the budget as “Bankrupt Canada”. After the budget it proclaimed Canada made a right turn.

The editorial commends the finance minister for showing the determination needed for Canada to claw its way out of the debt hole which decades of spendthrift policies landed it in.

The budget charts a new course for agriculture. In agriculture the government has set a target to achieve by the turn of the century, annual food exports valued at over \$20 billion. This is an increase of at least one-third over our record setting performance in 1994.

To do this the government will be introducing a new export credits guarantee program to support grain and other agri-food export sales up to a value of \$1 billion.

Consistent with the red book, the government will implement a Canadian agri-food marketing council and Canadian agri-food marketing service to ensure enhanced market development and effective use of the global information highway.

Our first fiscal year was not all doom and gloom. The Canadian economy is stronger than it has been in years. Real economic output grew at about 4.5 per cent in 1994, the fastest of the G-7. Over 433,000 jobs were created in the past year, almost all of them full time.

The unemployment rate has fallen by 1.7 percentage points nationally. Manufacturing output is up over 9 percent in the past year. Improved cost performance has led to record breaking exports, a growing trade surplus and a dramatic improvement in the current account.

I assure my constituents the budget belongs to a Liberal government. A Liberal government brought in new and innovative programs in the sixties and seventies to meet the challenges and needs of those decades. The government is adapting all

programs to meet the needs and challenges of the nineties and the 21st century.

We understand change. We have always been at the forefront of change. The budget is change. The Liberal Party has been traditionally a pace setter. I know the budget sets the pace for the 21st century.

I will end with a comment one of my constituents sent me during the prebudget process. With reference to the difficult choices facing the Minister of Finance, he wished him resolve: “My two young children will thank you, as you will be remembered as the finance minister who saved Canada from bankruptcy”.

(1705)

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate. Canadians know very well that we have inherited an economic mess from the Conservatives and that steps must be taken to reduce the deficit and the debt. On that we all agree.

The major preoccupation of this budget is to appease the marketplace, in particular rating agencies. Having done so this year one may expect Wall Street to demand more measures of the same kind in future budgets.

To deal with this the Prime Minister is taking the issue of currency speculators and their impact on national economies to the next meeting in June of the G-7 nations, a very timely initiative for which he is to be congratulated.

There are a few positive measures in the budget for which the Minister of Finance is to be congratulated. For instance, from the perspective of sustainable development one could highlight his decision to remove the 20 per cent limit of a donor’s income when donations qualify as ecologically sensitive land. There is a commitment in the budget to study barriers or disincentives in the use of recycled materials over virgin materials.

There is a promise to examine the tax system in search of disincentives to energy efficiency and renewable forms of energy. Subsidies were cut in the energy sector that encouraged uneconomic and unsustainable supply development. Much more needs to be done if we are serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This brings me to the end of the list of good news and back to the question of how to reduce the national debt and the deficit. It is a necessity on which we all agree.

In the weeks and months preceding the budget several presentations were made repeatedly that social spending is not the cause of our economic ills and that our deficit problem, rather than through cuts in expenditures, ought to be resolved through increases in revenue by way of closing tax loopholes. Billions of dollars a year are forgone in revenue because of existing tax loopholes, including items such as lottery winnings, business meals and entertainment expenses and other existing items well

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identified in a report by the Department of Finance dated January 1994.

To his credit, the Minister of Finance closed a couple of loopholes but the tax system remains unprogressive as a result of nine years of Conservative government, Conservative budget making.

It is time for a thorough review of our tax system as it stands now. This review is made even more urgent and necessary and relevant by the fact that the social envelope as announced in the budget is being reduced by \$7 billion. Had more tax loopholes been closed, had the tax system been put under the microscope to the same extent that the social security system has been, it would have not been necessary to reduce the social envelope. We would have funds available to diminish the necessity of cutting expenditures. We would have funds for the creation of employment programs for youth desperately waiting for job opportunities which are now not materializing despite our vigorous economic growth.

In other words, closing tax loopholes would provide the government with badly needed revenues to combat unemployment and to apply less severe cuts. Time does not permit to comment on the many cuts and I will therefore comment only on a couple which are particularly painful.

(1710)

One reduces the social housing budget by \$270 million at a time when in Toronto alone an applicant has to wait over four years.

Why reduce the protection of our natural resources by one third, the estimates of the environment department, and allocate to the department of defence almost 20 times as much, \$9 billion? What is more important?

Why reduce international aid at a time when health and development projects are so badly needed for the stability of nations most in need?

How can we implement our red book commitment to sustainable development with a 70 per cent cut in the federal allocation to the Canadian environment industry, while leaving the nuclear industry unscathed from any budget cuts?

How can we maintain and strengthen the Canadian identity when the budget of the Canada Council is cut in half? How can we promote and sustain artistic talents without the support of the federal government?

In a way it is too late to talk about the budget, but not too soon to talk about the next one. For 1996 we will keep on working so the budget will have a different orientation, an orientation to the promises made in the red book, an orientation to deal with unemployment, the protection of the weaker in society and the social needs of Canadians.

Over the years Canadians have turned to the Liberals at election time because they trust us as the party that knows how to strengthen and intertwine social and economic policies. This principle is as valid today as it will be 20, 40 or 60 years from now. Hopefully the budget will have the desired effect and we Liberals will be able to turn our attention to the other half of the equation, developing strong social and job creation initiatives and policies in the second half of our mandate for the benefit of the total Canadian society.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say at the beginning that it is pleasure for me to speak on the budget. I cannot do that. My feeling is one of great disappointment. The government is still not facing the reality or the severity of the problem Canada is in today.

The budget has given us minor cuts when major cuts are needed. It did include some hidden taxes where no tax increases were justified.

We owe a debt of thanks to the thousands of citizens who wrote in and attended tax alerts to send the very strong message to the government that there was no room for tax increases and that the books had to be balanced and that balance had to be brought about by cuts or reductions in spending with no new or increased taxes. We did achieve that to some degree. However, there were some hidden taxes in the budget.

This was a two stage budget. I will review the first budget and this budget. In the first budget it was interesting that the government said: "Canada has a problem. It is not too serious. Do not get too excited about it. Take an aspirin and when you get up in the morning you will feel fine. Do not feel bad. Be happy". It introduced a budget that actually aggravated Canada's condition because our debt over the year of that budget grew from \$490 billion to \$550 billion. Canada is in much more serious difficulty.

We even thought in that first budget we could buy our way to prosperity. It included the \$6 billion infrastructure program.

Canada's problem has worsened. With the second budget the diagnosis is that Canada is gravely ill. We do have a very serious problem with the deficit and the debt and it must be attacked. However, the cure is \$650 billion of debt, still overspending by \$25 billion and \$50 billion in interest payments. I hardly call this progress. I hardly call this a cure. Canada is going further and further into the hole.

(1715)

The government has diagnosed that it understands the gravity of the situation. The government has moved over to our position. It has agreed that Canada is gravely ill. The only thing we disagree on now is the treatment to cure our problem. The deficit, if we agree, is life threatening. Then why if it is life threatening to our country would we vote for, or go for a slow,

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hopeful, drawn out recovery; we hope we will get the books in balance.

Suppose someone were in a life threatening situation and the doctor said: "We can give you pills for the next five years and you might recover but the alternative is major surgery and you can be restored to health very quickly and get on with the healing process". Why would he take a chance?

Why would we gamble our future on the uncertainties of the marketplace, of interest rates? We do not seem to have anything in this budget to prepare for the eventual downturn in the economy that will come. It is not a question of if it is going to come, it is going to come. It is a question of when it is going to come.

There are some dark clouds on the horizon. Even south of the border, the situation in the United States could deteriorate and it would have a grave effect on the economy right here in Canada. We know that and we are not preparing for that in this budget. Time is running out. We do not have unlimited time. Unfortunately, that message is not getting through and has not been reflected by the government.

I was interested in the remarks of the Secretary of State for Training and Youth. She spoke about the New Zealand experience, how New Zealand realized the magnitude of its problem and did something about it. New Zealand's debt was at 50 per cent of its GDP when it realized its problem. Ours is currently about 70 or 71 per cent of GDP and we still are not facing the realities and doing the major surgery which needs to be done.

The claim in the first budget was that the government did not have enough time, that it had just taken over. The present government had been in opposition for eight years. What was happening in those eight years? What was happening in those eight years is that those members were adding to the problem in opposing any attempts to bring the deficit and the debt under control. I very well recall the UI debate when there was an attempt to reduce costs. The protest came from the other side at the attempt to reduce spending.

Here we have a budget. We had no plan to get us to zero or to balance the books in the first budget. We still do not have a plan with this budget. There is no fixed date to arrive at what we must arrive at, which is a balanced budget.

We have lost our credibility with the markets in this budget because we did not do anything about the MP pension plan. We had to do something to restore our credibility because it is low. That would have said very loudly and very clearly to the markets and to the Canadian people that yes, the government is serious about the problem and it is showing leadership by example. It failed to do that. Canadians did not miss that message, nor in

fact did our lenders. Our lenders have spotted the fact that we were not serious about the problem we face.

There are three ways to get the books in balance. We can raise taxes. We can hope for growth in the economy. Or we can cut spending.

Raising taxes, I would suggest, is no longer an option. The Canadian people have revolted and said that they are taxed to the limit. Raising taxes at this point becomes counterproductive because it fuels the underground economy that is there and is growing.

We can hope for growth in the economy, but we do not control that. That has been the problem for the last 25 years. We projected growth in the economy and at the end of the year it was said: "Oh gee, it is too bad it was not there. We are deeper in debt". We do not control that.

The one thing we do control, the one thing we can do to get our books in balance is to cut spending. We have absolute control there and it is where we should be targeting our efforts. This budget does not do that. It makes some scrapes when indeed it should be making cuts in spending.

We have had 20 years of raising taxes. Those 20 years of raising taxes have achieved the exact opposite. The deficit has grown and the debt has grown. There is absolutely no justification for any tax increase. It does exactly the opposite to what it is hoped to achieve. It is a job killer. It kills the economy.

(1720)

That there can be no pain is not reality. When we have lived for so many years beyond our means, there has to be some pain. We cannot escape that. The Canadian people understand and are ready for that. The problem is many in this place do not understand that but the Canadian people are ready for it.

We just have to look at the results of the surveys done since the budget came out. The Canadian people supported the move the government made but said they were looking for more. Those same surveys said there should be more cuts and those cuts should be made now because time is running out. We do not have unlimited time.

The tough action we have been taking on the east coast with the fishing problem is interesting. Overfishing is just like overspending. Fish are limited and dollars are limited. There is a bottom to the barrel. We are getting tough on fishing but we have not yet got the message on spending. We still think we can keep on spending. We can kill an industry or we can kill a country. We can kill an industry by overfishing; we can kill a country by overspending.

Moody's fired a shot across our bow and we missed the message. It fired a shot across our bow just as we did to that Spanish fishing vessel. The message Moody's shot across our

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bow was that 3 per cent of GDP is too low a target and there is no plan to get to zero. The budget has failed on both counts.

For anybody on the other side to assume that the markets have bought this budget, the verdict is not yet in. Moody's has not changed its position. The verdict is still pending on whether the budget was successful in convincing the money markets that Canada is a good place to invest.

We shoot the messenger who is giving us good advice: "You are in trouble. Get your books in balance or we are not going to buy your bonds". As I say, we are still waiting for the background on that.

There was nothing in this budget for small business. My background is in small business. That 1.5 cent increase in gasoline tax is to raise \$500 million a year.

In my riding a number of people commute to Toronto. They will have \$250 per year in additional costs just to drive to their business. It is also going to increase the cost of doing business for example for those who use gas in delivery services.

It is going to take about \$3 million out of the economy of my riding. There goes the new stove, the education and the new car. It really was not necessary and it is not productive to creating the employment we need. There was no justification for any tax increase.

We are indeed living in the greatest country in the world, but we are doing it on borrowed dollars and time is running out.

I see we are making an attempt to get Canadians to invest in Canada by buying bonds and keeping the money in Canada. The answer to getting Canadians to invest in this country is for the government to show some responsibility that it understands the magnitude of the problem and it is going to cut its spending. Canadians will then stop sending their money out of the country and will spend and invest it right here.

Canada is in a battle for its survival, make no mistake about it. I visited Dieppe just a year ago. It was a very moving experience to see the men who had the courage to go over there and give their lives. I am suggesting that it is going to take courage right now to tackle the very serious problem of overspending.

I hear words about compassion, generosity and fairness. What about responsibility, accountability and fairness to the taxpayers who have been carrying the burden all these years? The Canadian taxpayers are demanding some responsibility, accountability and fairness. We owe it to them and we owe it to future generations.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting that the member would spend so much time during his speech defending the Brian Mulroney government saying that somehow the Liberal Party frustrated the prior government for nine years. He is nodding his head now, but I

should remind him that the government of Brian Mulroney, which was turfed out, had a majority in both terms and had full control of its actions. We cannot pass on that blame. The member is just making rhetoric. In fact the prior Conservative government got exactly what it deserved.

(1725)

I listened with interest to the medical analogy the member used when he talked about cuts, that we have only had scrapes and not deep cuts. The member tried to somehow imply there was a tax increase in this budget when he well knows there were \$7 of cuts for every \$1 of increased revenue and there were no increases in personal income tax. It was pure fabrication.

I want to ask the member a question with regard to his strategy and the response that his own leader gave to this House. His leader stood in this House and attacked the government for cuts to social programs. Yet this member is saying that we should have more cuts than what has been proposed by our government. How does this member square his position with the position of his own leader?

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the questions from the hon. member.

I will deal first with the fact that the Liberals spent eight years in opposition and they could not do anything about the fact that the debt and deficit were increasing. I suggest to the member that they did nothing but encourage the deficit and debt to increase. They did not understand the magnitude of the problem then; they do not understand the magnitude of the problem now. Nothing has changed.

The Conservative government was turfed out for not listening. I would suggest that three years down the road this government will be turfed out because it is still not listening to the Canadian people.

Cuts of \$7 for every \$1 in increased revenue. There is no justification for any revenue increase. There is more than enough to balance the books in cuts. When there has been overspending for 20 years we cannot keep saying that we need more dollars, but a strong case can be made for saying: "Yes, we have been going into your pockets deeper and deeper; we are going to start pulling back now". Now is the time. If the Liberals have missed that message, they will go the same way the Conservatives did in just a few years.

My leader has never said that social programs should not be touched. The books cannot be balanced without touching the social programs. That is the reality of the amount of money we spend in that area. The word is that they have been responsible for the problem. They have not been responsible for the problem. However, there have to be cuts in there. The books absolutely cannot be balanced without doing it.

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Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague for Simcoe Centre made reference to the famous tax rallies which took place across the country. He will know the most notable one took place in my riding of Ontario. An estimated 3,500 people came out to protest against any notion of tax increases.

Of the 3,500 people who attended that meeting not one has called to tell me this was a bad budget. We have had over 50 calls telling us it is a budget that hit the mark and that the government has definitely listened to the voices of Canadians.

What was interesting about that evening was that it crystallized what these tax alerts were really all about. They were fronts for the Reform Party. That is very clear in the presentation I made a couple of weeks ago.

It is more interesting that one of my hon. colleague's cohorts by the name of Diane Francis in her paper *The Financial Post* on the same day that tax rally took place mentioned Morgan Trust, a famous bank. It does a lot of business in Canada, and has made some \$9.5 million in profits at the expense of the Canadian economy and has only paid 3 per cent in effective taxes.

The hon. member says we do not need any new taxes in this country. He applauds the tax alerts that have taken place. But surely to goodness he is not saying that some people should be indulging themselves while advocating austerity for the others as the banks have done.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about tax fairness. I did not get into the question of tax fairness. I will agree with him that the current tax system is unfair and we have to address that.

