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(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, May 2, 1995**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 2, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a summary of the Treasury Board report on the transactions relating to Canada's accounts for the fiscal year 1993-94 by the Export Development Corporation.

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### 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 five petitions.

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### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present the report of the Canadian branch of the Assemblée internationale des parlementaires de langue française, as well as the financial report concerning the branch meeting and the meeting of the Commission des affaires parlementaires of the AIPLF held in Bamako, Mali, on March 6 and 7, 1995.

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[English]

### PETITIONS

CRTC

**Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition from approximately 30 mem-

bers of my riding. The petitioners are opposed to the marketing practices of their cable company, more particularly the negative option approach that was used prior to Christmas.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to instruct the CRTC to review the entire manner in which the cable television industry has offered the new specialty channels. They feel that the CRTC should compel cable television companies to provide subscribers with the option to pay for the new channels if they want them, separate from the current channel package.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce in the House a petition signed by many of my constituents in the riding of Ottawa Centre. The petition deals with young offenders and the Young Offenders Act.

(1005)

BILL C-41

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions from my constituents in the riding of Comox—Alberni. The first contains 114 signatures. The petitioners request that Parliament not pass Bill C-41 with section 718.2 as it is presently written, and in any event not include the undefined phrase "sexual orientation".

SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.):** The second petition, Mr. Speaker, which comes from all across Canada and contains 1,000 signatures, making a total of 4,100 signatures to date, states that the undersigned request that in memory of Dawn Shaw, the six-year-old girl who was murdered in my riding of Comox—Alberni, this petition be brought to the attention of Parliament.

These petitioners request that Parliament enact legislation to change the justice system to provide greater protection for children from sexual assault and to ensure conviction of offenders.

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### 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Shall all questions stand?

*Supply*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ)** moved:

That this House denounce the will of the federal government to restrict the provinces to the role of mere consultant by imposing on them new national standards for all social programs through the introduction of the Canada Social Transfer, which will enable the federal government to interfere even more in such areas as health, post-secondary education and social assistance, all of which come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion is presented by the official opposition as part of a very important debate that started recently with the tabling of Bill C-76 by the federal government.

We are accustomed to seeing all sorts of things in politics, but I must say that in this case, the discrepancy between what the government says and what is actually going on is beyond belief.

Last Sunday, at a meeting of the provincial wing of the federal Liberal Party in Trois-Rivières, the Prime Minister made an extremely aggressive speech—and this is an understatement, considering the tone and the content of what he said—in which he accused the present Government of Quebec of ignoring the acute poverty problems of Quebec. The Prime Minister based this accusation on the fact that Quebec has a very substantial level of poverty, borne out by the announcement the week before that more than 800,000 people in Quebec were living on welfare.

The Prime Minister exclaimed, to the sound of thunderous applause by his supporters, that the Government of Quebec was to blame, the government of Mr. Parizeau who was so obsessed with the referendum question on sovereignty that he ignored his basic duty which was to deal with the issue of poverty in Quebec.

Personally, as I listened to the news Sunday night on television, I had the impression that I was watching an arsonist accusing firefighters of doing a poor job, because in this particular case, the government that is most at fault, a government that, since it came to power, has been totally aggressive in its treatment of the vulnerable and unemployed members of our society, a government that has done more than any other to aggravate poverty in Canada and Quebec especially, since Quebec is still part of Canada and is still in a position to be treated this way by the Canadian federal system, by decisions that are made in Ottawa, that government has hit hardest at the unemployed.

We had an election campaign in which the Liberal Party of Canada very skilfully read the mood of the people and realized that Canadians and Quebecers had serious concerns about jobs, maintaining social programs and maintaining the federal government's contribution to the implementation of its own programs. The Prime Minister managed to get elected on the basis of three words, which were always the same: jobs, jobs, jobs. All this is in the so-called red book which contains the Liberal government's promises.

(1010)

However, for some time now there have been no more references to the red book. I remember that during the first year we were here in the House, practically every speech by a Liberal minister or member ended with an enthusiastic reference to the Liberal Party's commitments in the red book. The red book has now become invisible. All we have now is a black list of social program commitments abdicated by the Liberal government.

The facts are there. The figures are eloquent and irrefutable. What has this government done to alleviate the problems created by poverty? What has it done? In fact, every action taken in the budget, every policy is aimed at aggravating the situation.

Let us go back to the beginning. In January 1994, the Liberals tabled Bill C-3 which extended the ceiling on equalization payments, so that the provinces would receive \$1.5 billion less during the next five years. We have no figures for this year, but experience has shown that when equalization payments are cut, Quebec has to pick up at least 40 per cent of the slack.

There is more. This was a good start, but there is more. In February 1994, the federal government's first budget did what? It started by cutting \$5.5 billion at the expense of the unemployed, which means the UI system had to do without \$5.5 billion, while an additional \$2 billion was cut at the expense of welfare recipients and the education system, all in the same 1994 budget for the years 1994-95 to 1996-97.

Furthermore, according to an internal document of the Department of Human Resources Development, in 1995-96, Quebec alone will be stuck with 31 per cent of the cuts in unemployment insurance benefits made in the Liberals' first budget. This is stage two of the federal Liberal plan to aggravate the situation of the poor and the vulnerable in our society.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we come to the February 1995 budget, a federal budget carved out with a really sharp axe. It reduced program funding transferred to the provinces by an additional \$7 billion, and this translates into a reduction in benefits for people on welfare, for students and the sick. In addition, funding for the unemployment insurance system was cut by another \$700 million. You may say that is quite a sum. I just hope that enough is enough. But no, I do not think that the Liberals will stop at

that, because one group has not been hit hard enough in their opinion, and that is seniors.

Obviously, in this case, they realize how sensitive the issue is, that it is particularly despicable and that they are walking a fine line between what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Nevertheless, they will not hesitate to make the move because they have already announced it. They said in the February 1995 budget that they were going to re-examine the old age pension plan. Who could be so naive as to think that a government which has done nothing but cut social programs since it came to power will actually increase old age pensions when it scrutinizes that program? Nobody.

Therefore, why the review if they are not going to increase pensions? The answer is quite clear. They are reviewing them in order to axe them. Obviously, old age pensions will not be spared by the Liberals, who realize that after cutting funding for the sick, recipients of welfare and students, another potential target for cuts remains: pensioners.

They accuse me of demagogy. But, after citing all those facts and figures, I challenge any Liberal member to stand in front of me and deny even by one iota what I have just said, because I have just given a truthful rendition of the Liberals' actions. It is recorded in the public accounts, it is written in the reports to the House. It is part of the harsh, day-to-day reality of all those who suffer the consequences of this reprehensible attitude towards social programs.

(1015)

I regret that the government decided to hit old age pensions. It is obvious that the government is initiating a far-reaching operation, but it will encounter an opposition blockade when push comes to shove.

At any rate, they have already cut the net income of seniors by \$500 million through the tax increase they imposed on them in the 1994 budget. And the same Prime Minister leading the same government stepped up to the microphone one fine Sunday at the end of April in Trois-Rivières in Quebec, in an area hard hit by this problem, to say to hundreds of people frantically waving small Canadian flags that the Government of Quebec and the sovereignists are to blame for this.

Quebec is not yet a sovereign state. Our current state of affairs and all of our problems and social traumas are the federal regime's doing.

To refresh the memory of Liberal members, the truth is that for the next three years, if we add up all of the cuts contained in the last two budgets, Quebec will be deprived of close to \$10 billion in social program financing for those years. It will be

### *Supply*

deprived of \$9.7 billion, I repeat, \$9.7 billion. That is what the arrival of the federal Liberals in Ottawa has brought.

We can look at all of this in terms of percentages, one simple figure to sum up the past 15 years. We all well know that the federal government has justified its existence and seen its role in relation to its contribution to social programs for a long time now. This used to be one of the federal regime's good points, which, we recognize, helped to make this country more civilized and a place in which wealth was more evenly shared and the less fortunate were treated with compassion. But for 15 years now, this has no longer been the case and the government has been moving away from these principles at a dizzying pace.

Take Quebec for example. In 1980, the federal government's share in funding for Quebec's social programs was close to 50 per cent. In 1997, the government's share will be only 28 per cent. This represents a drop of close to half of its contribution, an amount that will continue to shrink because we know that the federal government is leaning towards withdrawing its share of funding for programs, although they are essential.

Figures do not lie. We are talking about statistics, amounts of money, resources and percentages. And other figures are so much more telling, more dramatic: they are about people. In the end, it is not a matter of things being left up in the air, of things being left at a level of an academic discussion or of things not going beyond debate in the House. No, in the end, it is a matter of people getting it in the neck, and this is what the Liberals do not understand. But they used to understand, and that was one of the grand traditions of the Liberal Party, which set it apart from the Conservative Party and from the Reform Party. Now, they are all one and the same, because it means nothing to them anymore. They forget, for example, that, in Quebec, since the Liberals came to power, the number of people on welfare has increased by 53,590. Almost 54,000 more people now live on social assistance in Quebec since the arrival of the Liberals.

We are well aware that the new social assistance recipients, those new people on the welfare rolls, come from the ranks of the 40 percent of former UI claimants whose benefits were cut off. This too is one of the fine achievements of the Liberal Party in Ottawa. Not only did they reduce unemployment insurance benefits, they raised unemployment insurance contributions. What is more, they tightened restrictions so that fewer and fewer people can access UI benefits. Conclusion: people have stayed on welfare.

When the Prime Minister, whom I might call the social arsonist, arrives in Trois-Rivières and blames the Government of Quebec for the increase in poverty, there is no doubt in our minds that he is the one responsible for the growing numbers on the welfare rolls through his hateful restrictions. The Prime Minister of Canada is turning people into welfare cases.

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

*Supply*

**Mr. Loubier:** That is the truth.

(1020)

**Mr. Bouchard:** So now things have to be glossed over, kept hidden, and the best way, in the government's mind, to do so is to use new terms. So we have a marvellous new term: the Canada social transfer. It was preceded by trial balloons announcing the government's withdrawal from provincial jurisdiction, its confinement to its own jurisdictions and its transfer of money to the provinces to enable them to meet their responsibilities, and the rabbit that popped out of the hat was the Canada social transfer.

We might have wondered what was happening at the beginning, but now we know, because it is in black and white in Bill C-76. The bill lets us know very clearly what it is all about. It is about a centralizing assault, the likes of which we have not seen since the shameful patriation of 1982. For the first time in 15 years, the government is charging ahead, visor raised, along the route of massive and unequivocal centralization. It says so in the bill.

Now the federal government will not be content just to encroach on provincial jurisdiction. It will not be satisfied with legal opinions from the Department of Justice. It will not be satisfied by merely appeasing its appetite for power. It is going to set up a legislative framework for itself to achieve its end. This framework is known as Bill C-76, legislation that is a charade as well, because it is one of the ways the federal government is concealing the fact that it is dumping its poor management onto the provinces.