I do come back to my point that we have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. The government can go after the loopholes and tax the rich but it will not come close to balancing the books. What will balance the books is to get our spending under control right now. That is something we have full control over. We need to do it right away. We cannot afford to delay.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are debating the budgetary policy put forward by this government that permits it to borrow more money using the fragile future of our country as collateral.

(1730)

The Reform Party appreciates the grave financial situation in which we find ourselves. In fact, it has been our dogged determination to address the issue of government accountability in the areas of spending and taxation that have dictated the course of the government's fiscal agenda.

The Liberal budget took a very tentative first step in the direction of deficit reduction, but it did not go nearly far enough. Overall spending increased. Taxes increased. It failed to make the necessary changes to Canadian social programs. It failed to identify which programs are essential and which are not. It failed to explain where and how Canadians will find jobs. The Liberal budget did not lead by example. Cuts come from the bottom up it appears. Canadians are asked to tighten their belts while the Liberal fat-pack have secured their gold-plated pensions.

There has been much talk about Liberal red book promises. Let us focus on some of the promises that are made in the budget.

The Liberals are promising to borrow \$29.8 billion this year because they cannot balance the budget. The Liberals are promising to add over \$100 billion to the national debt in the next three years. This will drive the federal debt load well beyond \$650 billion by fiscal 1997. This Liberal promise will jeopardize the long term viability of social programs.

The Minister of Human Resources Development had a tremendous opportunity to make a positive contribution to changes in the delivery of social programs. Instead he dropped the ball and in fact has dropped out. What the Liberals are offering now is a block transfer of funds to the provinces. This Liberal approach simply downloads the federal debt, penalizing the provinces, especially provinces like mine, Alberta, which is working aggressively toward a balanced budget.

The Liberals promised to increase funding to special interest groups. To pick one example, the status of women, after we factor in the new grants transferred from HRD, it still has an increase in its operating budget of approximately 20 per cent. How can this be justified when funding to provinces for health care and education has been reduced? Canadians will not tolerate such foolish inequity.

The government has not been entirely open about its plans for balancing the budget. I am going to use the example of the Canadian heritage ministry to illustrate a wilful lack of disclosure regarding budget matters. If such dismal performance exists in one department, in one ministry, does it exist in others?

The Minister of Canadian Heritage had plans for the future of the CBC which he did not include in the budget, but which he did provide to the president of the CBC. Let us look at the Liberals' promises regarding the CBC. On February 3, 1994 in a letter from the minister to Mr. Manera, the minister wrote:

The government considers that stable multi-year funding for the CBC is the most effective way of enabling the CBC to return to a healthy financial position. I am therefore pleased to confirm that the government is prepared to commit itself to a plan and to affirm that it does not intend to impose new reductions on the CBC over the next five years.

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However, in the budget the minister announced cuts of \$44 million to the CBC. It now appears that the minister plans to cut of over \$350 million to the CBC. When I asked him a question about the plan in the House he denied the plan, suggesting that my allegations were pure invention and that Mr. Manera, who had subsequently resigned, had done so for personal reasons and that no more cuts were planned. It sounded like an incredible soap opera to me. That night, in an interview, Mr. Manera stated that he had resigned because of future cuts to the CBC and not for personal reasons. Only one of the two men could be telling the truth.

The next day in the House I presented to the minister a copy of the secret document, which the minister's officials had given to Mr. Manera, which outlined three years of cuts to the CBC. This is how the minister interprets honest and open government. First, he purposely withheld this information from the budget figures. Second, he denied the document and the accompanying cuts even existed. Third, he now admits the document exists but that it means nothing and that the president of the CBC is misguided.

This kind of pathetic performance eats away at the integrity of government. Canadians want to know how their money is being spent and that it is being spent wisely, based on a responsible plan for future spending. The Minister of Canadian Heritage has a different story every time he is asked a question. How can anyone take him seriously, especially organizations within the cultural community? His performance has left the CBC rudderless, without a chairman, without a president, at a time when it needs leadership the most, at a time when it needs to make the transition to the private sector.

(1735)

Further, last year the CBC was given a special borrowing authority for \$25 million. It turns out that this borrowing authority is \$25 million into perpetuity. Last year, at the end of the fiscal year the CBC proved it could not meet its budget and came back, cap in hand to Parliament, and as stated in the supplementary estimates it received another \$3 million. The CBC is just one example of gross financial mismanagement in the minister's portfolio.

The finance minister alleged that the Liberal government met its financial targets last year. However that can only be Liberal math, for when we look at the Department of Canadian Heritage's supplementary estimates we see it is very much in the red, that none of the targets were met.

Let us look at some of the government organizations which ran over budget: the Department of Canadian Heritage corporate services program, \$1.1 million over budget; the Canadian identity program, \$1.4 million over budget; the parks program, \$3.5 million over budget; Advisory Council on the Status of Women, which thankfully is gone, \$76,000 over budget; the

CBC, \$3 million over budget; the Museum of Nature, \$82,000 over budget; the National Archives, \$561,000 over budget; the National Battlefields Commission, \$125,000 over budget; the National Capital Commission, \$12 million over budget; the National Gallery, \$187,000 over budget; the Public Service Commission, \$4.5 million over budget; and last, the Office of the Co-ordinator of the Status of Women, \$162,000 over budget.

Thirteen organizations under the control of the Canadian heritage ministry went over budget. Canadians expect and deserve more from government. When will the minister finally take responsibility for the complete disarray and overspending of his department?

When governments continue to deficit finance they hurt Canada's future economic health. By failing to balance the budget, by failing even to announce when the budget will be balanced, the Liberals have shown they understand little about fiscal planning.

The Liberal Party continues its tradition of being borrowers of both money and ideas. The continuing failure to bring in a single, new, original thought begs the question of whether it will be able to lead Canada to economic stability within the current mandate.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Calgary Southeast for her remarks but she left me wondering. In the early part of her discourse she reported a 20 per cent increase to the status of women.

I do not know to what organization she refers. I would like very much if she could elaborate on that, what her information is, what details she has and what her sources are, if she would not mind.

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will refer to the estimates he will see that with the inclusion of the Department of Human Resources Development, moneys were brought over from that department. Approximately \$20 million is within the ministry of the status of women and represents the increase that I suggested.

Further to this, now that we are on the whole approach of the change to the status of women, it represents a remarkable shift in the Liberal policy. We are seeing economic pragmatism overtake social liberalism, which is incredible.

It is a shift into a Conservative-Reform territory which one would have never anticipated. The Liberals left their liberal ideology and embraced certainly Conservative ideology. The Reform Party has influenced dramatically this approach. We saw it in the budget and we are now seeing it in the downsizing and restructuring of bureaucratic departments.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member a question. She seemed to get off on a bit of a tangent thinking that all these government

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departments had overspent. If they spend their budget, she thinks they have overspent. I recognize the trait.

(1740)

However, sometimes there are reallocations of priorities in the way governments spend their money. That sometimes happens. In this case, I think the government considered what it might do and reallocated some priorities and spent more in some departments that it did in others.

Perhaps the member could answer a question about overspending. I believe her party ran into a lot of trouble with overspending. It was unable to organize its finances and I understand it is running a big deficit.

Does the member not think that the same rules that ought to apply to government ought to apply to a party? Does the member not think that the party ought to get its own finances in order before it criticizes the Government of Canada?

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, that is such a trivial question, it is not even worthy of a response. We are certainly in control of our spending.

When we talk about reallocation of priorities, I am going to address that part of the hon. member's question. It is quite interesting that when we look at what happened in Alberta with the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act. We are talking about reallocation of priorities all right.

I have a letter from a small business person in my riding. This individual wrote talking about Albertans being prepared to make that kind of sacrifice when it comes to helping with the deficit reduction process. But when we see companies and I quote: "such as ours that compete against companies based in other provinces on a national and an international basis, this change of the utilities tax has fundamentally altered the competitive landscape. Our cost of doing business, simply because we are located in Alberta, will go up as a result of this budgetary measure".

That message for the hon. member across the way speaks volumes to me about what the government intended to do with its reallocation of priorities with respect to Alberta.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 78(1), I wish to inform the House that there is an agreement among the representatives of all three officially recognized parties to the allocation of time to Bill C-74, an act respecting the supervision of

longshoring and related operations at west coast ports, described in the following motion.

I therefore move:

That Bill C-74, an act respecting the supervision of longshoring and related operations at west coast ports, be disposed of at all stages during the present sitting as follows:

1. Debate at second reading shall be limited to no more than 80 minutes;
2. Upon being read a second time, the bill shall be referred to a committee of the whole, which shall report the bill after no more than 60 minutes' consideration;
3. Immediately upon being concurred in at the report stage, the said bill shall be considered at the third reading stage wherein debate shall be limited to no more than 40 minutes.
4. At the end of the time periods described in this Order, the Speaker or the Chair of the committee of the whole, as the case may be, shall interrupt debate and forthwith put all questions necessary to dispose of the stage then under consideration.
5. No recorded division may be deferred and, when any recorded division is requested, the bells shall be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: As was indicated the motion is not debatable. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

(1745)

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre.

Contrary to what we hear flowing back and forth across the floor, it is an honour for me to participate in the budget debate on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Hillsborough. I congratulate the Minister of Finance on such a finely crafted budget. In my years in this House and in my years in the house of

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another jurisdiction I can honestly say that this is one of the best budgets I have witnessed.

The budget is about commitments made and commitments kept. During the election we campaigned on a platform of creating opportunity. We asked Canadians to put their trust in us and we put our trust in them to get things moving in the right direction.

We promised to create jobs for Canadians and we have. As has been talked about many times in the last number of weeks, in the past year over 400,000 jobs were created across the country. We promised stable inflation and we have the lowest inflation in the industrialized world. Our exports are at an all time high and the level of business confidence in the Canadian economy is at its highest point since 1979.

The budget moved us further down the road to even more opportunity in the future. As the Minister of Finance has stated, the budget breaks the back of the deficit. The government will reach its deficit target of 3 per cent of GDP by the end of the next fiscal year. Once we have reached that point the government will move to reduce the deficit even further. We will accomplish our goals without punishing the vulnerable.

Some people out there would say and have said that it is just a Tory budget tied up in red ribbons. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have gone about the budgeting process reasonably. Instead of across the board cuts as was the case with the previous government, we have examined every program and every activity of the federal government.

Yes, we can do more. The Minister of Finance chose a scalpel over a meat cleaver in making the cuts. In departments such as in the Department of Transport where the need for their services have declined, the minister has made larger cuts. The commercialization of airports will create new opportunities in my area for businesses to export their goods and promote better tourism marketing.

In the Department of Veterans Affairs the minister made considerably smaller cuts. I know that the Secretary of State for Veterans was keen in protecting services for veterans across the country. As a result few jobs will be lost at departmental headquarters in Charlottetown. This is also something the people of the riding of Hillsborough really appreciate.

Seasonal workers will be happy to know that there will be no changes to the unemployment insurance system. There have been no changes to eligibility criteria or the length of time one can collect benefits. The Minister of Human Resources Development will continue to examine the operation of the program, to streamline the operations, and to find better ways to help recipients of unemployment insurance.

The budget was also a fine example of sharing the burden of deficit control. For the second year in a row the government has refused to increase personal income taxes.

(1750)

Most Canadians have realized for quite some time that wealthy Canadians enjoy special treatment come tax time. On budget day the Minister of Finance moved a long way toward stopping special treatment by eliminating exemptions for family trusts.

A couple of years ago the former government extended a tax holiday called the family trust exemption. Previously some of the wealthiest families in the country could hide their money away from the tax person by saying it was for their children and grandchildren. Because these family trusts have been exempted for so long it is difficult to estimate how much money is involved. Estimates have ranged from hundreds of millions to a couple of billion dollars that the tax people cannot reach. This special privilege was unacceptable and I am glad to see it gone.

The Minister of Finance placed a special tax on banks that had record profits in the last year. As well the government will be leaning on banks to make sure more capital is available to small and medium size businesses. The government will hold banks accountable on their performance in helping the Canadian economy grow and provide more jobs.

In the budget there is an increase in the taxes on large corporations. This was done because we realized that ordinary taxpayers were already paying their fair share. The budget spreads the burden more evenly.

The government has taken the position that we cannot do it all. Nor should we. It is the job of government to ensure that there is a level playing field for all Canadians to prosper. It is not the duty of government to run businesses the private sector can run better. That is why we are selling, for instance, our remaining shares in Petro-Canada and selling Canadian National Railway. On the list being examined for sale is the Canada Communications Group that has come under fire from small businesses across the country.

In the future we will be looking not only at what government does but why government does it. If we cannot find a legitimate answer then we should stop it. This is about more than smaller government even though government will be smaller. It is also about smarter government.

We must remember the Liberals created Canada's social programs and safety net. While we will be funding those programs in different ways we will insist that certain national standards apply. All aspects of the Canada Health Act will continue to be enforced, especially universality and accessibility. Of that there can be no doubt in the minds of Canadians.

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We are well on our way to both fiscal sanity and healthy government. The naysayers and the special interest groups will try to convince Canadians that we have cut too much. Other people will say that we have not cut enough and that we should sacrifice our social programs in the interest of deficit elimination. Neither opinion reflects the needs and the desires of Canadians. The budget is about fairness, balance and a sense of the future.

As I said earlier, there is more we can do. I have mentioned this at different meetings with the Minister of Finance. There are more ways to find waste and other excesses in government. Every stone must be turned to find waste. Public servants out there are willing to talk about it and to tell us but they must be protected.

As Liberals we will continue on our course of creating opportunity for Canadians.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to the member I could not help thinking the Liberal side of the House must have a special fund set aside for psychiatric help. I have never heard so much talk about how they proudly built the programs and now they are equally proud to dismantle them. I just do not know how they can say that.

I would like the member to address several dilemmas that must go through the Liberal mind. I would not want to call them broken promises. How does he reconcile that the budget broke the workforce adjustment directive when a couple of months before they promised they would not break it?

(1755)

How can he justify that when the government came into power it said that it would not sign the GATT without a strengthened article 11(2)(c) and then it signed it anyway? The government was not going to sign the NAFTA but it signed it immediately coming into power. The government promised to eliminate the GST but that has not been possible. The government said that it would reform the pension plan of MPs but it just does not have the guts to do it.

Furthermore, things are coming down the road that Canadians know about. The Prime Minister muses that perhaps a 1 per cent or 2 per cent of GDP drop in health care funding is inevitable. That will amount to \$10 billion or \$15 billion. That is inevitable.

The member proudly said that there were no changes in UI. Yet the minister in charge of that program travelled the country for six months to try to find ways to change it. The member is proud to say that it has not changed. It has to change.

The last question I would like to ask the hon. member is: With respect to the pension plan of MPs, will he opt out or not?

Mr. Proud: Mr. Speaker, to the last question first, my answer is definitely not. I will not opt out. I am not ashamed of the pension plan. We changed the pension plan as we said we would do. We even went further than that. I will defend our pension plan and salary as MPs anywhere in Canada. I am not afraid to do that.

As far as justifying the workforce adjustment directive, the government negotiated with the unions and 15 of the 16 unions agreed to it. It came to a point where it had to be done and we took the attitude that we would do it. We did it and we are going to look after it in the most humane way possible.

We built the social programs and we are not dismantling them. I have said it over and over again. The Prime Minister has said that the costs of health care can be cut. That is what I said in my speech. We have to do things smarter and we will do it. We built the social programs; we will maintain the social programs. The social programs will be as good in 10 years time as they were 10 years ago as long as we form the government.

I have no qualms about any of the questions the hon. member asked. We have lived up to our commitments. Commitments were made and commitments were kept and we will continue to do so.

I have no problem in defending unemployment insurance. Not one change has occurred to the unemployment insurance system as yet. That is what I said. Nothing has changed. Some changes will be made. The minister has travelled the country.