It is also charade, because the government is using it to mask the extent of the cuts it is imposing on the provinces. And it is an even greater charade, because it is claiming falsely to eliminate national standards. The fact of the matter is that no bill has ever given the federal government so much power to impose national standards. This does not apply just to the traditional social programs; it is throughout the bill. For the first time, a bill explicitly provides for the federal government's imposition of standards in post-secondary education, an area that is clearly under provincial jurisdiction.

For the first time, the federal government is empowering itself to say: "I do not like this educational program. You will do it this way, or I will cut funding". Same thing for social programs. Do not just take my word for it. Many observers and analysts have noted and seen very clearly that the aim of the exercise is to confirm the \$7 billion cuts announced for the next three years and to give the federal government the power to dictate the set-up of the provinces' social programs to which it will be contributing less and less.

I said authoritative voices have said this. I will quote, for example, Lise Bissonnette, who wrote the following in an editorial in *Le Devoir* last week. She said: "According to Bill C-76, post-secondary education is now comparable to a social

program. The bill allows Ottawa to apply national standards, in this area, as in others. The provinces, whose jurisdiction over education is as clear as it can be in the Canadian Constitution, are at best assured of consultation".

*La Presse* agrees with *Le Devoir*. It may reassure the Liberals to know that in the March 31, 1995 edition of *La Presse*, Chantal Hébert writes, "With the bill tabled in the Commons to implement its February budget, the federal government opens the door to the unilateral imposition of new national standards in areas such as post-secondary education, child care, etc. In fact, Bill C-76 now restricts the provinces to the role of mere consultant in this exercise. The bill has no provision requiring the provinces' prior consent to the introduction of new national standards for social programs".

In *Le Devoir* of April 21, Conrad Yakabuski himself writes, "Although Ottawa boasted in its February 27 budget of having freed the provinces of Canadian standards in the management of social programs, the Chrétien government now wants to make them adhere to a whole series of new national principles that would apply to a wider range of programs. And although it claims it wants the provinces to comply voluntarily with these principles, the federal government is about to give itself the powers it needs to impose them in case the provinces refuse to do so".

In closing, I will also quote Giles Gherson, principal secretary to Mr. Axworthy, the Minister of Human Resources Development, who said, "What would occur after the failure of negotiations aimed at setting national standards remains ambiguous".

(1025)

The bill that is the subject of today's motion clearly shows what will occur if the announced negotiations between the federal government and the provinces do not result in an agreement. Without an agreement, it is clear that the government will find in this bill all the latitude and power it needs to impose its standards. I am very concerned when I hear that it is preparing to tell provincial governments like that of Quebec that if they do not comply, their funding will be cut off.

Meanwhile, a historic, essential process is unfolding in Quebec: the preparation of a referendum on sovereignty. It is not every day that a people can decide whether it should face its future as a sovereign people or a province. Quebec will do this in the fall. The federal government, which has the nerve to tell us it will propose a type of flexible federalism after the referendum, is clearly showing us today what Quebec can expect if it stays in the Canadian federation.

If Quebec stays in the Canadian federation, we can expect to live under the boot of the federal government, to let federal bureaucrats and politicians set standards for Quebec's social and education programs. They have the nerve to say this to us now, when we are on the verge of making our decision. I can tell you

that Quebecers are taking note of this and that this will weigh heavily in the outcome of the Quebec referendum.

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

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. It is pure demagoguery. I said so during his speech earlier, but I repeat it now for the whole House to hear because this is how I feel about it.

I must say that quite extraordinary things were just said. We have just heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about new terms. The Leader of the Opposition, the expert in newspeak, as Mr. Orwell called it in his novel entitled *1984*, accused the government of using new terms. Members opposite, who are afraid to use the word separatism and use sovereignty instead, who do not want to hold a referendum unless they are sure of winning it, while rejecting federalism, talk about a federalist sovereignty, which means sovereignty with a federal parliament—you can see the distinction: a federalist sovereignty, but not federalism. That is the difference in the world according to the Leader of the Opposition.

He spoke of massive centralization, while social groups come to Ottawa to denounce what they describe as a restriction of federal powers resulting from Bill C-76. I say that they are both going too far. There are those who, like the Leader of the Opposition, are prone to exaggeration by nature and see the devil at work everywhere. While he, naturally, sees excessive federal presence just about everywhere, others, on the other hand—This is a very serious issue and if the members opposite think otherwise, maybe they should listen to something else than their leader's speech.

I have a question for the Leader of the Opposition. He denounced what he called national standards in child care.

(1030)

I heard him speak in support of what reporter Chantal Hébert said. In his remarks, he supported her position, coming out against so-called national standards supposedly set in the bill on child care.

I wonder if he can think back to the election campaign in which he himself ran, in June 1988. Does he remember that there was a bill before the House at the time, a Conservative bill to establish a national child care system, and that he voted for this bill, that he went on to campaign with Mr. Mulroney and that, during the campaign, the public was told that the bill had to be dropped after third reading, after being adopted by the House, because the Senate had asked for one more day to consider the bill in committee? How could he get himself elected in a government that wanted to establish a system that he now accuses others of trying to impose?

### Supply

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to make two comments on the hon. member's preamble regarding a winning referendum. Indeed, there is a fundamental difference between Ottawa's federalists and us, Bloc members and sovereignists in general. The difference is that we want a winning referendum, so that Quebecers can be a fully sovereign nation, like a normal people. We know full well that federal Liberals want a losing referendum.

The federal government hopes that Quebec will once again go down on its knees, so that it can satisfy its centralizing needs and finish the dirty job started in 1982.

As for social groups, the member tells us that they come in droves on Parliament Hill to urge the federal government to impose even more standards on the provinces. First, we did not see much of these groups and, second, I think the member is mistaken.

These groups are not asking the federal government to set bureaucratic rules and increase its bureaucracy to control the provinces. They are asking the Liberal government to pursue its efforts, so that provinces can maintain civilized social programs which make sense. This is what people are asking the federal government.

I have a suggestion for the Liberal member who just made that statement. When he meets with social groups making such complaints about the provinces while extolling the virtues of the federal government regarding social programs, he should provide them with figures indicating what the Liberal Party has done to them in the last two years. He should tell these groups that this Liberal government made drastic cuts in the UI program, that it also made cuts in social programs through transfer payments, that the situation will get worse year after year, and that his government is also about to target old age pensions. If the member tells these facts to social groups, they will go back to their provinces, because that is where their interests are best served. Indeed, the effort is primarily made at that level, thanks to the generosity and compassion of Canadians and Quebecers, not at the level of federal bureaucrats and politicians, who are constantly finding new ways to stop contributing to that effort.

Thirdly, the child care program goes back to 1988, which is some time ago, but I clearly remember it. The legislation included provisions giving full scope to the provinces, while respecting their jurisdiction. It is the Liberal Party which instructed its majority in the Senate to block this \$5 billion initiative designed to set up a true child care program.

[English]

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition a straightforward question.

If the federal government gave provinces exclusive jurisdiction over health, education, culture, language and immigration as per the Jean Allaire report, would the Leader of the Oppo-

*Supply*

sition then withdraw his pursuit of separation and agree to recommend to Quebecers to stay in Canada?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Speaker, we will all agree that it is a purely hypothetical question.

(1035)

We only have to look at the Liberals opposite; they are petrified at the thought that these issues might be raised in the House. The track record of the Liberals, the federal government, the federal system and the efforts made to renew the Canadian Constitution and federalism has consistently been dismal.

I will be frank with the the member; I would have been delighted by such an offer when I was a federal minister and I would certainly have accepted it since I was ready to accept the Meech Lake accord, which did not even go that far. But, since we could not have the absolute minimum, we will never have the maximum. We will not settle for anything less than Quebec's sovereignty .

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

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, you know, when you are the finance minister, when you hold an economic portfolio in a government, and even when your portfolio is not an economic one as was the case for the Leader of the Official Opposition, you really care about people's priorities.

Obviously, the priorities of Quebecers, and Canadians as a whole, are job creation, and a meaningful future for their children and their fellow citizens. This is why it is so disappointing for Quebecers and Canadians to hear, day in and day out, the Leader of the Official Opposition and his acolytes talk about a political agenda which has nothing to do with the well-being of Quebecers.

This is why it is so disappointing not to hear them talk about deficit reduction, fiscal restraint, new technologies. They never talk about the environment. They never talk about what really matters to the Canadian people because they have a political agenda which creates uncertainty and has nothing to do with a country's true objectives in an increasingly interdependent world.

As a result, once again, we are presented today with an empty shell. The opposition really wants to waste the time of the House when it should be dealing with the real challenges facing our country and debate issues other than the fruit of the Bloc's imagination.

Let us be perfectly clear, the objective, the plan of the federal government was clearly laid out in the budget speech. In the budget speech, which can be read in both official languages, one

can see that it does not intend to impose anything on the provinces, or deliver the goods in the manner unfortunately described by the Leader of the Opposition in the speech he just made.

Let us be clear, under the new system, there will be fewer conditions governing the use the provinces can make of transfers. The provinces will no longer have to abide by rules specifying which expenses are eligible for cost-sharing and which ones are not. They will be free—let us be clear about that—to adopt innovative mechanisms regarding social security reform according to their own priorities.

A more flexible needs test will allow the provinces to make income support and non-monetary benefits more universally available to low income earners or to people who were on welfare and are entering the labour market. It is for these people that we are here. It is for these people that we made these amendments. It is these people that each and every politician in this House should care about, instead of trying to deceive Quebecers with a political adventure creating constant uncertainty in a world in great need of more certainty.

(1040)

Federal subsidies could be used to support, for example, the PWA program in Quebec and other types of income supplement programs for low income families and workers. That was not the case previously. Also, the Minister of Human Resources Development will invite all provincial governments to work together, through mutual consent. This means that absolutely no condition will be imposed to the provinces. Mutual consent means mutual consent. Both parties will have to be in agreement. They will meet to develop a set of shared principles and objectives that could underlie the Canada social transfer.

Through today's motion, the official opposition is trying to turn our project, which was so well received by the people in Quebec and in all of Canada—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** —to turn the development of a set of shared principles into a contrived issue. These hon. members would like the House, Quebecers and Canadians to believe that this whole process is nothing but a plot to underhandedly impose new conditions, methods or penalties. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that it is not so.

Just in case the Bloc members were daydreaming that day, although I do not believe so, let me remind you of what I said during the budget speech I delivered on February 27, 1995: "I will be inviting all provincial governments to work together on developing, through mutual consent, a set of shared principles and objectives that could underlie the Canada social transfer". This is exactly the commitment we are making in Bill C-76, without adding or deleting anything.