In my speech I was talking about seasonal workers. Seasonal workers are not the problem; it is seasonal work. When we reach the point where such people can work 12 months of the year we will not need unemployment insurance for them. Until that happens, with them in agriculture, fishery and tourism we need to have some kind of compensation for them. I will be the one to make sure, to the best of my ability, that it remains for them.

[Translation]

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in tabling the budget, our Minister of Finance has certainly shown a great deal of courage; it is definitely a first step towards the sound management of public funds.

To have a good understanding of the current economic climate and take effective action, we must, first, identify the economic changes experienced in the last 20 years and, second, have a clear vision of the goals to be achieved and the concrete ways to achieve them.

We are, of course, facing major economic changes. They have brought hardships and restrictions to all our fellow citizens. Their impact on disadvantaged groups is even stronger. Salaries

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have gone down. Jobs are getting scarcer and less stable. Access to social programs is increasingly restricted.

In the next few minutes, I will review the changes and propose goals and ways to reconcile economic and human considerations.

(1800)

Successful reconciliation of these considerations depends on our ability to strike a healthy balance between competition and individual achievement, on the one hand, and sharing and co-operation, on the other hand.

In the last 20 years, our economy has been shaken by three major changes: the global economic slowdown which started in 1973; two major anti-inflationary recessions in 1981 and 1990; and, in the last decade, the economic system's gradual rejection of people with little education.

Before 1973, our average standard of living rose by 40 per cent every decade. All classes of society were reaping the fruits of this growth. Since then, the rate of economic development has barely exceeded 15 per cent per decade. Several groups, including less qualified workers, have even seen their standard of living drop in absolute terms. This long term economic slowdown is common to all industrialized countries.

In the wake of the great depression and the second world war, all countries enjoyed enormous catch-up growth potential based on delayed technological development, cheap natural resources and an agricultural workforce ready to move to the cities. It took us a quarter of a century to use up this potential. Since then, all countries from Finland to Canada and from Italy to Australia have been having a hard time. Nothing is easy any more.

We managed for a while to circumvent the new economic constraints. The declining birthrate, the generalization of female labour, the high prices obtained from the sale of our natural resources until 1981, the debt increase in the 1980s allowed us to constantly defer until later the painful adjustment in our material expectations. The strong decline in consumption during the current recession underlines our belated awareness that money no longer grows on trees. Members of the middle class have finally started to tighten their belts.

But people are very nervous. Economic stagnation has resulted in both an increase in the need for social protection and a narrowing of the tax base financing our social safety net. Governments have managed to partly resolve this contradiction by raising taxes, which fuels the anger of taxpayers, already aroused by the state of the economy. This situation threatens our income security system, which is already starting to erode. Sharing does not come as easily when there is no growth.

Most industrialized countries started off the 1980s with an inflation rate of 12 per cent and were blamed for it. At the instigation of central banks, governments then subjected their economies to two anti-inflationary recessions. In 1981, Canada suffered the most severe recession in the industrialized world and inflation was brought down from 12 per cent to five per cent. Later on, starting in 1988, the Government of Canada and the Bank of Canada undertook to finish the job and force the rate of inflation further down, from five to two per cent. This target was just met in 1992.

(1805)

Once again, Canada stood out because, once again, it put itself through the worst recession in the industrialized world.

These two recessions have led to a massive underutilization of our human and material resources in the past few decades. The resulting loss of income for Quebec is already to the tune of \$100 billion. Obviously, this loss is on top of the general economic slowdown I mentioned earlier.

The \$100 billion swallowed up by the two recessions represents an astronomical and senseless waste. It is cruel, considering the hardship and countless psychological, family and social problems it caused. It is also fundamentally unfair. In addition, this loss of \$100 billion so far is not distributed equally amongst all people. Small businesses and low income earners are being hit absolutely disproportionately. Yet, they are not responsible, in the first place for causing the inflation we are now trying to curb.

Nowhere is growing chronic unemployment more obvious than among workers of all ages who did not finish high school. For the past decade, people in this category have slowly been sinking deeper and deeper. They are offered less and less money for jobs that are fewer and fewer and increasingly unstable; the rate of unemployment is increasingly higher than average. They have started to leave the labour force massively, generally ending up on the CSST or welfare rolls.

One third of Quebecers between the ages of 20 and 64, three times as many as in Germany or Japan, do not have a high school diploma. Barely one third of them have jobs. They are in a desperate situation. Compared to this group, the Gaspesian Peninsula is a real employment paradise. School may get you nowhere, as the saying has it, but it sure seems that ignorance does not get you much further.

Workers with little education were affected by the long term economic slowdown, like everyone else, and by the 1981 and 1990 recessions, which have hit very hard, but they also seem to be gradually pushed aside.

We have in Canada great economists and great minds. In Quebec, we have an economist of nationwide and even worldwide reputation. I have had the pleasure of meeting him on a

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number of occasions and hearing him testify here, before the finance committee. I am referring to Pierre Fortin, from the Université du Québec in Montreal.

Mr. Fortin has shown a great deal of common sense in his approach to the economic situation. He came up with a three-part social and economic program. That is, first, given the vulnerability of people who never graduated from high school on the job market, he said that we need to create jobs as quickly as possible mostly for their benefit, second, to protect what has already been acquired, and third, to undertake a second educational revolution.

I will now comment briefly on these points. It is very clear that large scale job creation will obviously reduce the amounts paid out in unemployment insurance benefits, social assistance and other benefits. It is also very clear that, by creating jobs, the federal government will generate more revenue for deficit reduction.

Mr. Fortin does not suggest that the government increase spending but rather that it exert pressure to maintain our interest rates under or around the five per cent mark or thereabouts, like our American neighbours.

(1810)

If interest rates were at five per cent, many small and medium size businesses would have access to the funds needed to create enough jobs to put all of the unemployed back to work. I think that makes eminent sense.

Secondly, we clearly do not want to be irresponsible and to spark another increase in inflation. On the contrary, job creation and increased profits will hedge against the likelihood of inflation becoming a problem. The danger of inflation flaring up over the next three to four months is very minimal.

Thirdly, we must undertake a second educational revolution. Obviously, people between the ages of 20 and 64 who do not have a high school diploma need vocational training. We are not talking about university diplomas, we are talking about training spread over one or two years. That essentially is my conclusion.

I would like to say to my colleagues that there are some good ideas out there and that it is high time that we in the House of Commons take heed of them.

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre. He made a nice speech, but forgot to mention that the Liberals were in office for a long time and that the deficit started growing back then.

I am somewhat sceptical when I hear that restoring confidence in the economy will result in the money markets lowering interest rates which, in turn, will stimulate job creation. I am from the Gaspé Peninsula and I can tell you that fringe areas need catalysts. Unfortunately, that budget does not include any

job creating initiatives. There is no catalyst to help people improve their lot.

The government's proposed approach, which is to let the private sector act freely, presupposes that it expects the private sector to create jobs for people with low levels of education. However, these jobs will not be well-paid. I would like to know how the regions will be mobilized. All the nice rhetoric heard in this House is fine, but the regions expect positive measures and guidelines. Instead of that, the government is cutting the financial support available through the Federal Office of Regional Development. Where is the support? Instead of providing support, the government is withdrawing it.

Mr. Assad: Mr. Speaker, I will first answer the hon. member's second question. I said, as did Mr. Fortin to the Standing Committee on Finance, that we have to exert pressure to lower interest rates.

Increasing the deficit will not solve the problem: it will only postpone it and make it worse. We have to find a way to lower interest rates, so that small and medium size businesses can get the money they need to expand. Let us not forget that there is a production capacity in our country.

The hon. member mentioned that the deficit started under the Liberals. That is true. However, when the Liberals left in 1984, the deficit stood at \$160 billion, whereas when they came back last year, it had grown to \$460 billion. Between 1984 and 1994, the deficit grew by 250 per cent, in spite of unprecedented levels of revenues.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.15 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 84(6), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Ways and Means 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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 167)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anawak	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Bakopanos	Beaumier
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Bélaïr
Bélangier	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Clancy
Cohen	Collette
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
DeVillers	Dingwall
Discepolo	Dromisky
Duhamel	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Fewchuk
Finlay	Flis
Fontana	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gerrard
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harper (Churchill)
Hickey	Hopkins
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Jordan	Karygiannis
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Maheu
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McTeague	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	Nunziata
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Ringuette—Maltais	Robillard
Rock	Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Shepherd
Simmons	Skoke
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thalheimer	Tobin
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Volpe
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
Young	Zed—142

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NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Asselin	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bachand	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bernier (Gaspé)
Blaikie	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Bélisle	Canuel
Caron	Chatters
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Cummins	Dalphond—Guiral
Debien	de Jong
Deshaies	Duceppe
Dumas	Epp
Fillion	Forseth
Frazier	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gilmour
Godin	Grubel
Guay	Hanger
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoeppner
Jacob	Jennings
Johnston	Kerpan
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Lefebvre	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Marchand
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Meredith	Morrison
Ménard	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Ramsay	Riis
Ringma	Robinson
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Silye	Solberg
Solomon	Speaker
St-Laurent	Strahl
Taylor	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Venne
White (Fraser Valley West)—81	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Barnes	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bouchard
Brien	Chan
Comuzzi	Daviault
Gaffney	Godfrey
Guimond	Harvard
Hubbard	Keyes
Lalonde	Landry
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
MacLaren	McWhinney
Mercier	Nunez
Paré	Patry
Rideout	Robichaud
Rocheleau	Terrana

(1845)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the the motion adopted.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I think you would would find unanimous consent to deal with item No. 25 under Ways and Means Proceedings on today's Order Paper.

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The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.) moved that a Ways and Means motion relating to certain measures announced in the February 1995 budget, laid upon the table on Tuesday, March 14, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion agreed to on division.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

WEST COAST PORTS OPERATIONS ACT, 1995

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.) moved that Bill C-74, an act respecting the supervision of longshoring and related operations at west coast ports, be read the second time and, pursuant to order adopted earlier this day, referred to committee of the whole.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to introduce the West Coast Ports Operations Act, 1995, which provides for the supervision of longshoring and related operations at ports on the west coast of Canada. The labour dispute that led to the tabling of this bill is between the Waterfront Foremen Employers' Association and local 514 of the ship and dock foremen of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union.

The association has a membership of 16 companies that employ members of the union in longshoring operations in British Columbia. The union has about 500 members and represents all unionized foremen employed in freight handling operations in British Columbia. The collective agreement between the parties expired on December 31, 1992, and the labour dispute was caused by the inability of the parties to renew the agreement.

After direct talks between the parties broke off, a conciliator from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service was appointed on August 5, 1993 to help the parties settle their differences. The conciliator met the parties during the period from September 1993 to March 1994, and as a result the parties

resumed negotiations in March. Conciliation sessions started again in April 1994 and went on until August last year. On October 18, 1994, the parties were informed of the appointment of Mark Thompson as conciliation commissioner in this labour dispute.

On February 10, 1995, after a series of meetings which took place over a period of four months, the conciliation commissioner transmitted his report to the parties. The employer indicated that, on the whole, he agreed with what the report contained. The union, however, rejected the report as a basis for a settlement. Following a meeting of both parties on March 10, union members went on strike on March 13. However, they indicated they were willing to allow the loading of grain shipments. The work stoppage occurred after the employer informed the union that it intended to impose the recommendations contained in the conciliation commissioner's report as of March 20, 1995.

(1850)

Following the walk-out by the union members, the employer imposed a lock-out in all ports on the west coast, at 1 a.m. on March 15, thus halting the movement of all goods, including grain.

This report contains specific recommendations forming a solid base for settling these negotiations, but it also sheds light on the problem colouring labour-management relations in the port of Vancouver for years.

In his report, Mr. Thompson indicates that repeated intervention by senior government officials in labour disputes in the port of Vancouver have made the parties less interested in reaching an agreement on their own. The commissioner also points out that since Parliament has not allowed work stoppages in the port of Vancouver to continue for more than a few days, the parties are tempted to hold off any agreement until an act is passed or some other form of intervention taken. Unfortunately, this is also what is happening in the present dispute.

For years, the port of Vancouver has been dealing with disputes involving various occupational groups, including longshoremen, foremen, grain handlers and other workers. And all of us in this House know we have had to intervene. Unfortunately, I see the current situation requiring exactly the same type of measure.

This subject would not have been my choice for my maiden speech in the House of Commons, but I have never backed away from problems, and I am not going to start now. My colleagues on both sides of the House are well aware that grain traffic is moving faster than ever before in the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert. I congratulate the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Transport on developing and implementing changes that have significantly improved the efficiency of the grain transportation network in the west.

Government Orders

In the first half of the current crop year, that is, from August 1994 to January 1995, grain exports through west coast ports increased by 45.6 per cent. Any prolonged work stoppage now could have a disastrous effect on the agricultural economy of the west, at a time when grain elevators are operating at full capacity. Given the intense competition Canadian grain producers face in international markets and the pressing need to maintain Canada's reputation with its major trading partners, it is essential that this bill be passed.

Although I have primarily spoken about the movement of grain in west coast ports, my colleagues know very well that Vancouver is an important international port that receives a wide variety of bulk and containerized cargo, whose transportation depends on the presence of a stable and efficient workforce in the port. The rapid passage of the bill I have tabled is necessary to maintain the viability of this activity.

As I have already said, the parties have already had the benefit in their negotiations of all the assistance possible from impartial third parties, measures which led to the report by the conciliation commissioner, Mr. Thompson.

In his report, the commissioner indicated that "there is a climate of hostility between the parties, at least as far as the Association and the Union are concerned". He even added that "the members of the Association believe that the Union is refusing to adapt to the evolution of economic conditions in the industry, while the Union, for its part, is of the opinion that the employer is attempting to weaken its position in the collective agreement, particularly with respect to job opportunities".

Mr. Thompson summarized the situation as follows: "There is nothing to indicate that the parties wish or are capable of working together creatively to resolve their problems". Even though he has presented a rather sombre picture of negotiations to date, I should add that the conciliation commissioner pointed out that the parties demonstrated excellent co-operation in their dealings with him, and I take this opportunity to congratulate him on his detailed and thorough report on this situation.

(1855)

In his report, the commissioner made specific recommendations on all matters remaining in dispute, and as hon. members can see, I have no hesitation in using these recommendations to establish the dispute settlement mechanism described in the bill before the House today.

Many points on which the parties agreed in the course of the negotiations were directly inspired by the existing collective agreement between the parties for persons employed in longshoring on the west coast. The conciliation commissioner made his recommendations so as to guarantee that the port of Vancouver remains competitive with other ports on the Pacific coast

and with types of transportation elsewhere on the continent. He also avoided any major changes in the structure of the collective agreement which he found was, on the whole, satisfactory.

In his comments, the commissioner indicated that both parties would probably receive the report with mixed feelings but felt that it offered a firm basis for a settlement. It was this conviction which inspired the bill before the House today.

The West Coast Ports Operations Act, 1995, provides for the immediate resumption of supervision of longshoring and related operations at ports on the west coast of Canada and for the appointment of a mediator-arbitrator to resolve matters remaining in dispute between the parties. As soon as this act comes into force, the employers will be required to continue or immediately resume, as the case may be, supervision of longshoring and related operations at all ports; employees will be obliged to continue or immediately resume, as the case may be, their employment when requested to do so. The term of the collective agreement is extended to include the period beginning on January 1, 1993 and ending on the date fixed by the mediator-arbitrator, which may not be earlier than December 31, 1996. The act provides that as soon as he is appointed, the mediator-arbitrator shall endeavour to mediate the matters remaining in dispute and to bring about agreement between the parties on those matters.