Of course, if there are problems, we will introduce amendments, but the goal of the government is clear: we do not want to impose anything on the provinces, we want to help the provinces and the federal government to put their financial houses in order and to give provinces a lot more flexibility. This is why I am so pleased to confirm today what the opposition leader has a little trouble with, which is our commitment to propose to the appropriate committee the following amendments.

To establish interim arrangements to finance social programs in a manner that will increase provincial flexibility. The amendment reads as follows:

Maintaining the national criteria and conditions in the Canada Health Act, including those respecting public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility

and the provisions relating to extra-billing and user charges.

Also, to apply the national criterion stipulated in section 19 which requires or allows no minimum period of residence as a condition for eligibility for social assistance. The amendment reads as follows:

Promoting any shared principles and objectives that are developed, pursuant to subsection (3), with respect to the operation of social programs, other than a program for the purpose referred to in paragraph (b).

The Canada Health and Social Transfer shall consist of, (a) a federal income tax reduction in favour of the provinces that would enable the provinces to impose their own tax measures without a net increase in taxation; and

(1045)

(b) a cash contribution not exceeding the amount computed in accordance with section 14.

The Minister of Human Resources Development shall invite representatives of all the provinces to consult and work together to develop, through mutual consent, a set of shared principles and objectives for the other social programs referred to in paragraph 1(d) that could underlie the Canada Health and Social Transfer.

[English]

When I spoke on the budget I made it clear that the government's objectives were to clean up the nation's finances, to put the country once again on a sound financial footing and, at the same time, to give the provinces far greater flexibility in the elaboration and the design of a multitude of social programs.

We made it very clear we were imposing only two conditions on that transfer. The first was that the objectives of the Canada Health Act must be respected. It is a covenant of the government with the Canadian people. We will never allow that to be taken away.

Second, the only standard that would be imposed on other social transfers would be that no minimum residency requirement be necessary for CAP. We would not allow provinces to

*Supply*

take welfare away from people because they had not had a long term residence within that province.

[Translation]

I said very clearly in this House that we had no intention of imposing anything else on the provinces, that we had no intention of imposing new national standards, that the minister simply wanted to sit down with his provincial counterparts to discuss freely with them issues such as Canadian values and the smooth running of both federal and provincial governments.

It is hard to understand that, with all the opportunities we have of working together to create jobs for our young people and to reduce poverty in Quebec, the members opposite have chosen to sidestep this issue. They come here with an artificial problem that has nothing to do with the truth and the reality of our country and of our budget.

[English]

The Bloc Quebecois is the official opposition. It has a responsibility to Canadians to speak for the nation. Members of the Bloc Quebecois talk about having an economic union. They talk about working with Canada. Let Canadians understand the way members of the Bloc Quebecois see working. Will they speak for the nation? No. Will they speak for national interest? No. Will they speak for Canadians' desire to have jobs? No. Will they speak for those who would take Canadians out of poverty and give our children a chance for a decent life? No.

What do they do? Day after day they come into the House and stand up with artificial questions that have nothing to do with the Canadian reality. Day after day they come in, as they have done today, and make up a problem. This country has problems.

[Translation]

We do have problems. We do not have to invent them. Why not work with us to solve the problems we have as a country? Why not join Canadians from all the provinces in saying that the real challenges lie beyond our borders? Competition comes from Japan, Germany and the United States. Competition is not between Quebecers and Albertans, but between Canadians and Japanese, between Canadians and Germans. That is where we have to look if we want to build a strong future for ourselves.

Instead of that, the Bloc Quebecois tried to create a problem because it had to find something to discuss on this opposition day. It decided that maybe it could mislead the people of Quebec by saying that the government wants to impose new national standards.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and I can assure the leader of the opposition that this is not true.



*Supply*

(1050)

The Leader of the Opposition has been a member of the federal cabinet. He knows very well what kind of country Canada is, with an outstanding potential.

Let me be quite clear. This government is going to stand up for the Canada Health Act. There is no doubt about that. It will not deviate from that policy. It will also make sure no province imposes residency rules that would deprive Canadian citizens of social benefits.

We have also clearly stated that we do not intend in any way to impose national standards on any province through the budget or the Canadian social transfer legislation. The minister intends to have discussions with the provinces on whether there are other values or Canadian goals we should concentrate on.

The Leader of the Opposition is sidestepping the issue for political reasons that have nothing to do with the day-to-day life of our fellow citizens.

He and the Bloc Québécois are once again looking for ways to create acrimony and uncertainty. Instead of fostering the well-being of Canadians, the Bloc Québécois is trying to create a problem where there is none.

[English]

Let this country understand that the official opposition refuses not only to speak for the national interest but in this debate is refusing to speak for the interests of Quebecers.

There is no intention to impose anything on any province. There is one intention and that is to create jobs. There is one intention and that is to give our children a decent future. There is one intention and that is to protect the Canada Health Act. There is one intention and that is to make sure that residency is not a condition for welfare. There is one intention and that is for this country to realize every bit of its potential. It is to give this country and its citizens the opportunities that it has as a result of the tremendous talent that exists within the ground and the talent that walks upon it. That is what this country is all about.

[Translation]

The time has come for Bloc Québécois members to join Quebecers who want to build our great country, Canada.

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

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we just heard the Minister of Finance, the one person responsible for cuts in this government. He was the one who cut unemployment insurance, social programs and transfer payments. Then he has the nerve to tell us: "In the budget speech, one can see that the government does not intend to impose anything on the provinces". Has he forgotten already that he cut social programs and education by seven billion

dollars for the next three years? It takes some nerve, Mr. Speaker.

It takes nerve also to say that the important issue is job creation when this government has failed completely in this area. This government has done nothing for job creation. The only job creating program mentioned in the red book, municipal infrastructures, was reduced by 200 million dollars in the recent budget.

So I believe people will have to be careful to sort out reality from inflated patriotic language and repeated protestations. Reality is extremely harsh and inescapable; it shows this government has taken a turn to the right and has decided to attack the unemployed, the have-nots of our society. It did impose 100 million dollars of additional temporary taxes on banks but, at the same time, decided to take 700 million dollars from the unemployed. This government has launched the worse attack ever against the have-nots of Canada.

So when the Bloc speaks in the interest of those people it is talking in true legitimacy. We are very proud to say what we say in this House. If we were not here, nobody else would defend social programs and the right to strike.

What we represent in this House is legitimate all across Canada.

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

(1055)

**Mr. Bouchard:** Previously, the Liberal Party and the NDP assumed that role, but the former now is the government and the later has all but disappeared. We are the only ones left in Canada, not only in Quebec but in Canada, to speak in this House for the poor, those who are the victims of this minister, the victims of this government. No ministerial or prime-ministerial speech in this House will make us forget that these people are persecuted by the federal government.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Second, we are being told that we are wasting the time of the House by discussing Bill C-76. What an undemocratic attitude. Have we reached the point—because we are sovereignists, elected as such by the people of Quebec, democratically, 53 of us out of 75 seats in Quebec when the governing party only got 20—where we can no longer express the reasons for our being here?

Have we reached the point, now that the government is imposing new national standards in the context of an unusual legislative framework, where we no longer have the right to say that this does not make any sense, where we can no longer speak on behalf of the provinces or the poor, where we can no longer say that, yes, we are here to promote Quebec sovereignty, because we believe this is the only possible solution to extricate ourselves from the current mess, the kind of deception we are witnessing today?

*Supply*

I can tell you that there is not one member here who is not proud to assume this historical role, and we are confident that in the fall the people of Quebec will prove wrong those who have not yet understood the Quebec reality.

I have a question to ask the minister. He knows Quebec and, as a rule, he is quite democratic. I do not think his speech today was really democratic, but as a rule he is. He knows very well that in Quebec there is a consensus on the issue of manpower training.

We talk about a lot of things, administrative arrangements in every possible area, but there is one thing that everybody agrees on in Quebec and it is that manpower training programs and the resources devoted to them should be in the hands of the Government of Quebec.

This would do away with a lot of arguing, would prevent the neutralization of efforts and the wasting of energies. We could have better designed programs, specifically geared to Quebec needs. Everybody in Quebec thinks like this, including the leading federalists, including people like Ghislain Dufour, president of the Conseil du patronat. There is general agreement on this in Quebec.

Being a democrat and seeking the best for Quebec, as he said, what is he waiting for to convince a reluctant Prime Minister—I know he is most reluctant—to convince his government to transfer all manpower training activities to Quebec with the necessary resources?

**Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has just accused me of being undemocratic, of accusing him of wasting the time of the House of Commons. Let us be perfectly clear: of course, the Bloc Québécois has not only the right but also the obligation to enter the debate on the government budget.

They certainly have the right to present their views but when, instead of discussing the budget, they create a phoney issue and make up their own budget that has nothing to do with the one we presented, I certainly agree that they are wasting the time not only of this House but also of the Canadian people.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is starting to change his tune somewhat. Today's opposition motion reads in part as follows: "—by imposing on them new national standards for all social programs—" That is patently untrue. The motion goes on to say: "—through the introduction of the Canada Social Transfer, which will enable the federal government to interfere even more in such areas as health, post-secondary education and social assistance". That is patently untrue, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my budget speech and in the budget itself and as I reiterated again today, there is no intention of imposing anything on the provinces or to interfere in provincial matters.

(1100)

To make things even clearer, this morning, I submitted to this House the amendments we intend to refer to the committee that will consider the budget.

Let us set the record straight. The Bloc Québécois's motion is a sidestepping tactic and has nothing to do with the truth. When I say that you are wasting the time of the House, it is not because you do not have the right to discuss the budget but because you are making up your own budget to better attack it. I think that we have just received a compliment. You have just shown that it is impossible to attack our budget by making up your own budget so you could attack it.

Second, the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of transfers to the provinces. Let me tell you that when I met with provincial finance ministers, they told me, "Give us notice. Do not take us by surprise like the previous government". So we gave them two years to adjust.

Third, they told us, "If you are going to hit us, make sure that you will be hit harder". That is what we did. We made deeper cuts at the federal level than at the provincial level.

Fourth, these cuts represent less than 3 per cent of provincial revenue and less than 20.5 per cent of Quebec revenue. It must be said that, at a time when all governments must put their fiscal houses in order, we simply fulfilled our obligations.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will talk to the head office, because he obviously exerts a great deal of influence there, and that the next time he talks to them he will suggest that they bring down a budget designed to put their fiscal house in order to create in Quebec a climate that would help the federal government create jobs.

Since the Leader of the Opposition has so much influence on the head office, perhaps he will talk to them about their own cuts, because he is blaming us for the cuts they are making in money areas.

I think that they should not say two different things. But perhaps it is possible for the leader of the Bloc Québécois to say one thing and for the leader of the Parti Québécois to say another thing. We face real economic and social problems. We know that. We know about the poverty problem and we see how painful it is. We know what is happening and we want to work together.