If he is unable to bring about agreement on a matter, the mediator-arbitrator will hear the parties on the matter and arbitrate the matter after taking cognizance of the report of the conciliation commissioner. All costs incurred in the appointment of the mediator-arbitrator and the exercise of his duties shall be paid equally by the parties. In addition, a series of fines is provided for, should the parties contravene the provisions of the act.

Finally, this act shall come into force on the expiration of the twelfth hour after the royal sanction, which will allow the parties enough time to bring employees back to work and give sufficient time for the resumption of the employer's operations.

The passing of this act will permit the resolution of the present dispute, but, in my opinion, we must find long term solutions to the problems that have been the source of labour disputes in Canadian ports for years. My colleagues are aware that an in-depth review of Part I of the Canada Labour Code is currently underway under the authority of the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Human Resources Development.

However, in the case of the present labour dispute, this is the second time in a little over a year that Parliament has had to intervene in a dispute involving the west coast ports. This would seem to indicate that there is a basic problem in the structure of collective bargaining in B.C. ports.

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(1900)

For this reason, I intend to strike a board of inquiry on labour relations, whose mandate will be to report on the ways that parties involved in handling cargo in ports can avoid closing down ports in the future when they are in the process of resolving their labour conflicts, because closure compromises our competitiveness on the world market and our reputation as a trustworthy exporter, and forces Parliament to take rapid action.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, we must avoid a repeat of this situation in the years to come. And I have told my colleagues that I am personally committed to finding a long-term solution to these labour-relation problems which have become endemic to west coast ports. That is why I would like to ask the members of this House to support the bill before us—to ensure that we will be able to move goods destined for export markets through west coast ports in the near future as we did before.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition agreed to today's emergency debate on this labour relations problem on the West Coast.

However, we still have questions and—in light of the government's proposals—we will oppose the bill as drafted. We will propose a number of amendments in committee of the whole and if these amendments are approved by the government, we would then vote in favour of the bill.

We have questions because this bill comes after a general strike was called at midnight last night. So a special bill was introduced less than 15 hours after the strike started. Logically, this amounts to calling into question the right to strike. Let us say so clearly. How can we talk about the right to strike when special back-to-work legislation is introduced after 15 hours? In fact, the potential right to strike cannot be exercised if a special bill is tabled less than 24 hours after a strike is called.

Last year, it was the same problem at the same port but with a different group, the dockers. We then agreed that the thing to do was to launch a debate on the issue right away and put in place settlement mechanisms. In this regard, I commend the industrial inquiry commission initiative. However, last year, the Minister of Human Resources Development told us that, in actual fact, arbitration was futile, that we had to move on to the last offer mechanism—the last union proposal and the last offer from management.

This year, we are rediscovering the advantages of arbitration. I think that this shows a kind of inconsistency. Let me say clearly that I favour neither approach. Nonetheless, I fail to see how you could be against arbitration last year and, this year,

consider arbitration to resolve the dispute at the very same place, the same port, with more or less the same players.

It seems to me that inasmuch as the right to strike is recognized, it is important to give both sides time to bargain not only before action is taken, but also while pressure is being exercised. Provided of course that negotiations can take place in acceptable and modern conditions.

This brings me to the whole issue of the anti-strikebreaking legislation. Such an act exists in Quebec. In fact, it was enacted as early as 1977 if I am not mistaken. Ontario and British Columbia have since followed suit. This means that 70 per cent of the people of Canada are governed by such legislation.

We are finding out that strikes tend to last much longer in areas under federal authority than in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, where anti-strikebreaking legislation is in force. I remember mail strikes. These were extremely violent strikes, but strikes are becoming much less violent in provinces with anti-strikebreaking legislation, and I think that the hon. minister is aware of this.

In Quebec, the CPQ has made no demands denouncing the anti-strikebreaking legislation in recent years.

(1905)

It used to at first, but I think that based on the results, the benefits of such legislation, the council realized that it made for better labour relations, as negotiations were more meaningful in a way, disputes were fewer and more easily resolved, all because modern legislation was in place.

When I hear that action is urgently required, I agree. But, as I said earlier, we plan to move amendments in committee of the whole. I wonder why it is not considered equally urgent to act to put an end to the strike at Ogilvie Flour in Montreal. That strike has not been going on for 15 hours, but nearly a year. One year, and no anti-scab legislation. Yet, if there is a company which does not care about its workers, it is Ogilvie.

Let me give you some examples. The negotiations were conducted in English. The employer refused to negotiate in French in Quebec. This is illegal under the Quebec Labour Code. Indeed, since law 101 and the various related provisions were passed, negotiations must be conducted in French.

The employer, AND, a company whose board of directors includes former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, refused to negotiate in French. How nice. So, no anti-scab legislation in the case of Ogilvie. Yet, it seems to me that there is some urgency to that conflict which, as I said, did not start 15 hours

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ago, but several months back. There is an urgency when profits or the economy are affected—and I agree that there are workers and farmers who are hurt by that strike—and we have to take action. However, when it comes to the economic well-being of workers, their families, their salaries and their health, there is no urgency. This looks like a double standard to me.

You may remember that the Bloc Québécois tabled an anti-scab bill, back in 1990. The Liberals, who were then sitting on this side, supported that legislation. The Minister of Human Resources Development made passionate speeches, saying that the time had come to pass such legislation. Nothing has been done since. Yet, the government could have taken action, especially in light of the fact that the strike at Ogilvie's has been going on for more than 15 hours. But there is no urgency in that case.

However, —and I know that the federal Department of Labour is considering anti-scab legislation—documents from that department suggest that a majority vote of 60 per cent should apply. For the sake of democracy—and I know that a majority vote of 50 per cent plus one in the Quebec referendum is being challenged, but this is becoming a habit with the Liberals—when a strike vote is conducted under a collective agreement, it should also be subject to the 60 per cent rule. The same bill includes other provisions—even though we were told today that these were only ideas—but I wonder why these ideas are included in a departmental discussion paper.

That document was circulated so as to inform and consult both the employers and the unions, and that is fine. It obviously circulated, because we had it. So, in this document, the door is opened to having replacement workers who are not members of the bargaining unit on strike, but who could belong to a bargaining unit other than the one on strike but with the same company, or who could be non-unionized workers.

Seen one way, this is not anti-strikebreaker legislation, but rather legislation that, in fact, allows for strikebreakers. This is very different from legislation in Ontario, British Columbia or Quebec, which stipulates clearly that only managers, who were managers before the dispute began, may work. So, I hope that if indeed there is, at some point, an anti-strikebreaker bill here, that this notion of strikebreakers would not be made legal because management would be using people from the same company, but from another unit, or non-unionized workers as replacements for unionized workers.

This is nothing more than a legal façade to avoid facing reality. As the minister just told us she was ready to face reality, I imagine she will discover the subterfuge of certain of her deputy ministers, who are circulating documents, which do not in any way, shape or form, resolve the issue of the presence of strikebreakers. I think that anti-strikebreaking legislation would allow us to humanize our labour relations, a far cry from what is happening in certain American states, for example, where shots are fired during disputes, and also far removed from what once happened in Quebec and in other Canadian provinces.

(1910)

I remember the Robin Hood strike, in 1977, or the postal workers' strike, where there was a lot of violence. At that time, scabs were even paid, with their hotel rooms and all, with federal funds. It was Canada Post that was paying their salaries, their food, and perhaps other things, I am not sure, but at least these things. And the Liberals, who were then in the official opposition, were denouncing that.

Since we are reviewing the Labour Code, I would also like to point this out. We are currently talking about a particular dispute, but it is part of a much greater issue. Hence the need to hold a commission of inquiry on labour relations practices in the port of Vancouver. But I know that this issue is only a part of a broader one which opens the door to a review of the code.

So, I hope that this will also open the door to giving Quebec female workers the same rights, whether they are under the federal code or the provincial code. I am alluding here to the preventative withdrawal of pregnant women. If you are a woman working in the communication or banking sector, depending on the federal system under which you work, you do not have the right to preventative withdrawal under the same conditions as a woman working in Quebec. When there were only eight members of the Bloc Québécois in the House, we had proposed such an amendment and the Liberals had supported it. So, I hope that they will remember that when they review the code in its entirety.

When we talk about this strike in Vancouver, we must also consider that there are other strikes going on. There is one in the railways and also one in the port of Montreal. It would be interesting if, before we resort to a special legislation to force employees back to work in the port of Montreal, we would choose the mediation process and name a mediator who would bring parties together, since they are already close to a settlement. They are negotiating in Montreal, not any more seriously than in Vancouver, but I think the chances of settling the dispute are better there than in Vancouver.

I have participated in long negotiations and I know that it is often better not to go into a useless mediation right at the beginning of a conflict and do nothing afterwards. But when you are close to a settlement, when you can see that only a few elements still need to be ironed out, mediation can be a very important tool. I hope that, in the case of the port of Montreal, the minister will choose this solution and not a special legislation.

In conclusion, I would like to announce that we will be voting against this bill at the second reading stage, because we feel it does not really allow for negotiations between the parties. I personally think that we are dealing with this situation very seriously, all the more so since we are working with the commission, and therefore I think we should be able to go into mediation without arbitration. First we should proceed only through mediation and let the parties negotiate and the mediator

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should not become an arbitrator. How can the parties trust anyone who will make suggestions if they know that, in case of disagreement between them, that person will turn the suggestions into obligations?

I think that instead of setting conditions, the mediator could report to the minister, who could in turn report to the Human Resources Committee—since there is no Labour Committee yet, but we will remedy that—or even to this House in order to discuss the issue with all members and parties concerned, rather than immediately determining the conditions after fifteen hours of strike, because that will be the case.

For those who are familiar with labour relations, it is the same thing as for tripartite tribunals. One union representative, one employer representative and a so-called neutral arbitrator. As we know, the decision is always two against one. The arbitrator takes sides. Expenses can be reduced by naming only one instead of three since the result of the vote is already known, even if we do not know at the outset which party the arbitrator will support.

Therefore, the Official opposition will vote against the bill at second reading and we will introduce a series of amendments in committee of the Whole House, hoping that the government will accept them and allow this House, as unanimously as possible, to encourage labour relations that are as fair, acceptable, normal and modern as possible in the port of Vancouver.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The agreement was that there could be twenty minutes for comments. Is there unanimous consent?

We now resume the debate with the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

(1915)

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been a member of this House for 15 or 16 months now, and I would not have thought that we would have to pass two special pieces of legislation for the same port in such a short time. In little over a year, this is the second time we see that there is something wrong in this work environment.

If I remember correctly, last year the minister in charge, the Minister of Human Resources Development, possibly because of the scope of his duties or maybe because known facts were not taken into account, did not follow up on that special legislation and, now, we have to pass back to work legislation for another group of workers.

Not only did we not learn anything from last year's experience, but we do not seem to be learning very much from the

present situation either. I was watching the news on TV, tonight, and I noticed that the transportation sector is in turmoil over labour relations. There are potential labour disputes in the railway industry and in ports all over Canada. The message this legislation sends will be important for future negotiations in these sectors.

If the parties are not convinced of the importance of agreeing among themselves, if we give them the habit of waiting for a third party to settle their problems for them, we create the type of work relations which now prevail in the port of Vancouver. I think that an imposed solution is unacceptable and never brings about suitable results. Therefore, it is important that we send the message to other economic sectors that parties must pursue negotiations as far as the process allows.

The official opposition felt that a debate on this legislation was urgently needed, but I think citizens have a right to know that this urgency is not the result of this one incident. It is the result of the government's lack of foresight, as it has known about the problems at the port of Vancouver for some time now.

The government was aware of problems in this area but did nothing about them. And now, it steps in and says to the people involved, as if they were children, that because they could not work things out among themselves that it is going to have to do it for them. This only perpetuates the idea that they do not have to negotiate with each other to find durable and constructive ways to improve their working climate.

The minister's announcement that an investigating committee will be struck is interesting, but we must ensure that the parties will participate and will find solutions. I think that even if we agree that a mediator must be named and that people must be legislated back to work, the current legislation should allow negotiations to carry on and should not impose an outside solution which, at any rate, will never satisfy anyone.

I think that we will know we have succeeded in transforming labour relations at the port of Vancouver when a collective agreement is signed without third-party intervention and when all of the parties concerned have the impression that they signed an agreement which is to their advantage.

When both parties are ready to be reasonable, they will realize that working conditions are better during a period covered by a collective agreement when it is signed and accepted by all parties involved. This is how we can break the vicious cycle that labour relations at the port of Vancouver have been stuck in.

Hopefully, this will be the last time during this Parliament that we will have to bring in special legislation, because it is always a sign that the system is ineffective.

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(1920)

[English]

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Wild Rose.

For 11 days in 1994 shipping through the B.C. ports was paralyzed. The estimates of the losses to the Canadian grain industry ran in the hundreds of millions of dollars. We are talking about grain in that instance. There were also manufacturers who lost out in the strike in 1994.

What did that strike cost them? It is difficult to measure that. Even more difficult to measure is the damage to our reputation as a reliable shipper. These were not the only losers in that strike. I believe everybody in a strike or a lockout situation is ultimately a loser. The workers on strike will probably never be able to make up for the wages they lost during that time.

It is absolutely ludicrous that such losses should be allowed to occur over and over again. In doing a little research, I came upon some bills that were very similar in nature. Some of them would think we could dust off and they would be suitable for today.

They are dated 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 right up to 1994 when we had to consider just such legislation in order to get the port of Vancouver working again. Déjà vu, here we are again. Sixty per cent of Canada's grain exports have been held in limbo. When one ties up that system, it has a domino effect. It backs up right to the farmers' gates. Nobody in a strike situation is in a winning position.

My friend from Rivière-du-Loup pointed out that perhaps because this has happened so often, the collective bargaining process is failing. I could not agree with him more.

Our minister has assured the House she would like to put something in place to ensure this does not happen again. I hear my friend from Rivière-du-Loup saying the same thing. He would like to make sure we do not have to go through this painful exercise, that perhaps when labour and management realize it is only a matter of time before the government steps in they maybe are not bargaining as closely and as honestly as they should.

I would be delighted if the Minister of Labour would look closely at what the Reform Party has put forward. My colleague from Lethbridge has put forward Bill C-262, a final arbitration bill, which we hope would never have to be used. Just because it is there does not mean that it is something we are going to beat up either management or union with and make them settle.

It is intended so both management and union know that if they cannot come to an agreement, they had better bargain hard and fast or this could be implemented.

We also have to look at what kind of a situation we would be in if the strike and lockout situation at the port of Vancouver were settled tomorrow. That contract is only good until December 31, 1995.

Then negotiations will start all over again. Perhaps next year at this time we would be back in the House considering back to work legislation again. Today the Minister of Labour announced the establishment of a commission to study labour relations.

(1925)

I invite the Minister of Labour to read through our bill, to study our bill and to see the merit in it. If the minister is philosophically opposed to supporting a motion simply because it came from the Reform Party, then fine. Defeat that motion, but bring in another one that is very similar and will accomplish the same thing.

In speaking to the port authority today in Vancouver, it was estimated that in the container business alone, some 7,000 containers at about an average income of \$1000 per container for handling has been lost in the little time this strike has been going on. This adds up to \$7 million in lost revenue, not to say anything about the damage done to our reputation as a reliable supplier and what it has done to labour management relations.

A chain reaction takes place whenever we have a situation of this type. We are in a situation in which some 405 people have managed to bring the entire west coast shipping to a halt. It completely grinds to a stop from the port right back to the gate of the farmers and the manufacturers.

Is it not odd that these people at the port have never been designated as an essential service until they go on strike or are locked out? Suddenly they are essential. The fact we have to bring in legislation to put them back to work makes them essential in my books.

Bill C-262 would not only be a very useful tool to labour and management, it would not only apply to the port of Vancouver, but also to the port of Montreal where we have a similar situation taking place.