In closing, I ask the Leader of the Opposition and the Bloc Québécois, instead of creating phoney issues and provoking empty debates, to help us tackle the real problems of Quebec and Canada.

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

*Supply*

[English]

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians watching the debate today are probably not sure whether the concern here is political point making or whether it is the welfare of the people of Canada. I hope as legislators in the Chamber we keep in mind the welfare of the people we represent and the people we serve.

There are strong feelings on issues that are perhaps unrelated to the absolute welfare of Canadians. Perhaps there are agendas that would seek to use some of the issues as springboards. However it is very important today to focus on what can best be done to assist the people and to keep in mind there are needs and concerns shared right across the country.

(1105)

We need to be honest and point out that governments can only do so much, whether it is a federal government or a provincial government. To my knowledge there has not been a government in history that has been able to eradicate poverty or has been able to relieve all citizens from hardship, from difficulty in their lives, from the insecurities of life with which we are concerned.

Somehow there is a feeling or a belief that governments can look after all of us and prevent us from facing hardships and difficulties. It is not fair to Canadians to suggest that if we talk enough, if we accuse each other enough, if we promise enough or if we fight enough, everyone will be looked after.

We can direct our minds to working together not only as legislators but as fellow citizens, to assisting each other, and to doing all we can to help those who cannot help themselves. That should be the real focus of the debate today.

There is a transition in the country with respect to security for Canadians. For quite a few years many security programs have been premised on two assumptions that have proved to be false. The first assumption is that mother government will, can and should look after its citizens, support them and protect them from all the difficulties and contingencies of life. The second assumption is that government can and should do so by borrowing money.

We have spoken so often about the dangerous assumptions and the wrong headedness of the assumptions that it is surprising we do not start from the premise right away. Clearly we do not. The reason reductions are being made in the funding of programs not just by the federal government but by all levels of government is that more and more of our income, more and more of our economic product, is being eaten up in compound interest accrued on the borrowing we have done to put the programs in place. Arguing about who did what to whom and whether cuts should be made here or there really obscures the central question of how we are to manage the situation we are in while making a firm and proper commitment to help the people who are truly needy.

My friends in the Bloc have a very legitimate point of concern which they have raised today about how the situation is being addressed. It is a situation that will not change. We are spending more and more of our income on interest payments. We are at the point where we cannot continue to fund programs on borrowed money. That inevitably leads to spending reductions. The question is not whether there should be spending reductions but how they should best be managed. If the debate today is intended to legitimately and honestly address the situation, it is very proper and very needed.

(1110)

Quite frankly no plan has been advanced or proposed by the government or by the ministers responsible to give us a road map, a sense of direction on where we are going in light of the realities of the economy and the reality that government cannot deliver on the promises that it made in the past to be all things to all people and to preserve and protect us in every difficulty.

I listened carefully for the visions, proposals and recommendations of previous speakers to Canadians who want security for themselves in the future. I did not hear any such proposal. I heard blame being assigned. I heard denials. I heard ridicule of concerns. However I did not hear any leader in the House say so far what he intends to do to address the serious concerns of the people.

In many places of the world the concerns of people in difficulty and distress who need relief and assistance have often been used as vehicles to promote political agendas. I hope very much that will not happen in our country. Promising people something that no level of government can really deliver is a dishonest approach to a problem that we do not want to duplicate in Canada. It also does not address what we should be and could be doing to better serve the people of our country.

The finance minister is correct when he says that the legislation put before the House to implement his budget does not impose any new national standards on the provinces. I have examined the legislation very carefully and there are no proposals for new standards. I do not believe the provinces are being required to do any more than they have in the past as far as delivery of services are concerned.

There are however two concerns which my friends in the Bloc have raised that we should acknowledge and address as much as we can. One concern is that there is no co-operative plan or process to facilitate the development of a co-operative plan to ensure the proper, effective and efficient delivery of services that Canadians need.

The government has said that it would reduce its spending and talk about what we will do together later. That is not a good service to the people. A far better thing to have done would have been to immediately work to facilitate a discussion and a co-operative approach to how services will be delivered instead of making unilateral decisions and then saying we can talk about it later. All provinces justifiably have concerns about that type of process. It could have been managed a great deal better.

The role of the federal government in the delivery of the programs has to be addressed honestly. The federal government is continuing to apply its own criteria to how the programs are delivered and to make judgments, pronouncements and give direction on how things will be structured as far as the delivery of programs is concerned. My friends in the Bloc are correct when they point out that it is an intrusion into areas of provincial jurisdiction.

(1115)

People look for income support when they cannot provide themselves with the necessities of life. Some of these people have suffered from a catastrophic illness or they are young people who are looking for the training and education needed to build a strong future for themselves. I do not think these people really care very much about how and at what level of government these services are delivered. They simply know they need the assistance and programs that will best enable them to look after the contingencies in life.

Canadians watching the debate today have probably felt quite frustrated at the suggestions that you should do this or we should do that; that you did not do this right or they did not do it right. Quite frankly, Canadians just want to know who is going to do it right.

The principles outlined by the Reform Party suggest how we can best deliver programs and structure the spending of public money to give Canadians health and security. The programs are most efficiently and effectively delivered by the level of government closest to the people being served. I believe the people who framed our Canadian Constitution saw it that way as well. Clearly, they put these matters into provincial jurisdiction.

If my friends in the Bloc are suggesting that it should fall within the jurisdiction of the provinces to deal with matters of post-secondary education, delivery of health care services and the support of citizens who are destitute and unable to provide for themselves, then Reform completely agrees with them. These services are best delivered by the provincial government and institutions and organizations in the provinces.

It would be the federal government's role to provide equalization of the financial ability of each province to provide good delivery of those services. It would also work co-operatively to facilitate a strong, coherent approach to the delivery of those services right across the country.

This is a very mobile society. People can now move easily from one end of the country to the other and to different provinces many times in their lives. We want to make sure there are proper services, proper education, proper health care, that

### *Supply*

we are caring for people to the best of our ability no matter where they live in Canada. The federal government does have a role which is to ensure the proper co-ordination and proper delivery of services across the country.

This confrontational approach, the big stick of additional funding and threats to withdraw funding if the federal government's will is not carried out will simply not be workable in the future. We must acknowledge that. We must move to a far more co-operative approach where we simply work together as legislators at the federal, provincial and lower levels of government to simply do our job, which is to serve the people we represent and with whose money and futures we have been entrusted. We need to work together to do that well.

It both concerns and disappoints me when we quarrel and fight rather than work together for the benefit of the people we are responsible to help and to serve by making good decisions. I appeal to my colleagues in this debate to look at the practicalities of how best we can achieve the good of all Canadians rather than simply using people's legitimate needs and concerns to advance agendas which really have nothing to do with giving them the help and the kind of government they need and deserve.

(1120)

We could work co-operatively and we could respect the decisions that have been made as to how best to help people. We could respect our jurisdictions and the proper roles each level of government has. If we could do that, all Canadians would be much better served.

As members know, the Reform Party has put forward a number of proposals to better meet the health care, education and social welfare needs of Canadians. We have done this in light of the realities we face today, in light of the fact that some of the past assumptions simply have not proven to be correct or workable. Today is not the time when I will talk specifically about those.

It should be the will of all of us serving as federal or provincial legislators, or as municipal officials, at whatever level we are trying to meet the needs and protect the interests of the citizens we serve to work co-operatively. We must work to find ways where each of us can make the best contribution for the good of our citizens, where we can bring our country together, where we can work together and build a strong future. With that in mind, I move:

That the motion be amended by adding immediately following the word "denounce" the following: "for the sake of national unity".

When we work together in a unified way, we will best serve the legitimate and very real needs of all the people of this country.

*Supply*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The amendment proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North is in order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I had prepared a speech but, given what I have heard here this morning, particularly from the Minister of Finance, I will start by replying to the Minister of Finance. I was flabbergasted to hear the Minister of Finance say what I heard him say this morning, when he talked about employment, compassion for the poor, people on welfare, the 808,000 Quebecers who are currently on the welfare rolls. He said, his hand to his heart, that he had done all he could to help these people and that it was our turn.

He is the one responsible in the first place for the hardship experienced by these people in Quebec as well as in the rest of Canada. It is his doing. He is the one who, out of compassion for the unemployed, cut \$7 billion from the UI fund. He is the one who pushed some of the unemployed and more to come, with their families, onto welfare because of tighter requirements brought about by his cuts.

Now he has the gall to tell us to call upon our head office, in Quebec, to establish real policies to fight poverty when he himself, as the Minister of Finance, his government, and his Prime Minister in particular, are seriously interfering not only with economic recovery but also with improving the lot of the most unfortunate families in Quebec and Canada.

(1125)

That is dreadful. I will tell the Minister of Finance right away that he better stop taking his instructions from the Power Corporation head office or that of the Bronfmans and the rest and start working for and serving the people who elected him instead of his friends, the large corporations, who benefit from a tax system of an unprecedented generosity because there are so many loopholes in it that it looks like Swiss cheese. The Bronfmans, the Desmarais and the rest take advantage of such loopholes.

I have a hard time containing myself sometimes when I see how few measures he takes and consider his personal situation, but I will not dwell on that because we, Bloc members, are too polite to engage in this kind of thing. But I find it despicable that such a man can say that he is compassionate, given that he is the one responsible for the hardship of these people.

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

**Mr. Loubier:** He said that instead of creating economic uncertainty by talking about sovereignty, we should join them. First of all, he is the one creating uncertainty by not proposing

budget measures. Moody's realized that in February. Moody's understood that when it downgraded Canada's rating. We truly regret that, but the agency recognized that the Minister of Finance had demonstrated his incompetence over the past year. The minister took no appropriate action for a medium-term control of Canada's deficit and debt. He is the one creating uncertainty. He is the one who is confusing the economic situation and leading the country on the road to ruin.

So, we urge him to stop talking about uncertainty, to look in his own backyard and to ask himself what he has done in the past year as finance minister to regain control of public finances, what he has done other than to offload his deficit problems onto the provinces and plan an eventual transfer of the federal government's rating cut. These are the real questions he should have asked this morning.

Coming back to Bill C-76, the legislation maintains the national standards in the health sector, and introduces new national standards in the areas of social assistance and post-secondary education. If the provinces do not respect these standards, the federal will cut their funding as it did to the unemployed and welfare recipients, and as it is about to do to our seniors. These measures would limit the provinces' autonomy in their own jurisdiction and would apply to a sector as vital as education for Quebec's cultural identity.

The Minister of Finance proved us right this morning when he came up haphazardly, in an almost unprecedented fashion in this House, with a series of amendments which he intends to eventually table. We do not know when for the minister was so flustered that he did not tell us. But he proved us right. He told us that we were right to fear federal interference in areas which come under Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction, such as education and social assistance.