The port of Montreal is a very important east coast facility and we should be considering some intervention in that area. We have been reading in the paper where the port of authority there expects the government to take action, thereby strengthening our case that Bill C-262 would be required reading for the Minister of Labour.

We are not trying to point the finger at anyone in particular. It takes two organizations to come up with a conflict and I am sure there are two sides to this conflict.

Our final offer arbitration bill would be a very useful tool, one probably welcomed by both business and labour and I encourage the House to support that bill.

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The Reform Party will be supporting back to work legislation.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fine words. I am pleased to support this move tonight.

A number of things have crossed my mind since this affair began. I cannot help but remember the first two or three things that came to my understanding. We had some young families in Wild Rose that work for small businesses, exporters, mainly hay processors, that were laid off a week ago because the signs were coming that things were going wrong.

These people were the ones making \$9 or \$10 an hour. They do not make car payments and they do not make house payments because they cannot do that on \$9 or \$10 an hour. They have young children and are trying to survive. It is a shame that hundreds of these individuals are trying to get into the work market, trying to make a go of things, trying to stay off of welfare and doing all the right things. Suddenly there is a move about somewhere and they are being held hostage. They cannot go to work. There is nothing to do because a few people somewhere are stopping the work or not allowing the procedure to take place.

(1930)

There is a discouraging part about it. I stood in this place less than 24 hours ago and asked if the House would consider giving unanimous consent to debate legislation requiring the workers to go back to work. The disappointing part was that right away we heard "no, no way" from the other side of the House. Good grief, here we are one night later doing exactly what I asked to do last night.

What was so unusual about getting going last night? Is it a bad deal that it happened to come from this side of the House? Did we have to wait another few hours to make sure it came from that side of the House?

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): It has to be a Liberal idea.

Mr. Thompson: It has to be a Liberal idea; it is no good otherwise. That is a shame. What did we hear? We heard: "No way", but here we are tonight debating something we all agree on.

There was noise from the opposition as soon as I mentioned that we should debate legislation to get these people back to work. What else did I hear? I heard irresponsible from Bloc members. I will tell them what is irresponsible. It is irresponsible when 295 individuals sitting in the House continually let these kinds of things go on year after year.

I admire and commend the Minister of Labour for her move. She said tonight that we must get something in place to make certain these kinds of things do not happen again. It is a good

idea, even if it did come from the Liberal side. It is too bad they did not feel the same way last night. We could have got going a lot sooner, or maybe last year instead of letting it go for 12 days. We are just asking people to wake up.

A small business in my riding, Transfeeder, worked very hard this year to re-establish the business it lost last year. It does not employ a great number of people but it is doing its very best to help. It is part of a big picture. Last year it lost \$500,000 in sales during a 12-day strike. Since then it has tried to calm the fears of Japanese businessmen and managed to get new orders.

It is finally getting back on its feet and suddenly everything is in jeopardy because of a stoppage. This small business is really striving. Japanese businessmen are asking why Canada is allowing the stoppage to happen. They do not understand.

Mr. Blair Wright, owner of that business in Olds, Alberta, could only answer like all Canadians by saying that he did not know. Is it not a shame when we in the House of Commons receive calls from our constituents saying that they have to lay people off, things are falling apart and perishable goods are perishing? They are being held hostage. Farmers cannot move their grain. Everything is looking grim. Yet we in the House hear nothing more than silly comments like irresponsible or no way when we try to do something about it.

It is time we woke up, started to get more serious and change our attitudes in this place. Perhaps that would inspire some attitudes all over the country that might make a difference and keep the economy going the way we want to see it go.

Unfortunately if we did not do something all Mr. Wright's work would be in vain. All he has done for a year to try to get going would be in vain. He worries about his staff. Most of them are young families trying to get a start somewhere. Most of them earn a little better than minimum wage. We do not even know what that is like any more, we are so accustomed to our big salaries.

(1935)

An hon. member: And pensions.

Mr. Thompson: And pensions. We have to start thinking a bit more about the little guys who are trying to get on their feet. When times are tough and we get things rolling right, let us remember that we are trying to provide services and goods that are much needed throughout the world.

In case anyone has forgotten, the most important industry in the world is agriculture. We better not ever forget that. We have to keep our food supplies going where they are needed, keep people fed when we have the opportunity to do so, keep the jobs rolling and keep giving opportunities to young people who are saying that all they want is a chance to prove themselves. They are hard workers. They do not want welfare. They do not want

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unemployment insurance. However we let these kinds of things go on year after year.

Bless the minister for coming up with the idea to put through some legislation that will put an end to this situation at last. Let us hope it is truly meant and let us hope that irresponsible opposition parties will fall into line and support logical legislation of this nature.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to indicate the opposition of the New Democratic Party to this back to work legislation. I suppose it will come as no surprise to those who are familiar with the stance that the NDP has taken in the past on back to work legislation.

I was in the House on a number of occasions when we dealt with some of the back to work legislation members referred to earlier tonight. Unfortunately, I say to the member for Wild Rose, I have heard other ministers of labour say that they had to do something about bringing forward a system to ensure that they would not have to do this as often as they do.

I have two things to say in that regard. I hope this time the government will try to bring in such a system. However we ought not to assume the system it brings forward is one we will automatically agree with. We may have problems with it but certainly the government ought to make an effort in that regard.

It was interesting to listen to some of the remarks members of the Bloc Quebecois, the official opposition, made on this matter. Earlier they had an opportunity in the House to delay the legislation and they did not use it. When the government invoked the standing order that permitted it to proceed without unanimous consent, if 10 Bloc Quebecois members had risen at the appropriate time to object we would not be dealing with the legislation tonight. There seems to be a bit of a gap between rhetoric and reality when it comes to the attitude of the official opposition in this regard.

With respect to the government and its sense of urgency which it did not display yesterday but which it has in abundance today, its sense of urgency is related to the movement of grain and the importance of agriculture. We all know how the argument goes.

I wonder why the government always refuses to take seriously and hold up to public attention that in many of these cases, as was the case yesterday and today before the lockout, the workers were willing to continue moving grain. I know this does not help other shippers but grain is often held up as the reason for the urgency.

In these situations I have seen workers and unions repeatedly offer to keep moving grain. It is the companies, the employers, that will not tolerate the situation because they want the government to step in. They rely on it. They know if grain were to keep moving the political pressure for government intervention would disappear. Therefore they lock out the employees to make

sure the grain cannot keep moving to create the appropriate political scenario so the government then has in some sense a false sense of urgency. If the government really had a sense of urgency about moving grain, it would respond to the offer of the employees in the situation and make sure it was accepted by the company. But the government never does that. It never ever does that. That is something I wanted to put on record.

(1940)

When I last checked about an hour ago bargaining was continuing between the union and management. It would certainly be ironic if by the time we finished tonight they had an agreement. Let us hope so. It is always better if something can be negotiated rather than brought to a conclusion by legislation.

Again going back to the extent to which the government often bases its arguments about its concern about moving grain—and I know my Reform colleagues will not agree with me—this is the same government that announced in the budget the end of the Crow benefit. In the judgment of many, and not just the New Democratic Party, that had an extremely deleterious effect on western Canadian farmers.

We are supposed to believe the crocodile tears that are being offered on the other side for western Canadian farmers when only a couple of weeks ago, in their budget of February 27, the Liberals completed the job that they started in 1983 in the House when they were in government. It was the Liberal government of that day, I would remind western Canadian farmers who might be listening, that began the demise of the Crow rate.

I was here then and part of that great parliamentary battle. That was before the Tory government changed all the rules so that opposition could not have great parliamentary battles any more. We cannot delay things. We cannot allow time for public opinion to develop. We cannot do all the things opposition parties used to be able to do to give public opinion time to mobilize on an issue. It does take time.

It was the Liberals who started doing the job on the Crow rate then and they are finishing it now by getting rid of the Crow benefit. I do not swallow it when I hear Liberal cabinet ministers or Liberal members or anybody else getting up and giving me the old sob story about western Canadian grain farmers. From our point of view we believe the Liberals are doing far more harm to the agricultural community in western Canada by virtue of the policies announced in their budget than a strike on the west coast could ever do.

I would like to pick up on something the Bloc Quebecois mentioned, that is the need for anti-scab legislation in the federal jurisdiction. There is a campaign on now. I am sure the minister, even though she is new in office, will have inherited a rather large file from her predecessor of letters from all across the country, from locals, regional and provincial federations of

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labour and other labour leaders calling for anti-scab legislation in the federal arena.

I would certainly like to add my voice as NDP labour critic to the call for that kind of legislation. I say that in an uncritical way. It may be that the government will bring forward a form of anti-scab legislation that will be unacceptable and will only, as the member said earlier, legalize a form of scab labour by sanctifying the movement of employees in a way that amounts to the same thing. We will wait to see exactly what the minister has in mind.

We know that in those provinces where genuine anti-scab legislation has been brought forward there is a lot less labour-management strife. Management has to bargain. It is not that all management bargains in bad faith, but there are rotten apples. Sometimes they bargain in the knowledge that they can put people out on strike and hire scab labour. When that kind of legislation is in place they cannot do that and they have to bargain in good faith. I hope we will see very soon from the government legislation in that regard.

In my riding a strike has been ongoing for two and a half years. I see the same guys walking back and forth in front of the Northern Blower plant in my riding. I believe this is their third winter. They are dealing with a company that has absentee ownership that does not care. It will not bargain. It has scab labour in there. These guys have been in this situation for a long time. If we had that kind of legislation in the provincial domain in Manitoba they would not be in that kind of situation. It is wrong for that to happen to people. I hope that we will see anti-scab legislation in those provinces which do not now have it and at the federal level.

(1945)

Just the other day I went to the shopping centre in my riding. A fellow stopped me as I came out. The projectionists at Famous Players theatres are on strike. They are being asked by a company that I understand is making good profits to take a 60 per cent cut in wages.

What is going on when companies can ask people to take this kind of beating in their standard of living, particularly when those companies are making money? The company has brought in other people to run the projectors. If it was not able to do that it would have to bargain more seriously with its workers and would not be able to demand these kinds of concessions from them.

I have mentioned the situation of the lockout when it comes to the west coast. We have a similar thing happening at CP Rail right now. The brotherhood of maintenance workers decided to have a series of rotating or geographically isolated strikes, not to shut down the whole system, but to demonstrate anger at the situation without endangering the economy as a whole. What did

the company do? The company locked the workers out. The company tries to create a crisis.

Obviously we do not have the crisis yet that the company wants. I am sure it would like to see back to work legislation but I would try to counsel in the same vein as others counselled the minister yesterday. Why not try to do something now about the situation facing us with respect to the railways rather than waiting until the situation develops further?

I am not talking about back to work legislation. I am talking about bringing the parties together and knocking some sense into the railways. They cannot expect railway workers to give up the kind of employment security benefits they negotiated. The workers gave up things for that security at the bargaining table years ago.

The railways cannot have it both ways. They cannot have asked employees in the past to give up certain benefits in order to get employment security and then at some point down the road say: "Do you know that employment security we gave you in return for all those things, well, we want it back. However we are not interested in giving back to you any of the things that you gave us in order to receive employment security".

I have a final comment. These debates always illustrate the kind of philosophical gap that exists between how we interpret the actions of working people and how we interpret the actions of people with money.

I heard the member for Wild Rose talk about the young business couple in his riding being held hostage by, in this case I presume, the longshoremen. I heard somebody else talk about the fact that a small number of people can hold up the whole country in this way. I understand that argument.

Why do we not have the same sense of offence when a small number of money speculators can hold the whole country hostage? Why do we not take the same offence at the small number of currency traders, the global casino operators? Why do we not take the same offence when they say: "I am not getting a high enough interest rate out of you, Canada, so I am going to undermine your economy".

Why is their economic freedom and their self-interested economic judgment to be respected and appeased? Why do we listen for instance to members of the Reform Party get up in the House even today and say: "We have to do what these money markets want us to do". Why is their economic self-interest sacred and yet the economic self-interest of longshoremen is held in a different category, if not in contempt?

(1950)

I say not just to the Reformers because I have seen this happen long before they arrived here but we make this distinction. When working people say: "I will withdraw my labour because I

am not satisfied with the return I am getting on it," we say: "Don't be so unreasonable. Think of the entire economy. Think of the shippers, think of the small businessmen, think of the people you are hurting".

However, when a money speculator or a currency trader or an investor says: "I withdraw my investment. I withdraw my money from this situation because I am not happy with what I am getting," we say: "That is the way the world works, you had better get used to it". This is a double standard that ought to be exposed.

We must treat both arguments for economic self-interest equally. I would be quite prepared to live in a world where unions, like everyone else, were made accountable to the common good. But I am not prepared to live in a world where unions get the argument that they have to take everyone else's welfare into account while money speculators, investors and everyone else can just do whatever in hell they like and that is called reality. No way.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, can I ask your advice? How much longer are we debating?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Until 8.07 p.m. We have 80 minutes debate allocated. We have 17 minutes until 8.07.

Mr. Peterson: I am very pleased to be able to say a few words tonight because I believe we are going through a period of incredible transition in our country. We have seen the government having to do things that five years ago we never would have dreamed would have been necessary when we brought down the budget.

Canadians realize that there is no longer that pot of gold out there or that our future is assured or guaranteed. People are uneasy because they know we are facing change. They also know that in Canada we have assets unparalleled in any other country in the world: natural resources and human resources to actually make the transition from a resource based economy to an economy dependent on human skills competing in the global economy.

We can do this but it is going to require a lot of changed attitudes. I do not believe that in the future the concept of management on the one side; labour, be they unionized or not, on the other side, be it government or the public, are going to necessarily be the stakeholders in the way they have in the past.

We have introduced in our country and throughout the western world, for very good reasons, the concept of collective bargaining, the concept that workers have the right to negotiate freely for their conditions and for their terms of employment. Management has the right to lock out workers if they do not accept the union offer. However, more and more we are going to have to realize that workers are citizens of the country, that manage-

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ments are citizens of the country and that all of us have a stake in finding new ways to deal with labour disputes.

Can we afford to go back to the era of 10 years ago when we had the worst labour-management record of any of the industrialized countries? We were doing it to ourselves. Of course we cannot because we are now competing in a global economy where other nations have learned to resolve their labour disputes in a civilized, non-confrontational, non self-inflicting damage manner. Anytime there is a strike or a lockout it is an admission of failure in the collective bargaining process. Let us recognize that.

(1955)

I am glad in the present circumstances that we let this thing go as long as we possibly could to see if a collective agreement could be arrived at by a negotiated solution. This is always best, rather than imposing conditions which may not be acceptable to either side.

We had to act however. The member for Wild Rose puts it very forcefully. They went on strike this morning. That is why, with the consent of all members, we are sitting tonight to pass that legislation. Maybe some members, like the member for Winnipeg Transcona, do not necessarily agree with this. I understand some of his concerns for the working person. However we have to recognize that the moment we start using lockouts and strikes, we are denying our competitive ability vis-à-vis all of our neighbours in the global economy. How irrational can we be to allow these things to take place?

Legislation preventing strikes in every circumstance is obviously not the solution. As people with a duty of public leadership in Parliament perhaps we have to work more closely with labour and management to see if we can settle these strikes before they become self-defeating for all of us. Maybe we are going to have to find ways to say: "You just cannot strike in certain circumstances. You cannot lock out in certain circumstances because it is against the national interest".

Maybe we can look at new solutions such as final offer arbitration.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peterson: Maybe these are some of the approaches we can go into. However, we know the risk is always there if management and labour in a dispute know that government will step in and settle that dispute by legislation. Then they will not negotiate in good faith.