The Minister of Finance intends to eventually table amendments. We will wait for these amendments. So far, nothing is official, but the minister felt cornered. He knew that the official opposition was right, and is always right, because we are dealing with a bill. So, the minister hurriedly came up with these things in an off-hand, almost arcane manner.

Try to imagine—we are referring to Bill C-76—what it means to have Canada's English speaking majority impose education standards on Quebec. Do you have any idea of the implications? Try to imagine what it means to Quebecers, given our particular historical background.

Canada-wide standards in education would mean that Ontario, Newfoundland and Canada's English speaking majority would define, to some extent, Quebec's education system, a system which perpetuates our identity and our culture from generation to generation.

*Supply*

Can you imagine for a moment Clyde Wells, in Newfoundland, and his elected friends in Ottawa, his associates and accomplices, defining the content of Quebec's education system through the direct use of Canada-wide standards? Does this mean that, for post-secondary education, we would only have 25 per cent control over decisions, while being constantly blackmailed by the federal government regarding the level of transfers?

(1130)

Through this bill, the finance minister and his government are pursuing two aims: first, to crush the legitimate claims of the Quebec government in its own jurisdiction, a fight that has been going on for at least 30 years; and second, to hide from people of Quebec and Canada the real situation with regard to the cuts in the transfer payments to provinces and the impact of these cuts for next year in particular but especially two years from now.

The government is seeking to hide the real situation about the budget transfers as a whole by talking about cash transfers, not tax point transfers. The Minister of Finance is confusing the population when he says that transfers will not decrease over the next few years, because he is talking about tax points and cash transfers whereas only cash transfers should be considered. That is what the federal government has under its control. That is what the federal government can use to blackmail provinces, not tax points. Even the government agrees that tax points are there to stay. They are provincial entitlements. So he mixes everything up, tax points and cash transfers, resulting in a distorted picture of reality.

Here is the reality. The financial transfers as a whole, meaning the federal cash transfers paid to the Quebec government, will decrease by 32 per cent—and this is not peanuts—from 1994–95 to 1997–98 because of the cuts in transfer payments to provinces. It is important to understand that these transfer payments are not a gift from the federal government but are taken from the \$30 billion paid by Quebec taxpayers to the federal government.

I have to point out that these taxes have increased to such an extent since 1982 that it is incredible that the finance minister, who has been in charge for 16 months now, has not thought about considering the situation with regard to taxation. Since 1982, taxes paid by Quebec taxpayers to the federal government have increased by 143 per cent, whereas federal transfer payments to Quebec, cut year after year, and even more since he became finance minister, have increased by only 50 per cent.

On the one hand, taxes paid by Quebec taxpayers have increased by 143 per cent, to \$30 billion at present, and on the other hand, transfer payments have increased by approximately 50 per cent over a 10 year period. That is the situation. It is tangible evidence that this system is not working. When taxes

are raised so steadily while the rate of growth of transfers is being reduced, surely there is a problem somewhere, there are inefficiencies of some kind and some chronic malfunction in the system.

In the coming year alone, cuts announced in the last budget of the Minister of Finance will result in losses in revenues of \$1 billion for Quebec. The direct impact of transfer cuts amounts to \$650 million and the indirect impact, to \$450 million. In 1997, the shortfall resulting from the federal budget will stand at \$2.4 billion.

When we see such things, when we realize the federal government wants to quell legitimate aspirations of the Quebec government and that, at the same time, it is trying to hurt the Quebec fiscal situation and make it even more difficult for the Quebec government to prepare its next budget, we see the Minister of Finance for what he really is. His lack of responsibility becomes obvious. We see his centralist views, that are encouraged by his Prime Minister who took part in all struggles against Quebec during his whole political life. We now see the truth.

Through the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and the Bloc Québécois, we want to restore some order so that the government will not get away as easily as it would have liked to with the shameful measures it took and the almost unprecedented attacks it launched, without warning, against Quebec and its jurisdiction.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** If I understand the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot correctly, he is going to share his time with one of his colleagues. The remarks of the hon. member will be followed by a five minute period for questions and comments.

(1135)

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let me point out a small mistake my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot made when he said that the finance minister had his hand pressed to his heart when he talked about his deep compassion for the destitute. To me, it looked more like it was hovering over his pocketbook, or more precisely over the financial interests of the friends of the government in order to protect their pocketbooks. That is how it looked to me.

Also, during the speech made by one of the members opposite, I heard a statement which is frankly beginning to try my patience. We keep hearing that Canada is the best country in the world. I am sorry, but enough is enough.

This reminds me of a family which was earning a lot of money fifteen or twenty years ago. Without thinking, they bought a beautiful house, a second home, a nice car for the husband, a nice car for his wife, but in these hard times, they find themselves crippled with debts. Everyone keeps saying that the

*Supply*

owners live in the most beautiful house in town, that they are the richest people in the area, when in fact, behind this facade, the owners have to scimp on child care and sacrifice their children's education in order to pay their debts. So, this best country in the world is just a facade behind which we can hardly afford child care.

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

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I was deeply shocked by the remarks of the Minister of Finance.

There may be words which are not parliamentary, but there are also ideas which can be best expressed by saying that the Minister has considerably distanced himself from the truth.

This budget, like the measures taken by this government, has a centralizing effect. Even though the Minister, before trying to discredit us, has made the effort to propose, in a way which is absolutely not parliamentary, amendments to a bill which he has tabled himself and which was interpreted by the reporters and by everybody who has analyzed it exactly as it was by us, he is not fooling anybody. Because we can say that the cuts to UI proposed last year by this government, by this Minister of Finance, have begun to hit people hard, particularly the young people who are not entitled any more to UI benefits because they have not worked for a sufficient length of time and the women who go back to work and who are not entitled to UI benefits either. All these workers who suddenly see their benefit period shortened and the amount of these benefits reduced have been hit hard.

People who sometimes watch these debates have experienced and continue to experience daily the effect of these cuts and they know it. But what they still do not know is that these cuts were used this year to accumulate surpluses of more than 3 billion dollars for next year and of 5 billion dollars for the following years. These surpluses will shelter the federal government from the next recession, whereas the provinces where transfers were cut dramatically will see their number of people on welfare rise.

Imagine, during this so-called period of prosperity, 5,000 more people each month go on welfare in Quebec. But there is more. Not only will the federal government be sheltered, but it has also announced a new reform of UI which will impose new cuts of \$700 million next year, and of \$1.5 billion the year after, on top of all the other ones my colleagues spoke of.

(1140)

These amounts will be put into a new fund which is not mentioned in the act implementing the Budget, a fund which will be used at the sole discretion of the Minister of Human Resources Development. This fund is called the Human Re-

sources Investment Fund and can come directly into play in provincial jurisdictions. It can focus more on employment development services, such as needs assessment, counselling services, literacy and basic skills training, training and experience in the workplace, child care support, and income supplements for people on welfare.

The truth is that this government proposes, with this discretionary fund, after having starved the provinces, to force them to take the heat because of the cuts they will have to make. It is Quebec's ministers who are being blamed for cuts which were decided by the federal government.

After that, the central government will have a fund and say: "So, you are having problems? We will—" As if the money did not come out of the same pocket. The central government will say that it has come up with a certain amount from UI premiums and employers premiums, from amounts which will have been cut elsewhere. And then, the government will be able to show itself in the best light. Not only that, it will be able to ignore the provinces' conditions.

For the other provinces of Canada, maybe this is not a problem, but Quebec is a distinct people and nation. In 1965-66, when René Lévesque was the minister responsible for family and welfare, he said that we should regain control over the family allowances program in order to transform it into a system adapted to our society and to our particular needs.

Thirty years later, far from having been able to build a system adapted to our own needs, to the particular needs of Quebecers, we see ourselves increasingly choked in the jurisdictions where the federal government forced us to retreat. Furthermore, the federal government keeps funds that are not available to pay for services that would conform to its own standards but would nonetheless be designed by Quebec so it can use it to intensify its direct action by handing out yellow cheques bearing a maple leaf.

Not only is that a move toward increased centralization, but it is a radical reform of the regime where Quebec thought that it had a state in which, moreover, it felt it was destined to realize its potential. But the more things evolve, the more that state, which seemed to be a given, is stripped of the very means that were supposed to serve to protect the interests and the civic life of its citizens. From now on, the federal government, which has shown itself unable to manage its own affairs, wants to dispense all the services directly.

On the one hand, it wants the provinces, Quebec, to make the cuts and the painful choices that will make them look insensitive while, on the other hand, it will keep its spending power, its power to add to the debt. By using the unemployment insurance premiums paid by workers and businesses, it will be able to

impose not only its standards, but also its own programs, its own ways to deal with the needs.

(1145)

It goes further than ever. It interferes directly, no longer through standards, no longer by requiring—as we have seen in the 40s—constitutional reforms because the only constitutional reforms this country has ever seen are those which provided for the transfer of provincial powers to Ottawa, never the other way around. Not content with having done that, not content with having starved provinces which had put in place programs according to their own requirements, the federal government is now preparing to provide these services, in total contravention of what seemed to be the beginning of a contractual relationship.

The people of Quebec, the nation of Quebec has specific and distinct needs. It is a people, a nation according to all national standards. It is a people, a nation wishing to control its own destiny because, it is unthinkable that under the present circumstances—with 808,000 persons on welfare, more than 400 000 unemployed, young people who have no longer any hope—the current situation can continue, and to be told that instead of discussing these issues, we should accept the federal government's invitation that the finance minister presumably sent us, is simply outrageous!

It is outrageous! Words fail me; it is senseless! From the very beginning the people of Quebec have always wished to obtain minimum recognition. Their efforts were always answered with a blatant and insulting no. Now, in view of the economic and social mess this country is in, a situation we are trying to get out of by any means possible, they tell us to co-operate, to collaborate. It is an insult, not for us, not for the members of the Bloc Québécois who were sent here to defend the interests of Quebec, to protect the future of Quebec, but it is an insult for all Quebecers, for all those who are suffering from these policies, for all those who can no longer tolerate that Quebec is unable to go about it alone.

Sure, there is a debt, sure there will still be a debt afterwards, but at least we will be able to set our own priorities and to use our resources for the development of Quebec and for creating hope. Far from being useless, this debate will have given us another opportunity to reveal the true face of this government, whose only goal is to subjugate the people of Quebec once and for all.

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what the member for Mercier and her colleagues said a little while ago. I always find it difficult to understand the Bloc's logic, and today is no exception.

The Bloc is always seeking a little bit more autonomy for Quebec regarding federal expenditures. The budget gives great

### *Supply*

er autonomy and flexibility in transfer payments, and the Bloc sees in this flexibility less autonomy and more centralization. It wants to hold a referendum to separate Quebec from Canada, but now that it believes that it might lose it because, increasingly, Quebecers are saying, through polls, other media and forums, that they are not interested in the proposed separation, it is starting to realize that the referendum it decided to hold is doomed; it wants to blame the federal government for the fact that it is going to lose the referendum.