Looking ahead, the solutions are not always that obvious to us. If they were, we would have found them a long time ago. No one in the House believes that strikes and lockouts are the solution. But I do believe that if we keep stressing that we are now in this together, it is not a question of adversaries and stakeholders fighting it out. We are all in the same boat. If we are

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fighting one another, we are drilling a hole in the bottom of our own boat. This has to be the attitude we bring to our future as management, as labour, as citizens and as government.

With this approach we are going to be able to overcome a lot of the animosities of the past. In doing this, we will have to ensure that we do not allow the injustices to creep in which gave rise during the twenties and the dirty thirties to organized labour that had to strike. We are going to have to make sure that we do not have the rapacious management of the twenties and the thirties that was capable of dictating not only wages and hours, but conditions that were unsanitary, unhealthy and such things. That is not what we are asking for. We are enlightened.

We know that a happy workforce is a productive workforce, is a competitive workforce. We know that a management team that works with labour and shares their problems, that brings them to the table, that opens the books to them, that says: "We have a big problem, how do we fix it together," is the type of enlightened management that avoids problems and brings about the new routes to productivity being employed by many of our competitors around the globe.

Let us not rejoice tonight in the fact that we have had to legislate an end to this work stoppage. Let us recognize that what has happened is a failure for every one of us. It is a failure for everyone in this House who did not use his or her collective strength and ability to say to labour and management, is there not a better way. It is a failure based on the way we have done things in the past. We have done them better recently, but it is only 10 years ago that we had the worst record for lost days because of work stoppages, strikes and lockouts.

(2000)

Let us say we have done what we have had to do. It was necessary in the public good. Let us say, can we not use this as an occasion to find a better way for the future.

[*Translation*]

Recognizing the role played by workers, unions, companies, and Canadians in general, we must recognize that the measures taken today are not remarkable and that their sole purpose is to protect exports, harbours, and farmers, and to provide essential services. But, from now on, let us recognize that we must find more efficient and more realistic alternatives to ensure peace on the labour front, and co-operation between unions and management, in order for Canada to become stronger, more competitive and more prosperous.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

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

(*Division No. 168*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Adams
Alcock	Allmand
Anderson	Arseneault
Assad	Assadourian
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Beaumier	Bellemare
Benoit	Bertrand
Bethel	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Bélair	Bélanger
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chatters
Clancy	Cohen
Collenette	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
Cummins	DeVillers
Discepola	Dromisky
Duhamel	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Epp
Fewchuk	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Forseth	Frazer
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gerrard	Gilmour
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Hanger	Harb
Harper (Calgary West)	Harper (Churchill)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Harris
Hayes	Hermanson
Hickey	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Hopkins	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Jennings
Johnston	Kerpan
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lincoln
Loney	MacAulay
MacDonald	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
Massé	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McTeague	Miffiin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Morrison	Murphy

Government Orders

Murray
O'Brien
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Ramsay
Regan
Ringma
Robillard
Schmidt
Silye
Skoke
Speaker
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo
Thalheimer
Tobin
Ur
Volpe
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Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Payne
Peters
Phinney
Proud
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette—Maltais
Rock
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Simmons
Solberg
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson
Torsney
Valeri
Walker
Wells
White (Fraser Valley West)

NAYS

Members

Asselin
Bachand
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bélisle
Caron
Crête
Debien
Deshaies
Dumas
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Jacob
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Shefford)
Marchand
Picard (Drummond)
St-Laurent

Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellehumeur
Blaikie
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond—Guiral
de Jong
Duceppe
Fillion
Gauthier (Roberval)
Guay
Laurin
Lebel
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PAIRED MEMBERS

Barnes
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien
Comuzzi
Gaffney
Guimond
Hubbard
Lalonde
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacLaren
Mercier
Paré
Rideout
Rocheleau

Bergeron
Bouchard
Chan
Daviault
Godfrey
Harvard
Keyes
Landry
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
McWhinney
Nunez
Patry
Robichaud
Terrana

(2025)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went in committee thereon, Mr. Kilgour in the chair.)

[*English*]

The Chairman: Order. House in committee of the whole on Bill C-74, an act respecting the supervision of longshoring and related operations at west coast ports.

[*Translation*]

The parliamentary secretary to the Leader of the government in the House has the floor regarding clause 2.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, some discussions took place between the different parties in this House.

[*English*]

Mr. Chairman, I think you will find there is unanimous consent if such is required, but you will find there is general consent in the committee to have the amendments put by members of the opposition. I do not believe there are any government amendments to the bill, although there may be some, as the hon. member for Calgary Southwest is keen on saying.

The opposition may wish to move amendments and there would be a disposition to allow all of those amendments to be put, notwithstanding which clause they may be on. Then the discussion could range over all of the clauses and all of the amendments while being nominally on clause 2.

At the end of the discussion I think you would find a disposition to put the question in order on all of the clauses, the amendments appropriately placed for each clause, the title and the preamble, or whatever there may be to put questions on at the end of the bill. I would invite the Chairman to do that if that is satisfactory. I think you will find general consent.

[*Translation*]

The Chairman: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chairman: We received 11 amending clauses and I believe all of them are in order.

The chief opposition whip has the floor regarding clause 2.

On Clause 2

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Chairman, I will table a series of eight amendments supported by the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, and I will read each of them.

The first amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 2, be amended by deleting, in lines 18 and 19, on page 1, the word "arbitrator".

The second amendment reads:

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That Bill C-74, in Clause 6, be amended by deleting, in line 7, on page 3, the word "mediator-arbitrator" and replacing it with the word "parties".

The third amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 8, be amended by deleting, in lines 30, 36 and 37, on page 3, the word "arbitrator".

The fourth amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 8(2)(b), be amended by deleting, in lines 11 and 12, on page 4, the words "and render a decision in respect thereof" and replacing them with the words "and report to the minister".

The fifth amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 8, on page 4, be amended by deleting paragraph (2)(c), paragraph (2)(d), paragraph (3)(b) and paragraph (4) and by deleting, in line 18, the word "arbitrator".

The sixth amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 9, on page 4, be amended by deleting the word "arbitrator", in line 34, and by deleting all the words following the word "mediation", in lines 40 to 45.

The seventh amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 10, on page 5, be amended by deleting the word "arbitrator", in lines 3 and 4.

The eighth amendment reads:

That Bill C-74, in Clause 11, on page 5, be amended by deleting after the word "provision", on line 17, all the words in lines 17 to 21.

(2035)

Mr. Chairman, I already made a speech at second reading and those amendments reflect the proposals put forth during that speech. Consequently, I have nothing else to add and I will let other members speak on these issues.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, the amendments submitted by the Bloc Quebecois, as I understand them, are meant to introduce a mediation system without arbitrators, without a timetable and without any indication of what would be done with the mediator's report.

I would simply like to remind the members of this House that when the conflict began in the western ports, the government followed all of the steps set out in the Canada Labour Code. The first step was to name a conciliator from the department's Mediation and Conciliation Service. This conciliator was named back in 1993 to help the parties negotiate with each other. Unfortunately, the conciliator achieved no real results.

Then, my predecessor officially named a conciliation commissioner. This action was taken back in October 1994. The commissioner worked with the parties for several months and submitted a report quite recently, in February 1995.

Therefore, I think that all of the possible mediation and conciliation steps to bring the parties to an agreement regarding

the collective agreement have already been taken. This is why I find myself obliged to tell the Bloc Quebecois that it would be extremely difficult for this government to accept its proposed amendments.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Chairman, our amendments clarify a number of points, including what should be done with the report. We suggest submitting the report to the minister. I assume that if the minister received a mediation report which involved the participation of both parties, she would know what to do, which means at least reading it and probably taking some kind of action. That was my first point.

Second, I realize there was an investigation commissioner, but the fact remains that special legislation has something urgent about it and is a major step in the process, and the parties would certainly take the mediator's proposals more seriously in the knowledge that the minister would subsequently receive a report which they had helped to draft and that the minister would be able to intervene, to take this report and bring the discussions and the mediator's proposals before the House.

So I think the basics are there. And if the minister wants to include a time limit in days in the amendments we are proposing, well, we would be happy to oblige if the minister is so concerned about that.

On the other hand, I must say that when we consider how this dispute developed, all the employer did was order a lock-out and 15 hours later we have special legislation. This tends to poison labour relations, and that is exactly what happened.

(2040)

It should be pointed out that the union allowed grain movement and longshoring. It was management that interrupted these essential services which could be maintained under an anti-strikebreaking act. I disagree somewhat with my colleague from the NDP who said earlier that the Bloc Quebecois had made this emergency debate possible. I think it is important to debate this issue, even though we will be voting against this legislation.

I will remind him that, had his party held its own in the 1990 debate on anti-strikebreaking legislation, perhaps we would not be having this debate now. But the NDP did not do so in November 1990. Principles are one thing, actions are another and actions speak louder than words.

I think that, with our amendments, the hon. minister has enough material to take more significant action in this matter.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois misunderstood me. First, let me assure the House that, as Minister of Labour, I personally read each and every report I receive. Have no fear, if a report is sent to me, I will read it.

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I think the Bloc member did not understand the fact that I already have a report that was sent to my predecessor. We have already tried conciliation at a previous step in this process. There was a conciliation commissioner who submitted a report, not only to the minister, but to both parties involved who took cognizance of it.

The conciliation commissioner did an outstanding job. He examined in detail all the problems involved and came up with some answers. His report was handed down not only to the minister, but also to both parties involved. The bill before us provides for the appointment of a mediator–arbitrator, that is to say that the emphasis will be put, first and foremost, on mediation.

This is in line with the wishes expressed by members of the Bloc Québécois who demanded a mediation process. This bill will ensure that such a mediation process takes place. If the parties cannot reach an agreement, the mediator will become an arbitrator and will then act in such a capacity. So, in that sense, the bill before us addresses the concerns of both parties who, unfortunately, could not come to an agreement.

As I said earlier, a Minister of Labour is always reluctant to introduce back–to–work legislation. It is always better for the parties to come to an agreement by themselves, but since this was not possible, we must act to protect the entire economy of Western Canada.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Chairman, I think there is a big difference with this bill. This bill provides for a back to work order which we agree with and do not wish to amend. What is proposed here is a mediation process as a result of the pressure tactics used by the union or a lockout declared by management, and we agree with a back–to–work legislation.

What we say, however, is that it would be much better for the mediator to do his or her job in a setting different from that which existed before the pressure tactics, the lockout and the special back–to–work legislation. This bill contains all the elements needed for the parties to adopt more realistic attitudes, which was not the case when an investigation commissioner was chosen even before any pressure tactics was used by the parties, something they will no longer be able to do after this bill is passed.

Mrs. Robillard: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Minister of Labour can act according to the Canada Labour Code. If I understand correctly, what is wanted is that the bill require a return to work and the appointment of a mediator who would report to the minister.

(2045)

But what would happen afterwards? How would we make a decision? How would we reach a collective agreement? It is not incumbent on the Minister of Labour to make the final decision

and to decide on the clauses of the collective agreement. It is exactly for that reason that the Canada Labour Code gives us the possibility of naming an arbitrator. And therefore it seems to me very appropriate to have a mediator–arbitrator who will be able to play both roles.

The Chairman: Before recognizing the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, I think that I must give some explanation to the House.

[English]

We are having a general debate on all of the amendments so that any member can get up at any time on any amendment. It should be understood by all members that is the case.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Chairman, I rise to provide some response to the question the minister asked and to draw attention to what I see as a contradiction between the bill and the excellent decision to set up a board of inquiry. There have been a lot of problems in this sector of labour relations for a number of years. The minister says it is time to clean things up, understand what is going on, change the rules and take the appropriate corrective action.

At the same time, the bill repeats the same old traditional pattern of making special laws for ports, as has been done for a number of years. The practice has always been to decide for the parties. We would expect, and this is the focus of our amendments rather than the elimination of the notion of arbitrator, that the minister would want to change the way things are done, just as the board of inquiry should bring about effective changes in practices and ways of operating.

We must remember that they got to this point because they knew from the outset that this was the way it worked in the sector. Therefore, from the outset, they negotiated knowing that, in the end, they would reach this point and that there might be special legislation because of what has happened in the past. What we must give them is the message that this longstanding pattern no longer works and must be changed.

Therefore, adopting a special law is no solution. We are telling them to return to work and to their bargaining responsibilities, to resume negotiations with a mediator so that they are not relieved of their responsibility, but are rather confronted with it, and will have to reach an agreement as they are the interested parties. This is the meaning of the amendments we made.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I now understand more clearly the intent of the amendments brought forward by the Bloc Québécois, but I want to say to the members of this House that we have to solve, in the very short term, a problem that exists at this very moment. At 8.45 p.m. tonight, we have a problem in Western Canada and the

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appointment of a commission of inquiry will not give us short term solutions to this problem.

The appointment of a commission of inquiry will certainly help us in the medium term so that this situation does not happen again. Right now, I agree that we are opting for a more traditional solution, if I may use this expression before the members of this House, to the dispute that is going on. This more traditional solution is the appointment of a mediator–arbitrator who will impose a settlement so that we have a collective agreement that will be effective until at least December 31, 1996.

In the meantime, we will appoint a commission of inquiry which will review the bargaining process and we will be able to see what changes can be made later on. So, the bill before us will help us solve the problem in the very short term, but we will still take a long term look at the whole bargaining process.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the last amendment on our list because it is a little different. That amendment provides that in clause 11, on page 5, line 17, all the words after the word “agreement” be deleted. That clause reads as follows: “Nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to limit or restrict the rights of the parties to the collective agreement to agree to amend any provision of the collective agreement—and the clause goes on—amended by or pursuant to this Act, other than a provision relating to the term of the collective agreement, and to give effect thereto.”

The purpose of our amendment is to delete all the words after the word “agreement” so that the parties will have much more freedom to agree on provisions other than those provided for in the bill, more particularly relating to the term of the agreement.

(2050)

We would like the parties to have the opportunity, if they so wish, to negotiate provisions other than those in the bill, and especially a back to work agreement. It would be important for the parties to have some breathing space to do that.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I have been informed this is already possible under the present provisions of the Canada Labour Code. The amendment proposed by the hon. member for the Bloc Québécois is unnecessary.

Mr. Crête: Mr. Chairman, if it is already indicated in the Canada Labour Code, then it is a matter of clarification. If it is already in the Canada Labour Code, it would be unnecessary to say what it says in the bill, because this would mean adding

something that already exists in the Canada Labour Code. Here, certain clauses restrict the rights of the parties, but we do not want any restrictions on the rights of the parties. This is in line with getting rid of the mediator–arbitrator, but it is an additional element that could apply even if the amendment on the mediator–arbitrator is rejected.

[*English*]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Chairman, it is sad that I must stand here today to talk about putting an end to a strike that should not have happened.

This type of work stoppage has happened again and again. There have been over 25 stoppages in the grain handling system in the last 25 years. There is no need for that.

The irony is that as we debate putting an end to this longshoreman strike, at this very time there is a labour disruption effecting rail movements which will still prevent the proper movement of grain and other commodities to market.

I refer to the Minister of Labour’s response in question period yesterday to a question from the hon. member for Simcoe Centre. He said: “The Minister of Labour may have time to wait and sort this out but Canadian farmers do not. Present shipments are in danger. They must plan for future crops now and should not have to worry about whether the rail system will be there when they need it. I ask the minister again, when will the government introduce back to work legislation?”

The response from the Minister of Labour was: “I would like to ask the Reform member to remain calm and to refrain from spreading panic among the parties concerned. As we speak, grain is moving in the west, in Vancouver this very day. We should keep in contact with the parties and keep in mind that it is always better to negotiate an agreement than to envision legislating these people back to work”.

The hon. member for Simcoe Centre said in his next question: “We have been calm far too long. When is the time to get nervous? It is right now. There have been 13 work stoppages in 29 years. Our western grain growers cannot afford to bear the brunt of another strike. Canada’s transportation system must be reliable or our customers will go elsewhere. Once the back to work legislation is passed, will the government take steps to ensure the threat of future rail strikes is removed once and for all?”

The minister’s response was: “As usual, the hon. member is going a bit too fast. At this stage, legislation is out of the question, so I will not answer hypothetical questions”.

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(2055)

The minister's response to the Reform member's question was not acceptable then and it is not acceptable now.

Today we are talking about ending a strike which affects longshoremens. It is not good enough to do this today. We must bring in back to work legislation tomorrow to end the rail strike which will still cost farmers and other shippers money tomorrow, Friday, Saturday and the day after that.

The Chairman: The hon. member is speaking to the matter. He can speak to any of the amendments or any of the clauses. The members on the government side were listened to courteously. I think the members of the government side might listen to this member who comes from the grain producing region of Canada.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Chairman, tomorrow let us get back to work legislation on the rail strikes. Next week let us get legislation before the House that will prevent this from happening again next year and in the years following.

I would like to thank my fellow members of caucus who have worked so hard in pushing for an end to this strike. I would like to thank in particular the member for Wild Rose for asking yesterday for an emergency debate to end the longshoremen strike which stopped movement of grain and other products. I would also like to thank the Liberal government and the labour minister for her action in legislating this strike to an end.

I want to talk about the costs this strike will bring to farmers, that the strike last year brought to farmers, that the rail strike will continue to bring to farmers in western Canada and to others who depend on this movement system.

Particularly for the farmers these costs include demurrage costs on ships that wait to be loaded. It cost millions of dollars last year in the 12-day strike. It took the government 11 days to act last year. I guess it is to be congratulated. It took less time this year with this strike. How long is the government going to take on the rail strike? We have yet to see.

There are 28 ships waiting in port right now with 17 more ships due by Friday. More than 60 per cent of the grain exports are not moving. Grain elevators are backed up. Lost sales which we incur with each of these strikes are the biggest single cost to farmers and for other shipping commodities through the west coast and other ports.

What is the value of lost sales in grain due to this strike, due to the rail strike which still continues, due to the strike last year? Last year the estimated cost over the 12-day strike was over \$200 million in lost sales. This year for the longshoremen strike it will be millions more. We do not know when the rail

disruption will end. I would like to ask the minister when she plans to end the rail disruption.

Why did this longshoremen strike and the rail strike ever happen? In 1992 a contract ended. We knew, this minister knew, this Liberal government knew, Reformers certainly knew, farmers knew and union members knew there would be a work stoppage.

It has become tradition for unions to depend on back to work legislation to end strikes and lockouts. It has become tradition because they have learned over the past years they do very well by waiting for government to legislate them back to work. In some cases the agreements have actually been better than they have been asking for in negotiation. Labour has come to depend on governments legislating them back to work.

Why did we have to wait until the work stoppage actually came into effect? Why are we waiting for the rail strike to continue? When will the minister act in that regard?

(2100)

Last year when government legislated an end to a disruption on the west coast, the Reform Party presented during the debate positive alternatives which, if implemented, would have prevented this situation from ever happening. Reform pushed for last best offer arbitration during last year's debate. Nothing was done. I would like to quote from a speech that I gave about a year ago in the House in very similar circumstances.

I want to present one of the Reform options which I presented to the House at that time and which the Liberal government should have responded to then and which I ask it to respond to now.

I talked about two options. The second option:

—is to put in place a better labour-management negotiation process. This could involve ensuring that a new agreement will be in place before the old one expires—

To accomplish that an arbitrator could be appointed approximately six months before a contract expires. If a settlement has not been reached within two weeks of the end of the contract, then an arbitrator would ask management and labour to come up with their best offer, their best position. The arbitrator would then pick one, either the labour position or the management position. One position would be completely accepted and the other position completely rejected.

Under this process a strike would not be allowed to occur. This is good for labour. It is good for management. It is good for western Canadian grain farmers and others using the system. These options should be considered in developing a long term solution to the recurring disruptions in the grain handling system.

That is what I recommended in debate last year.

Since then the hon. member for Lethbridge has put forward a private members' bill on this issue, Bill C-62, which he will talk about later. In that bill is the process for dealing with last best offer arbitration.

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I encourage the government after the third hour of debate which takes place at noon on Monday to be here to vote in favour of Bill C-62 so that we will have in place a mechanism that will work and that will satisfy labour and management to some extent. It will prevent these disputes and these disruptions from happening in the future.

I call on the Liberals now to be here on Monday to listen to the third hour of private members' debate and to vote so that these disputes will not occur in the future.

As my last question I ask the hon. Minister of Labour if she will support Bill C-262 which will put in place a last best offer arbitration procedure that will prevent any disruptions in the grain handling system from occurring in the future?

I ask the labour minister that now and I encourage her to support the bill next Monday. I ask her whether she will support this bill.

[*Translation*]

The Chairman: The Minister of Labour may prefer to answer both members at the same time. The hon. member for the official opposition put a question earlier. Does the minister wish to respond or would she rather wait until the end of this discussion?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, in response to the question asked by the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois, I will remind him that clause 11 of the bill before us allows the parties to amend any provision of the collective agreement, including those that will be imposed on them, other than the term of the collective agreement, of course. Clause 11 gives a fair bit of flexibility.

(2105)

Second, I would tell my colleague from the Reform Party that the government has already made a decision on all the problems that he has raised. First, it will solve the problem very quickly through this back to work legislation but also by setting up an industrial inquiry commission that will review the collective agreement structure.

I do not know whether the investigation commissioner will draw the same conclusions as the hon. member from the Reform Party, but I think that we should analyse the situation as a whole and that is why we will appoint an investigation commissioner.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Chairman, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. I wonder if she could tell the House whether or not it is the general policy of the government to bring in back to work legislation which does not legislate a settlement, as is the case with this legislation?

Is it the policy of the government to bring in legislation without a settlement? The legislation before us does not have a settlement. It appoints a mediator or arbitrator. Is this the general policy of the government with respect to back to work legislation?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, the government assesses each situation on its own merits.

[*English*]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Mr. Chairman, I was sitting here just a few minutes ago wondering why I was happy to be here at seven minutes after nine on a Wednesday evening. I just realized what it was. I get to sit in the front row once a year. However, that is hardly reason enough to be here once a year; to pass back to work legislation in labour disputes.

Many of the points I want to make this evening to the government and to the opposition have already been made so I will dispense with them. However, there are a couple of questions and a couple of concerns that I do have with this legislation and I would like to spend a few minutes asking a couple of questions.

Before I do that, I had a letter handed to me today from an alfalfa dehydrator in Olds, Alberta. I think it is worthwhile reading it into the record tonight. It is an obvious concern from people in that industry who go through these types of labour disputes on an almost regular basis. Certainly they have concern for the future of their businesses whenever they see one coming down the road.

I will read this letter, if I may:

If in any small way my name or the name of my company can stop the insane abuse of power a very few people have over so many others, please use them.

In our industry Canada only has a 3 per cent market share. The U.S.A. has 85 per cent, China and Australia have about 5 per cent each. The Americans cannot be happier, they probably will sell lots more product now and will lock in more future sales because of Canada's poor track record and reliability and with no future end in sight to the strikes. My customers from Japan ask, "How can we be so stupid?" "If you cannot supply them we have no choice". Americans will win again, not because they are better, more competitive, or have better quality but through default.

If the Dominion of Canada wants me to pay taxes and to help fight the deficit, please help me deliver products I have sold. End this strike forever.

It is signed: "A discouraged export business owner". His name is Blair Wright from Olds, Alberta.

The reason I read that is that I think it is critical. I echo the words of my colleagues who have said that we cannot continue to work under this system. I encourage the minister to develop some sort of system. I encourage her to do that in order to pre-empt these types of labour disputes. As the member of Parliament for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, I would offer my

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support to the minister and I would be prepared to help in any way I can to make that happen.

(2110)

The two questions I would like to ask the minister on the legislation are, first, why are the Montreal docks not included in this legislation? Second, if the Reform Party had been drafting this legislation it would have removed section 8 and replaced it with final offer selection, which has been discussed here before.

I want to be very clear about this. I talked to the minister's officials before the debate began tonight. I understand that the reason behind not using final offer selection is that it was used about a year ago in a labour dispute that was then ongoing. I understand and I accept what they have told me.

However, I would like to ask the minister if she believes that final offer selection could be useful at some point in this process. Would she commit the mediator-arbitrator to move to final offer selection at some point in this process if it is necessary?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, with respect to the port of Montreal, why is the situation there not included in this bill? Well, I would say that the situation in the port of Montreal is completely different.

I said earlier that we evaluated each situation on its merits. That is what we have done in the case of the port of Montreal. As you know, there is a labour relations problem there too, but all the other ports in the province of Quebec are now also in operation. Trois-Rivières, Sorel and Quebec City come to mind. Therefore the impact or consequences are not as great compared to the situation in Western Canada. That is my first comment.

My second is that, in the port of Montreal, we have seen over the years that the parties are very often able to reach an agreement. I believe that we have not had a general strike in the port of Montreal for over 20 years. At this point I have complete confidence that the parties can still come to an agreement in the port of Montreal. It is also very clear that I am making them a formal offer of mediation, precisely for the purpose of reaching such an agreement. Under these circumstances, I would consider legislative intervention completely premature.

As for the second question, regarding the possibility of a final offer, I would like to say that the complexity of this year's debate, compared to last year's, is completely different. Last year, there was only one element involved. If I remember correctly, the issue then was whether or not to allow an increase from 65 to 70 cents. The question was very simple: yes or no? The issue was a very straightforward one.

The situation before us today is much more complex. That is why we have opted for mediation-arbitration. If there is a final offer, the decision will be up to the arbitrator.

[*English*]

The Chairman: The member for Winnipeg Transcona made it clear that he had not finished his earlier remarks.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister a question earlier.

Concerning back to work legislation, is it the general policy of the government to bring in back to work legislation which does not involve a settlement, but rather a mediator-arbitrator as is the case before us now?

The reason I ask that question is because of the debate which has already ensued here and the comments which have been made about the possibility of further back to work legislation having to do with the rail situation. There is a concern, given some of the things the Minister of Transport has said in the past, that if the government brings in back to work legislation it may legislate a settlement to get rid of or reduce severely the employment security benefits that are in the current collective bargaining agreements.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour whether or not she can give assurances to the House and to the people who are concerned about the nature of that back to work legislation. Has the government ruled out legislating a settlement, particularly in respect of the employment security benefits?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I repeat that each situation is assessed on its merit.

As for the railway situation, it is now 9.15 p.m., so it is premature to talk about back to work legislation. I would not want to base my opinion on assumptions, but we will assess each of these situations. I am happy to see that negotiations were going on, today, in the railway sector. Once again, the main purpose of the minister of Labour is to help parties reach an agreement and to legislate. When we do that, it is because we do not have a choice any more.

[*English*]

The Chairman: There are four people who want to speak and there are about 15 minutes left. One more comment from the member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister of Labour with respect, I understand there is no need for back to work legislation now and I hope there will be no need. I cannot foresee a situation in which there would be. But her colleague, the Minister of Transport, also has a responsibility in the area of rail. He has indicated on a number of occasions that the government would act to eliminate the employment security provisions of the collective bargaining agreements if they could not be negotiated away.

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What policy does the Minister of Labour bring to this particular situation which I am sure she is familiar with? On the merits of the situation as she now understands it, is she prepared to tell me and this House that the government will not legislate a settlement—

The Chairman: The member has been here as long as I have and would know the matter he has raised is not relevant to the bill now before the House. If the minister wants to make a comment she can, but it is certainly not relevant to what we are talking about.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chairman, I have a first question to put this debate into perspective. I keep hearing my colleague talk about strikes and more strikes. I think he mentioned the word five times. To my knowledge and from what I have read about the situation, a report was tabled, the employer implemented it unilaterally while the union was against it. The employer then proceeded to lock out the employees. To my knowledge such was the chain of events. Workers are not on strike, they have been locked-out. This is the first point. Madam Minister, I am asking you to tell us whether I am right or my colleague is right.

As to the actual return to work we have no objections, but we do have objections with what the minister is proposing, a graduated approach. She mentioned earlier a conciliation which effectively took place. Normally, the second stage in labour relations is mediation, followed by arbitration, if need be. I believe that as far as graduated responses are concerned, this one, as my hon. colleague mentioned, is rather swift, since we have already reached the mediation-arbitration stage, only twenty hours after the lock-out started. This is rather quick, and I believe that it sends a dangerous message to Canadian employers as a whole, especially since no life is at risk. I understand that from an economic perspective, this issue is very important.

(2120)

It is conceivable that, from now on, employers in the rest of Canada are going to say: "If we lock out our workers, what might happen is that the minister and the House of Commons are going to pass back to work legislation which will impose a mediator-arbitrator and they will both abdicate their responsibilities".

My second question to the minister is this: Does she not think that she is going a bit too fast with her graduated back to work measures?

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, let me take this opportunity to express my warmest

and sincerest congratulations to the new Minister of Labour who acted very quickly on this issue in a very decisive fashion. I think that was warranted, given the situation we are facing.

The decision to bring in legislation to force people back to their jobs is never taken lightly. It is a step that is only taken when the stakes are too high for a strike to be left to take its course. This is such a time.

Last February, Canada's grain handling and transportation system was disrupted for 11 days when longshoremen on the west coast went on strike. It was a significant contributing factor in the big transportation backlog. This was only the most recent of several work stoppages in recent years that have affected the grains and oilseeds industry. The direct cost of that strike to the industry was estimated at \$35 million above and beyond other significant losses resulting from deferred or lost sales.

Make no mistake about it. Whenever our ability to transport our grains and oilseeds and other crops to port is disrupted, our customers look to other suppliers to meet their needs. These repeated work stoppages no matter what their cause have the same results, a negative impact on our sales. Some of our customers have questioned our reputation for consistent and timely delivery of quality grains and oilseeds.

Last April and May the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food made an important trip to Japan, Korea, China and Hong Kong. While he was there he was told face to face by some very angry customers that they were not happy with Canada's performance. The message was clear: We had better clean up our act or our customers would find other suppliers.

Immediately after that trip, to avoid any finger pointing or buck passing, as he puts it, the minister called together all the major operational players for a face to face meeting in Winnipeg on May 16. The objective of that meeting was to confront the reality of our problems and to work out practical solutions very quickly.

Now we are faced with the same issue for a second consecutive year. No one can guarantee that our customers will indeed be understanding.

I would like to mention a few specific examples of the potential impact of this strike. The Canadian Wheat Board has indicated that its export program for March is 2.9 million tonnes through both east and west coast ports. This represents an estimated sales value of \$511.5 million. Every week the board exports 570,000 tonnes of wheat and barley worth more than \$102 million. Over the balance of the crop year we will export more than one million tonnes a month.

Every tonne not moved in March will roll over into the next month, making it more difficult to maintain the planned export program. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that the potential for lost sales from just one week of lost shipping will have a serious impact on our grain exports.

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(2125)

The wheat board has advised us that four vessels are waiting at the west coast port as we speak. Another 18 vessels will arrive this week to load 500,000 tonnes and 12 more will arrive before the end of March. Aside from the potential cost of lost sales, the charges will be significant if work does not resume immediately. No wonder the Canadian Wheat Board has asked the government to take quick action to resolve this critical situation.

On top of the effects the strike would have on wheat and barley exports, is the potential impact on our export of canola, our second largest export crop. Canada will export 4.2 million tonnes of canola seed this year worth \$1.6 million. A major portion of it will pass through the ports of the west coast.

The Chairman: Excuse me. I wonder if the member is aware that other members want to speak. There is a relatively short time left. Had the parliamentary secretary finished his remarks or was he just about to finish them?