(1150)

The hon. member mentioned the need to get our financial houses in order, not only at the federal level whose expenditures are, for the main part, transferred directly to the provinces, including Quebec, through equalization, social transfers and other mechanisms offering more and more freedom to the provinces. We are looking for ways to co-operate with the provinces and with Quebec, but we are accused of always trying to centralize. It is impossible to co-operate with someone who does not want to.

My question to the member is in connection with the motion before us today: How does the social transfer give less freedom to Quebec to manage its own finances within this envelope? What are the new conditions set by the Canadian government in this envelope?

**Mrs. Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, first, my hon. colleague says he does not understand. I think this is evident. It is also evident that Quebecers have seen over the years that this central government does not understand, that maybe it is not even listening, that the budget includes some centralizing measures. I spoke about the human resources investment fund which is an extremely important centralization measure.

I will answer the question very precisely and would ask the member to refer to clause 48 of Bill C-76, a fundamental part of that bill, which says two things; it is a two faced budget and it is a two faced clause. On the one hand it says it will increase flexibility for the provinces and, on the other, it maintains national conditions established in the Canada Health Act and, where appropriate, national standards for the operation of other social programs. Those other social programs are explained later on, in clause 53; they are health, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services. So my answer is very precise, it comes directly from the bill.

If some of us here do not understand, it is the members from the other side. I think they have not read the bill or, if they have, they feel they must do like the Minister of Finance who thinks he has to announce some amendments before he can talk, before he can answer. He used an approach which, I repeat, is entirely unparliamentary. I wonder if my hon. colleague saw those amendments because we read directly from the bill here in the House. If we were to listen to what we hear, to what the



*Supply*

government says are its intentions, we would find the government has many intentions, which are often contradictory.

We are members of Parliament and we work with bills. This bill entitles, even forces the Bloc Québécois to take the positions it is taking this morning, on this opposition day. We would not be doing our job if we neglected to take such positions. The best proof of that is again that the Minister of Finance, before speaking to us, felt he had to announce some amendments we have not even seen. We are eager to see them.

(1155)

Something else also confirms that we are right and that is, I repeat, that the minister felt he had to use an unparliamentary approach and announce amendments. So I can easily understand that he does not understand.

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with the hon. member for Vaudreuil.

Since my arrival in this House, I have come to the conclusion that the surprises will never end. The opposition, which never misses an opportunity to label the government a “champion of the status quo”, has risen today to denounce this initiative.

This same opposition which constantly advocates decentralization, is today objecting to the government transferring greater responsibility to the provinces in the area of social security. Although they continually preach that federalism is a system that is too rigid, they are now opposing a measure precisely intended to allow greater flexibility in the application of programs.

Because this is exactly what the new Canada health and social transfer (CHST) announced in last February’s budget is intended to do: to give the provinces more latitude in the area of funding and management of health care, post-secondary education and social services.

On April 1, 1996, the new program will replace the Canada assistance plan and established program financing for health and post-secondary education. Under the new program, the provinces will receive block funding for social assistance and social services, health care and post-secondary education.

It is known that the current Canada assistance plan is an obstacle to innovation because of its overly restrictive cost-sharing requirements.

[*English*]

The Canada health and social transfer will give the provinces the flexibility they need to implement innovative approaches to social programs so they can be more effective in meeting the specific needs of their clients. For the provinces this is good news, because it establishes social assistance and income secu-

urity measures, which for all sorts of technical reasons are not always eligible for funding under the Canada assistance plan.

It is good news, in particular, for Quebec, which is always in the forefront of innovation in the area of social security. For example, Quebec’s APPORT program provides wage assistance to low income families with children and encourages parents on welfare to return to the labour market and helps low income parents keep their jobs.

[*Translation*]

Since its inception in 1988, this program has never been eligible for cost-sharing under CAP because it was not based on needs testing and therefore did not meet CAP requirements. It was the same thing with its ancestor, the work income supplement program, introduced in 1979.

In the 1970s, various social measures aimed at protecting disadvantaged children in schools could not be cofinanced under CAP either because they did not meet the definition of “social protection services”, which excluded education-related services.

Probation services for young offenders were excluded from funding under CAP for a similar reason: the definition of “social protection services” also excluded correctional services.

Several other progressive measures implemented by the provinces were not eligible for funding under CAP because they were not based on needs testing or did not meet the definition of “social protection services”. This was the case for a number of programs aimed at assisting persons with disabilities or impairments, such as self administered care programs, community-based services and para-transit services.

(1200)

All these measures are presently ineligible for funding under the Canada assistance plan. CAP’s excessive rigidity tends to discourage provincial initiatives and innovation. Yet these are social programs and services that are effective in meeting people’s real needs. They provide assistance that is geared to specific needs and situations. And all of these measures will be eligible for full funding under the new Canada health and social transfer.

[*English*]

As a Quebecker I am appalled that my provincial government refuses to see any other issue than the separation of Quebec. Even today’s discussion will be used to fuel its separatist arguments.

I have before me examples of projects and agreements reached between the federal government and the other provinces which have taken strong initiatives in addressing the specific problems they and their citizens are facing. Unfortunately the PQ government has one issue on its mind. As the Prime Minister said this past weekend, I am ashamed the PQ government cannot look beyond the Constitution and the real problems facing

*Supply*

Quebecers today, especially the poor in Quebec and in my riding of Saint—Denis.

The federal government is looking forward while the PQ government is looking constantly backwards with public money. It is doing it with my taxpayer money. It is using that money to fuel separatist sentiments. The PQ government shows no leadership at all. There is no creativity or innovation in terms of sitting down with the federal government to look at what types of programs will help the most disadvantaged and the poor in Quebec.

This is the type of country members of the PQ want to create, where there is one issue only: let us separate. They do not look beyond that but place the blame on the federal government. I am tired of the same violin story playing all the time. They continue to say the federal government is the culprit of all the ills that befall Quebec society. That is totally false.

Why were many actions taken by the government with other provincial governments through negotiation and collaboration? I will name a few. The Atlantic provinces have been hit the hardest in terms of unemployment and the current economic climate. Why were these provinces able to sit down to negotiate agreements with the federal government, thereby helping the more disadvantaged and the unemployed in their provinces? Why did my provincial government not do the same thing?

It organized commissions with taxpayers' money, prepared documents with taxpayers' money, talked and talked and continues to talk and all for one reason, to achieve the dream of separation; a dream the majority of Quebecers do not share. They do not share that dream yet the PQ government, with its friends on the other side of the House, continues to talk about one thing. As we all know, it continues to talk about it in different languages. Its only concern for the poor, the unemployed and the most disadvantaged is to accuse the federal government of a lack of vision and a lack of leadership.

[*Translation*]

With this new program, the provinces will have all the latitude they need to implement and fund pilot projects and new employability measures. They will no longer have to submit to rigid and restrictive requirements, as they currently have to. If they want, they will even be able to combine social assistance, health or education measures.

In fact, with respect to social assistance, the provinces will have to meet only one requirement under the Canada health and social transfer. They will not be able to deny social services to people who are entitled to social assistance because they have not fulfilled a residency requirement.

[*English*]

I repeat the only real national requirement under the Canada health and social transfer with regard to social assistance is that which concerns health and residence requirements. That requirement is not based on the idle whim of the federal government. It reflects the wishes and expectations of all Canadians. It reflects our desire to preserve the notion of freedom of movement within Canada between provinces.

(1205)

[*Translation*]

It seems just as contradictory to say that the government wants to limit the provinces to a mere consultative role when, as I just explained, they will be able to apply the social programs they deem most appropriate in whatever manner they see fit, and will be the ones in charge in this area.

The Canada health and social transfer is an important initiative that responds both to today's social imperatives and to the fiscal pressures facing government. And it is also a striking demonstration of the flexibility of Canadian federalism, which allows us, simply by means of legislation, to make major adjustments within areas of jurisdiction.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed with the remarks made by the member who just said that Quebec is the country's poorest province because of eight to ten months of Parti Québécois government. This province has been a part of Canada for 128 years and, before the PQ took office, we had ten years of provincial Liberal government, which proves that federalism is neither desirable nor cost-effective for Quebec.

Furthermore, it is one of the basic reasons why we will separate from Canada. It is very important to us to become responsible for our own development and to stop relying on transfer payments. In this respect, the federal government is sending us a most interesting message, saying that it can no longer borrow funds at the expense of future generations as it has done for the last twenty years.

You are trying to hide this behind a transfer of responsibilities to the provinces. Try this in any other area, Madam—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I remind hon. members that they must always address the Chair.

**Mr. Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment to the member. Try cutting anybody's budget by 15 per cent and telling them that they have all the flexibility in the world to do what they want with what is left. There is something wrong with this approach, which will inevitably lead to the balkanization of Canada.

The Council of Canadians, an organization certainly that cannot be called separatist, told the finance committee last

*Supply*

week, concerning this bill, that if the federal government wants to impose national standards without providing the necessary funding, it will simply come up against a wall of negativity from the provinces.

The federal government cannot ask the provinces to maintain Canadian standards if they do not have the money to do so. And they will not have the money to do so. As the saying goes, "once bitten, twice shy". How can the provinces, which were humiliated once by the oh so wise federal government when it decided to hold a forum on health without making sure of the provinces' participation, how can they agree to take part in a process that is biased from the start?

**Mrs. Bakopanos:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have already said that, at any rate, the Government of Quebec does not want to participate in the initiatives already taken by the federal government. Every province in Canada wants to participate, except Quebec.

I think that the official opposition should be very careful when talking about links with the federal government, because we have already proposed administrative agreements. Several of them, which could, in fact, have helped Quebecers, were not signed by the Parti Quebecois government. Now, the hon. member dares to raise such an issue.

I think we have to look at what is behind what is happening in Quebec, and I think that I put my finger on it earlier, and that is that the current government, the Parti Quebecois, has only one goal, and that is to bring about Quebec's separation from Canada. They have devoted all of their energies, human resources and money to this cause, and have taken no other initiative in the past six months.

(1210)

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when Rome burned, Nero fiddled. He was out of touch with the day's reality. Similarly, I find this motion out of touch with reality.

The members of the opposition try at all cost, take every opportunity, to discredit the federal government, particularly with regard to interprovincial and government jurisdictions.

The only thing Canadians and Quebecers want from their government, be it provincial or federal, is action. Let us stop this stupid business about jurisdiction of power.

[English]

Canada is undergoing nothing short of a revolution. Our economy is being transformed from a traditional resource based and labour intensive one to one that is globalized, information based and knowledge intensive. The effects are being felt by business and industry. They are certainly being felt often painfully by workers, be they loggers, farmers, fishermen, miners or even assembly line workers. They are being felt by our

teachers and students and they are being felt by governments at all levels.

Nowadays we warn young people preparing to enter the workforce that they will probably change careers several times during their working lives; I am talking about not just jobs but careers.

We have engaged once again in a sterile debate on jurisdiction while our constituents, including those of the Bloc Quebecois, are looking to their governments to create the environment to guarantee continuing jobs and ensure the training to match the skills needed for tomorrow's jobs.

The Government of Canada is determined to remain steadfast to that goal. The government was swept to power with a resounding victory and a vote of confidence by Canadians and Quebecers who were clearly ready for change. They believed in our commitment to create jobs and to prepare people for those new jobs.

[Translation]

While the members of the Bloc Quebecois contemplate their navel and get lost in jurisdictional discussions, the government, fortunately, is not letting Canadians down.

[English]

Since the government came into office no less than 454,000 full time jobs have been created; strong evidence of enough employer confidence in the economy to offer stable full time employment rather than part time jobs. This job creation performance has surpassed even the most optimistic predictions including those of the OECD.

The OECD predicted Canadian employment growth of 1.2 per cent last year. It was almost double the rate, growing at 2.1 per cent.

I remember a former prime minister said we would have to wait until the year 2002 to see unemployment fall below 10 per cent. Fortunately she did not get elected and today we are enjoying an employment rate of 9.7 per cent. We hope to do better. We must do better.

The OECD estimates Canada's employment growth for 1995-96 will be the highest among all G-7 countries, even surpassing the United States. Given our track record so far there is every reason to suspect these predictions will once again prove to be modest.

[Translation]

The members of the Bloc Quebecois should also recognize that Quebec has benefitted by Canada's efforts.

[English]

In the employment figures for the last two months of this year Quebec has experienced strong employment growth with a gain

of 14,000 jobs in February alone. The employment rate in Quebec declined from 11.5 per cent, the lowest since 1991.

Job creation initiatives by the government directly and in co-operation with the province have contributed a significant share. Since October 1993 some 120,000 jobs have been created and almost 36,000 Canadians were provided with training through initiatives of their government such as the infrastructure program, youth internship and strategic initiatives, to name a few.

(1215)

Statistics are very cold. They do not tell us the human stories behind the job creation figures. They do not describe how so many Canadians have regained their self-respect knowing they are no longer dependants but contributors to this fine country.

Statistics do not show the efforts of determined people and co-operative government action and how they can be made to work for the good of all Canadians.

Statistics do not tell us, for example, about Le relais des jeunes adultes du Sud-Ouest de Montréal. It is a job search training organization funded by the federal government in partnership with two Quebec departments. Human Resources Development Canada provided nearly \$800,000 last year. Sixty-five per cent of the participants in this program have found work.

Statistics also do not tell us how 250 people are participating in entrepreneurship development jointly funded by Quebec and Canada, where 21 entrepreneurs have set up their own businesses.

Statistics also do not tell us of the federal-Quebec effort that arose from the closing of the Hyundai plant in Bromont. Some \$8 million federal funds helped 556 participants, 80 per cent of whom have found work or gone on to further vocational training.

I could go on citing such projects. None of them are earth shaking in themselves, however they constitute the real story behind Canada's good fortune in terms of job creation.

The other straight fact to which members opposite have turned a blind eye to time and time again is that co-operative action among governments, including the federal government and Quebec, does succeed in helping Canadians help themselves.

Canada's economic prospects have not looked this good in a very long time. Productivity has surged. Canada's cost competitiveness is at the highest level in more than 40 years. Our trade surplus is up. All of this is not by accident.

From the speech from the throne which formed the government's agenda, through to the most recent speech by the Minister of Finance, the Government of Canada has introduced cohesive and concerted strategies aimed at advancing the agenda for jobs and growth.

### *Supply*

Last October the Minister of Finance tabled "A New Framework for Economic Policy" which proposed a broad framework for policies for economic growth. Then "Creating a Healthy Fiscal Climate" takes steady aim at the deficit. Equally, the Minister of Industry released "Building a More Innovative Economy", a series of measures and strategies to create a climate of economic growth and job opportunities throughout the country.

In February the budget delivered on the government's pledge to get the country's fiscal house in order, restoring investor confidence and clearing the way for further employment growth.

Taken together, these efforts are radically reshaping government involvement in the economy. They are already producing results. The policy initiatives, coupled with strategic partnerships with the provinces, territories, business, labour, educators, community workers and committed individuals are creating jobs for Canadians.

There is a message for all of us in this. Healthy economies in today's highly competitive and internationalized world are not made without consistent, concerted efforts on the part of all citizens, all businesses, all institutions and all levels of governments.

If Canadians are not up to the competition, job creation will simply not continue. We are a small market in global terms. It takes the strength of united effort to ensure competitiveness. The workers of many nations are quite ready and, in today's global economy, quite able to jump into the breach should Canadians flag in their efforts.

[*Translation*]

It is the job of governments to do everything in their power to ensure the best possible tools are in place in order to develop an effective program to create quality jobs and to equip our workers to find and, more importantly, keep jobs.

[*English*]

It does not serve our constituents well in any part of Quebec or Canada to fiddle while Rome burns with petty jurisdictional concerns. The Government of Canada is prepared to challenge conventional wisdom, to adopt new policies and fresh approaches.

We have made it clear that the government is willing to work closely and co-operate with the provinces and the territories.

(1220)

A number of new measures from strategic initiatives of the human resources investment fund have already been outlined to address problems with labour market development. We recognize the need for flexibility. Labour market demands vary from province to province. Each region of the country has its own vision and its own agenda. We understand that and local people best respond to local needs.

*Supply*

I suggest to members opposite that their constituents do not care what logo is on the letterhead as long as efficient, quality service is provided and prospective employment income can improve.

The federal government must clearly work with the provinces to maintain national standards, ensuring that the skills people develop are recognized and portable throughout the country and keep us competitive with the world.

The federal government is ready to go to work. It is confident that we can perform this role in a complementary fashion that will support and reinforce the labour force development efforts of all provinces and territorial governments.

In conclusion, I take as proof of our ability to succeed Canada's recent record of growth and job creation, the envy of every G-7 member. It demonstrates the soundness of the course charted for Canada by the government. With less bickering it would undoubtedly have been much better.

Now is the time for co-operation. Canadians demand it. Our task is to explore how we can work together to reform, restructure and rebuild our communities and our country to ensure that each and every Quebecer, each and every Canadian has the opportunity to share in our future prosperity.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I must say I was very surprised to hear the hon. member for Vaudreuil accuse the official opposition of playing the fiddle while Rome burns. The question is, who started the fire in the first place? The hon. member for Vaudreuil should have listened to the Leader of the Opposition when he said that what is happening in Canada today reminds us of the arsonist who blamed the firefighters for doing a bad job, because these fires have been burning for a long time in Canada.

When we realize that for the past 12 years, the Canadian government has cut transfer payments to Quebec by a total of \$14.4 billion, which means more than one billion annually, is it any wonder this would have an impact on the public finances of the Government of Quebec? This year, the federal government maintained this trend by cutting another billion. Next year—not this year, because of the referendum campaign but next year—it will be \$2.4 billion, reflecting the government's increasingly devious plans to make cuts at the expense of low wage earners.

I want to commend the hon. member for Mercier on her excellent and very instructive speech in which she explained that the unemployment insurance fund does not belong to the federal government. It consists of the premiums paid by workers and employers, but the federal government is appropriating this money, so that after bringing the provinces, including Quebec,

to their knees, it can then say: If you do not have enough money for your social programs, we do, thanks to the way we managed these funds which do not belong to us—the unemployment insurance premiums paid by workers and their employers.

I would like to ask the hon. member for Vaudreuil what he thinks about all this, what he thinks about the announcement in the budget speech which was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition and what he thinks about this committee that is looking into the administration of old age pensions, to increase them, of course.

**Mr. Discepola:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, Rome is burning. They used to talk about the “beau risque”. Now it is a “beau virage”, and today, we have this separatist mirage Quebecers are being asked to embrace, but no one is really interested.

(1225)

That is why I said that Rome is burning, or rather that Nero is fiddling instead of dealing with the real problems in our society.

The hon. member said that the federal government just happened to leave out equalization, because equalization always benefits Quebec. But if we include equalization, the tax burden on the province of Quebec represents only 1.4 per cent of their total revenue. That is their tax burden: \$350 million. But when we talk about money, it is always the same money and the same taxpayer.

The municipal government takes it out of your left-hand pocket, the federal government takes it out of both pockets and the provincial government takes it out of your right-hand pocket, but the pockets all belong to the same taxpayer. Yes, some responsibilities have been passed on to the provinces, but they were also allowed some flexibility. Flexibility in how they manage their programs and structure them according to their needs.

This is not a burden on the provinces. In fact, six provinces have already brought down balanced budgets. It is now up to the Province of Quebec to do likewise before the referendum.

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, really, the things you hear in this House. As the critic of the official opposition for regional development it is with pleasure and interest that I rise during this official opposition day. The federal government's attitude, denounced by the Bloc Québécois, which consists in restricting the provinces to a strictly advisory role by imposing new national standards following the budget of the Minister of Finance in February, has a direct negative effect on regional development in Quebec.

Bill C-76, an act to implement certain provisions of the federal budget for 1995-96, far from eliminating the intrusions of the federal government in areas under provincial jurisdiction,

allows it, by imposing national standards, to multiply its interventions while increasing the impact of its intrusions.

We know that following this budget Ottawa had decided to merge in a new "Canada social transfer" its whole package of contributions to the provinces in such areas as health care, social services and post-secondary education. This decision of the federal government represents in the short term some savings and Liberals call that a fight against the deficit.

The fact is that as a result funds allocated to the provinces are cut by \$2.5 billion in 1995-96 and by \$4.5 billion in 1997-98. In 1997-98 the Canada social transfer envelope is going to be allocated among the provinces according to a criterion yet to be negotiated. If the chosen criterion is the present mode of distribution, which is not very likely, Quebec will suffer a \$1.2 billion shortfall.

Rather, the objective of the federal government and its Minister of Finance is to allocate the Canada social transfer envelope on a per capita basis, so that Quebec will in fact bear 41.7 per cent of the cuts in transfer payments to the provinces across Canada in 1997-98. With this distribution criterion, the loss of income for Quebec jumps from \$1.2 billion to \$1.9 billion.

With the new Canada social transfer and the implementation of new national standards, the federal government, while relegating the provinces to a purely advisory role and further centralizing action, will once again impoverish Quebec and threaten regional development.

In the last budget and in Bill C-76, we see that the Minister of Human Resources Development intends to use the savings from unemployment insurance reform—that is \$5 billion in cutbacks in 1994 plus \$700 million more in 1995—to create a human resource investment fund.