Mr. Bevilacqua: Mr. Chairman, since the 1970s, Japan has been our largest and most reliable customer of canola seed. In fact, canola has become the predominant vegetable used in Japan. While the Japanese prize the quality of the Canadian crop, they also place a premium on reliability. Japanese crushers purchase canola on the basis of just in time delivery and inventory approach. Needless to say, strikes and other work stoppages play havoc with this system.

With the experiences of the last few years, Japanese crushers are becoming quite concerned about our ability to reliably ship the quantities of canola that are required when they are indeed required.

Last week, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food met with the chairman of the international affairs committee of the Japanese Oil Seed Processors Association. He was seeking assurances that there would be no disruption in our oilseed shipments. The parliamentary secretary assured him that the government would act decisively to ensure that any disruption would be very minor.

For this and many other reasons, I ask this house to support the action taken by the Minister of Labour.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Chairman, I am astounded with what I hear tonight. I am totally astounded and ashamed to stand in this House and say what I have to say tonight. Yes, ashamed that I have to say it.

For a whole week I have tried to get some communications through to the port of Montreal. Today I am told that I am such a second class citizen that they will not even listen to me in this House.

I have a constituent who has \$200,000 worth of sunflower seeds locked up in the port of Montreal and he cannot get them out without even trying to ship them. The bank manager is talking about foreclosing on him and we are joking around here about the lives of people.

(2130)

When the House passes legislation where criminals can dictate to the judicial system and get paid for inconvenience and the people in my constituency have to go hungry, something is wrong in the House.

An hon. member: He is talking about the last strike. What about this strike?

Mr. Hoepfner: The member can scream and I can scream too. This is serious to me. I told my constituent today that I would help him to take legal action whenever he can to get this mess cleaned up.

We have tried to work with the government. We have tried to work with the minister to get that stuff out of there so that it will not be ruined. However what are we doing? Nothing, absolutely nothing. That is the type Parliament that has come about. I am ashamed. I feel like taking my citizenship and moving out of the country if this is the kind of justice we have. It is time that we change it.

My uncle was shot before a firing squad in the Soviet Union to get out of a system like that and that is what we are coming to. We had better realize it. When a man who is depending on putting food on his table cannot get his product out of the yard, something is wrong.

The Chairman: Pursuant to the order made earlier this day, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the committee of the whole stage of the bill now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on amendment to clause 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Chairman: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Chairman: In my opinion, the nays have it.

Some hon. members: On division.

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(Amendment negatived.)

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Chairman, if there is unanimous consent, I propose that we apply the result of this vote to all the amendments proposed.

The Chairman: Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chairman: Consequently, the amendments to clauses 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are negatived.

Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

(2135)

The Chairman: Shall clause 8 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 9 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 10 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 11 carry?

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

[*English*]

The Chairman: Shall clause 12 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 13 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 14 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 15 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall clause 16 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause agreed to.)

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall the schedule carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Schedule agreed to.)

The Chairman: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill reported.)

(2140)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.) moved that Bill C-74 be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mrs. Robillard moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is with conviction that I rise again in this House to introduce the 1995 legislation on west coast port operations. As you know, the purpose of this bill is to end the current dispute between two parties.

I have already explained at length all the details surrounding this dispute which, in my opinion and in the opinion of many Canadians, cannot go on. Until now, the government had

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provided all the assistance it could to help solve the problems. First, we appointed a conciliator.

Then we appointed a conciliation commissioner, whose report was submitted to the parties. Unfortunately, we face a situation which requires government action. Believe me, it is with regret that, as the Minister of Labour, I must table this bill before the members of this House. It would be much better—and we all know it—for the parties to negotiate a collective agreement together, and that is our basic policy.

However, all port operations on the west coast have now come to a stop and the economic consequences are such that the government must act. This bill provides for the immediate resumption of operations and the appointment of a mediator-arbitrator, who, I hope, will bring the parties closer.

In closing, allow me to thank all the members of this House for their co-operation on this bill. This shows, I think, that we all care about this country's economic development.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you will, however, understand that my speech will differ from that of the Reform Party, even though we are both speaking in opposition.

I would like to say that it is always difficult moment for Parliament when its elected members are obliged to adopt special legislation to force people back to work, since we agree, hope and say that, in the workplace, there is nothing better than a collective agreement that is wanted, negotiated and implemented by the parties.

Therefore, I believe that the Minister of Labour cannot be particularly proud of starting her career here in this House, by imposing special legislation. She will be quite free in the coming days to go down in history by allowing us to adopt anti-strikebreaker legislation, legislation sought by the official opposition from the time there were eight of us, and we continue to think that this must be done.

(2145)

Therefore, we are saying to the minister that the best way for her to continue her work as Minister of Labour is not to introduce more back to work legislation, but to follow in the footsteps of one of the greatest Quebec democrats, a person she should seek to emulate, I am referring, of course, to René Lévesque who gave the province of Quebec an effective anti-scab legislation.

Since I mentioned anti-scab legislation, I should remind you that in a province or country—the Labour Minister in nodding in approval to the position of the Bloc—there is a direct link between such a legislation and the length of strikes and also, I should say, healthy labour relations.

This is what we are saying to the minister: it is unbelievable that, in 1995, no anti-strikebreaking legislation is in place at this federal level of intervention. I know that she realizes such legislation is necessary and wants to put it in place. She said herself that preliminary consultations were under way and she was committed to consulting the parties. So, she will have the chance in the days to come to go down in history as having given this country an anti-strikebreaking act.

With this in mind, as the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie said and the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup after him, we, the official opposition, fully grasp what a shame it is to have a lock-out bring the West Coast to a standstill. We know how important port activity is to the economy of the region. That is why we hope that a back to work agreement can be signed.

The difference between the labour minister and ourselves is the fact that we do not want a back-to-work order at any cost. Our concern with this bill is that it will shamelessly resort to arbitration. The minister should be consistent with herself. She was very pleased to tell us earlier that the discussions have resumed, that both parties have come back to the negotiation table, although their efforts might be a bit timid. She even linked the resumption of the negotiations to the statement she made in the House during question period.

We should be pleased about the efforts, albeit timid, made by both parties to resume negotiations. We take comfort from the fact that, with the resumption of the negotiations, we might be able to avoid arbitration and rely on the mediation process.

It is certainly not because we are naïve or overly tolerant that we in the official opposition continue to believe that mediation would have been possible. Why would mediation have been possible and why is it desirable? Because in the delicate balance of labour relations, arbitration means acting unilaterally. A third party outside the dispute is given the extraordinary power to make decisions on the application and the validity of each clause of a collective agreement. We think that this is not desirable, that the use of arbitration where a person will be able to impose a collective agreement that will be effective until December 1996 is not desirable. I will say it again, we would have preferred being able to continue the mediation process.

A link should also be made with another fact. We believe things would have been different if we had had anti-scab legislation in Ottawa. This debate provides us with an opportunity to do something. The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup reminded us that this is the second time the House passes special legislation concerning operations at the west coast ports.

At the time of the first legislation, the present labour minister had other things on her mind, and I am sure she had no idea that she would some day be the member for Saint-Henri—

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Westmount in the House of Commons. But she must not forget that, at that time, we were already debating back to work legislation.

Why is it that her government, a government that she obviously supports, did not take the opportunity of that first labour dispute to set up a commission of inquiry on labour relations that were already a cause for concern.

(2150)

Why did we wait so long? Why did we not learn from that first labour dispute and the passing of special legislation several months ago. It is because of all this deteriorating process that we are puzzled by the action taken by the minister.

I want to take this opportunity to really invite my colleague to make an impression as Minister of Labour. We all know that she is a determined and brilliant woman and that she is able, if she wants to, to take advantage of this labour relations review process to bring the parliamentarians to participate in this debate on whether or not we should have an anti-scab legislation at the federal level. We believe so and we have an opportunity to evaluate a model which is the one established by the Quebec National Assembly.

The Minister of Labour, who is a few years older than I am, will recall that this anti-scab legislation has proven right in Quebec, which used to be the champion for lost hours and days of work. The anti-scab legislation played a crucial role in pacifying labour relations. This is what we must aim at in the days to come.

We have to keep in mind, because it is important to do so, that we have two classes of workers, since three provinces have passed anti-scab legislation: Ontario, British-Columbia and Quebec. Thus, this is to say that some 60 to 65 per cent of the Canadian workers are protected by anti-scab legislation. Therefore, there are two classes of Canadians. This situation is far from healthy or acceptable.

To conclude, I want to say to the labour minister that she and I have something in common. Like her, I represent here a Montreal constituency. As hon. members for Montreal, we are obviously concerned with the continuing situation in the port of Montreal.

The minister says she is confident that we can avoid resorting to special legislation and that a negotiated agreement can be reached. I am sure the parties involved will take advantage of the mediation offer aimed at a negotiated settlement, so that we can have a collective agreement that is desired.

To avoid the kind of situation we are now in, it is important to maintain the optimum conditions for dialogue. However, these optimum conditions, that we would like to see for Montreal, can obviously not be maintained on the West Coast, because if the

bill is passed, working conditions, non-monetary clauses as well as salary clauses, will be imposed by arbitration.

The Reformers' impatience is hard to understand, because it must be said that they have been behaving in a very unruly manner tonight, and I am sure that my colleagues will agree with me because everyone knows that the members of the Reform were unruly.

In conclusion, we agree with the return to work, but we would like to see ideal conditions for dialogue maintained, which is incompatible with a special bill.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Finally, with apologies, the hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on third reading of Bill C-74.

We want to move those ships out full of western Canadian grain. I appreciate the member from Winnipeg's indicating that to this assembly.

For many years in my period of time as a member of the Alberta Legislature there were numerous opportunities, I remember about 12, where governments of Canada, both Liberal and Conservative, did not have the gumption or the aggressiveness to deal with this problem.

(2155)

We in Alberta moved resolution after resolution asking the federal government to pass legislation to put the workers back to work. The governments did it but to a major cost to western Canadian farmers over and over again.

A year ago it cost us a lot of money, \$35 million in demurrage and penalties. The Alberta Wheat Pool tells us there was \$100 million in terms of loss to the Canadian economy and \$450 million in lost sales for grain farmers. That is provided by the figures from the Canadian Wheat Board.

Many dollars were lost. Even in this short time that the workers were off work, we suffered serious losses. One of my colleagues illustrated in the House earlier that the strike cost one of our alfalfa shippers \$250,000 because they could not get it off the boat and into the marketplace. That market was lost to some American producers. I do not think that is fair.

I understand the minister and the government were advised several days ago that an agreement could not be reached. Why did we not bring legislation into the House so that if a strike did occur we could act immediately and put the workers back to work?

This is the first step in a series of responsibilities the House will have. We have not settled the matter with regard to Montreal. My colleague, the member for Lisgar—Marquette, has illustrated that point very well on how one of his producers or processors in that province of Manitoba is affected in a very

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significant way. We have to deal with that. Why did we not deal with that tonight and get it over with for the industry?

We do appreciate that the minister has brought the legislation before this assembly. We give her full credit and compliment her for that and compliment the composition of the legislation as it is. It has met one of the needs of western Canadians. The minister deserves that credit.

I also on behalf of my colleagues want to give the minister credit for the fact that she and the government intend to set up a commission or some body to look at ways we can deal with this problem on a basis that does not require legislation or a knee-jerk reaction every time workers walk off the job or there is a lockout, as is the case at the present time. I give the government full credit for that.

In all the years federal governments have dealt with this issue they have always brought legislation in to put the workers back to work or prevent or stop a lockout and they stopped there. They were afraid to challenge the unions on this very basic question. They were afraid to do what they thought would disturb the collective bargaining process and they wanted to maintain the integrity of that process.

Western Canadian farmers face a very unique situation. It is different. We as farmers in the west are victims of the collective bargaining process. We pay the bills. When there is demurrage to be paid we pay it as farmers. When there is loss of sales we pay it as farmers. Whatever the losses are we are the ones who pay. It is not management. It is not the unions. They do not pay any of it. There are no losses on their part. It is the person who ships the raw product, grain and other agricultural products, or our processed products into the export market. We are the victims.

The collective bargaining process as it now stands is completely unfair. The right to strike in that process does not fit that circumstance at all.

(2200)

There must be a different approach. I have recommended in private members' Bill C-262 that we look at a process by which there is binding arbitration and that each party provides to the arbitrator a final position.

The arbitrator then would choose one position or the other and at that the work continues and there is an agreement for both of the parties. That is one of the options we should look at. Maybe there are other options.

The minister has indicated there will be a commission. The matter will be studied. I hope that is not a diversion or a delay. I hope the minister and Prime Minister are very sincere that there will be recommendations that will come into either the June portion of this session or into the fall session of the House whereby we deal with the problem once and for all.

It can be done without violating what we talked about, the collective bargaining agreement process by which management and employees can settle their various disputes.

Agriculture is different from General Motors, for example. General Motors has management. Its employees produce automobiles. If the automobiles are not manufactured and sold, management and employees are affected. It does not affect the other people beyond that. That is the very basic difference in terms of these two processes.

We intend to support this legislation. We want the government to support it and move quickly on it. We want it to deal with the other circumstances affecting the export of agriculture and other export products. We want that to happen as quickly as possible. If it needs to be done tomorrow let us do it tomorrow and not wait until there is a major crisis in our economy.

We are looking forward to some major changes in legislation this fall that will deal with this problem on a long term basis.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on something I was speaking about earlier but which was exacerbated by a speech given by a Liberal member who spoke about the national interest.

In the context of talking about the national interest, a double standard exists between how we regard labour when it pursues its economic self-interest and how we regard capital when it pursues its economic self-interest.

When money markets act in ways that hold the country hostage, we do not take the same offence as some members take when a trade union is said to be holding the economy hostage in its economic self-interest.

What I was pleading for was that there not be this double standard that if we want to hold that everyone should be accountable to the common good or to the national interest, we have to do that with some uniformity.

We cannot say that trade unions or working people should be accountable to the national interest but the money marketeers, the currency traders and the money speculators can do what they like, act in their own economic self-interest and that our only role as a Parliament is to appease them, ask them what they want next, do whatever they want so that they will invest in our country. We need to stop having this double standard.

Picking up on the comment that the Liberal member made about national interest, this is also an interesting concept given globalization and free trade agreements.

Why are working people asked to subscribe to a notion called the national interest? I believe in the national interest, but when we ask the same thing of the corporate sector we are accused of being romantic. We are accused of not being with it. We are accused of not understanding that there are no borders any more.

Investors, capital and corporations move all around the world doing whatever they want. Anyone who wants to talk about the national interest, except when they are trying to morally intimidate working people into giving up their economic self-interests, are called romantic. Why is that? Why is there this double standard when it comes to working people? I do not understand it.

I think ordinary Canadians sense there is something fishy when they are always supposed to act in the national interest but

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the people who can play with interest rates and the money markets and who can look around the planet for cheaper labour markets or weaker environmental regulations or weaker labour laws, that is okay for them. They can seek their economic self-interests; that is just called finding a good investment climate. However, when working people want to do the same thing, shame on them. They are not taking the national interest into account.

I say, shame on this House for accepting that double standard.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

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

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That on Thursday, March 16, 1995, when proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38 have been concluded, the motion to adjourn the House shall be deemed to have been withdrawn and the sitting shall be suspended until such time as the Chair may reconvene the sitting for the sole purpose of a royal assent;

That immediately upon return from the royal assent, the House shall be adjourned until the next sitting day, provided that if no royal assent has been held by 9 a.m. on Friday, March 17, 1995, the House shall be reconvened for the sole purpose of being adjourned until 10 a.m. on that day.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to that, colleagues?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent to the motion.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think a formal motion of adjournment is required pursuant to the order of the House earlier this day. Therefore, I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to that motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Deputy Speaker: The House is adjourned.

(The House adjourned at 10.09 p.m.)

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