(1230)

This fund will be used, among other things, to finance manpower training programs, a power unanimously demanded by Quebecers. Clearly, this has a direct impact on regional development. With initiatives such as the Canada social transfer and the cuts in unemployment insurance, the federal government will use all the money it is going to save elsewhere for massive, centralizing and discretionary interventions, totally disregarding totally the policies of Quebec in the area of regional development.

In fact, the goal of the measures contained in the February budget is to direct the economic development of Quebec, to refuse to recognize the distinct character of that society by assimilating the evolution of Quebec into the Canadian policies on regional development.

### *Supply*

In Quebec, companies, trade unions, local authorities and the co-operative movement no longer fear to take their development into their own hands. In forums such as the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, they reached a very wide consensus and demanded that the government of Quebec be the only one to control the economic development of these regions.

With the budget measures I already mentioned, there is no doubt about the intentions of the federal government. It wants to stimulate Canada's gross domestic product by promoting an area, an industrial region. So, the economic climate really takes precedence over the structural dimension in most of the interventions of the federal government in the regions.

We know that today, the federal government is interested only in small and medium size exporting and technology firms, in total disregard of the overall strategic regional structural development plans which concern all areas of activity in a society. This attitude, and the interference of the federal government in regional development, will be harmful, in the long run, to the development of Quebec.

We have to remember that regional development is not covered under the Canadian Constitution, and that forces Quebec to enter into endless negotiations to conclude agreements or "agréments", as the member for Brome-Missisquoi says.

Those agreements inevitably open the way to numerous awkward intrusions by the federal government in regional development. Bill C-76 proves that. These are obvious, clear and open intrusions. The Quebec regions suffer from the numerous interferences in regional development and from the lack of consistency of government policies.

While dropping its financial involvement in the provinces, the central government is leaving its administrative structures there. Consequently, duplication and overlap not only remain, but are sanctioned. Even if those administrative structures are becoming more and more symbolic, they are even more costly and hinder the dynamics of regional development in Quebec.

The Federal Office of Regional Development is a good example of squandering by the federal government. When will there be a comprehensive structural reform of the federal regime? In spite of the decentralization measures that the government announced at the beginning of the year, the Liberals have not made any changes. More and more, they are using national standards as a means to centralize. Centralization is the golden rule of federal Liberals.

The objective of the Bloc Québécois, the official opposition, is to make the federal government realize that it has to withdraw completely from regional development in Quebec and recognize Quebec as the sole master of regional development. For over forty years, there has been, in the nation of Quebec, a much more

*Supply*

efficient and responsive attitude, in terms of regional development, to the needs of peripheral regions. I repeat that at present, there is a series of general agreements between the government of Quebec and its 16 administrative regions.

(1235)

Each region has conducted its own strategic study on small business and industrial development. These general agreements confirm the importance for Quebec to be close to these regions and to decentralize within the province, contrary to what the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec is doing, in the light of federal imperatives based on a mythical and centralizing vision of what industrial development should be in Canada.

The new role of the Federal Office of Regional Development is merely a duplication and overlapping of jurisdictions. Merged with the Department of Industry, it has become a business service centre, whereas there is already in Quebec a totally adequate information service and strategic assistance analysis entity available to small business, including exporting firms. The existence of a parallel network of 13 regional offices within the Federal Office of Development—Quebec is inappropriate, a duplication of services and, ultimately, a waste of public funds.

Because of cuts to provincial transfers as the result of the Liberals' February budget and Bill C-76 implementing it, financial transfers to Quebec will decrease by 32 per cent between 1994-95 and 1997-98. That is viable federalism, I would even say that is Ottawa's new administrative flexibility towards Quebec: cut, cut, cut.

It is important to understand that financial transfers are not a gift from the federal government, but are funded with our taxes. A sovereign Quebec would recover about \$30 billion in taxes that Quebecers are paying to the federal government. It would recover this amount and administer it itself, according to its own priorities and its own strategic development plans. But because of cuts made by the federal government to provincial transfer payments between 1982 and 1993, taxes paid by Quebecers to the federal government increased by 143 per cent, while financial transfers from the federal government to Quebec only increased by 50 per cent. In terms of regional development, this situation has had the following effect since 1983: annual federal funds for regional development increased by only 50 per cent in Quebec, while they increased by 250 per cent in the Maritimes and by 300 per cent in Western Canada.

In conclusion, as far as Quebec is concerned, this means that the Quebec State and its regions should manage their own policy. And when Quebecers have decided their political auton-

omy by basing their development on education, professional training, dialogue between unions, businesses, universities and communities coming from the 16 administrative regions, then Quebec will have total control over the tools for its own development. There will then be an open and happy country.

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that my colleagues of the opposition would want to debate on a motion which says that the federal government will impose standards on provinces. I read the document tabled in this House by Mr. Martin on February 27, 1995 and nowhere can I find the word "impose". It only says that the federal government wants to start discussions with the provinces in order to establish standards and goals, so that there will be minimum standards all across Canada.

I do not understand why my colleague is so allergic to the words "goal" and "standard". There is nothing different there.

(1240)

I would simply like to mention to the hon. member that in the *Hansard* of May 4, 1989, on page 1291, Mr. Bouchard who was then a conservative minister, said and I quote:

That being said, the best way to guarantee that social programs will be preserved is to maintain a strong government that is able to intervene and to stand by its commitments to our neediest fellow Canadians.

So stated Lucien Bouchard on May 4, 1989, page 1291.

I agree with what Mr. Bouchard said in 1989 and as a matter of fact I—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I simply wish to remind the House that as parliamentarians we should always refer to one another as the member for such and such riding, the minister of such and such portfolio, the Leader of the Opposition, but not by our names.

**Mr. Harb:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask my colleague of the opposition if he agrees completely with what the Leader of the Opposition said in 1989.

I would like my colleague to tell me if he agrees with what his leader said in 1989.

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank the member for his question. I just want to remind him that the most vicious aspect of this venture is the use of the words "national standards", and we know why.

When the federal government had the power to spend money borrowed from future generations, there were no national standards. The federal government was spending money and interfering in provincial jurisdictions as much as it pleased.

*Supply*

Now that the federal government must slash its budget, it prefers to talk about flexibility rather than spending power. However, your government's flexibility is strictly a matter of passing the bill to provinces and telling them: "You will make your own decisions while applying our national standards". That is underhanded.

Now, regarding the quote you gave us, one of your colleagues—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order, please. Again, I perfectly understand that today's topic is very important and members who rise have very strong ideas to communicate. However, I would like all the remarks to be addressed to the Chair.

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague says, it is a warm exchange of views.

Concerning the National Forum on Health, I wish to quote comments made by the member for Saint-Henri—Westmount when she was a provincial minister: "The federal government's behaviour is absurd". That is what the Quebec Minister of Health, Lucienne Robillard, said in an interview on the phone.

"How can we even think of reforming the health care system without the participation of the provinces who are responsible for delivering the services? It is simply unacceptable". That was reported in the September 27, 1994 issue of *La Presse*.

This is what your colleague said, the one that is now among us, your courageous colleague who was not elected but appointed as a member of Parliament. A member had been democratically elected, but he was given a plum position in the Prime Minister's office in exchange for his riding, where this courageous minister had to struggle fiercely to be elected.

I want to quote this same minister in response to your statement. Here is what she said as minister. "I say things as I see them",—this is what your colleague for Saint-Henri—Westmount said—"in Quebec the provincial government is still the level the most directly, exclusively and inextricably linked to the future of our society. A distinct society which, whatever we might think or say, is able to conduct its own destiny and prepare its future". That is what we want to do in Quebec—prepare our future by becoming a people, by becoming a country".

(1245)

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I could hardly wait to rise in the House on this allotted day to take part in the debate on an issue which is crucial not only in Quebec but especially in Quebec.

Let me read you the motion, because I think it is important to put this debate in its proper perspective, especially since our Liberal colleagues seem to get lost in all kinds of considerations. The motion put forward reads as follows:

That this House denounce the will of the federal government to restrict the provinces to the role of mere consultant by imposing on them new national standards for all social programs through the introduction of the Canada Social Transfer, which will enable the federal government to interfere even more in such areas as health, post-secondary education and social assistance, all of which come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

That is under our current Constitution, of course. This is the motion now before the House.

First of all, I would like to say how stunned I was to see that the Minister of Finance was the main spokesperson for the government, the individual chosen by the members of the government to speak on their behalf at the beginning of this debate, even though the motion concerns the Minister of Human Resources Development more directly.

Where is the Minister of Human Resources Development? Why is he not taking part in this crucial debate where we would be very pleased to hear what he has to say about the federal policies and their impact on areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction? In my humble opinion, I think the Minister of Human Resources Development should be called the Minister of Human Resources Discouragement and Impoverishment, because that is exactly what he is.

We are now faced with a government whose main objective is to pick on the destitute. They were elected under false pretences, because during the election campaign, they said they would defend our social programs, the permanence of our social programs and the rights of the poorest members of our society. Right after the election, in his first budget, the Minister of Finance, or rather the minister of provincial impoverishment, made cuts in transfers to the provinces and in unemployment insurance, and as if this was not enough, he struck again in his second budget with even greater force.

Last weekend, I was shocked, as were, I am sure, the majority of Quebecers, to hear the Prime Minister criticize the Quebec P.Q. government and all the sovereignists for focusing the debate on the Constitution instead of tackling the real problems facing all Canadians and particularly Quebecers, problems such as the high levels of unemployment that we are experiencing these days.

I was shocked because the Prime Minister and several of his colleagues are constantly saying in this House and elsewhere that if the Constitution is being discussed in Quebec right now, it is because of the sovereignists. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is sheer hypocrisy. The Liberals who are saying this are nothing but hypocrites. They say things that they know are



*Supply*

not true. They know full well that, over the last thirty years, it is the federalists who have fuelled the constitutional debate.

(1250)

I will simply cite some figures to demonstrate how much the federalists, and not the sovereignists, have negotiated, gossiped and wasted time over the past few years on the issue of the constitution. Please allow me to cite some very telling figures.

Between 1960 and 1992, they held 56 conferences, sessions and meetings. It was getting so ridiculous that they had to keep presenting them under a different light to try to ensure that the population did not realize what was really going on. And I am only talking about meetings at the political and not the departmental level. I am talking about all of the energy spent by the ministers of the federal government in each of the provinces to prepare for these meetings and to follow up on them.

There have been a total of 19 commissions, committees, working and advisory groups, for example, the Laurendau-Dunton Commission at the end of the 1960s, the Pépin-Robarts Commission in the 1970s, and the plethora of consultation panels leading up to the demise of the Meech Lake Accord and the breakdown of the Charlottetown negotiations. Nineteen commissions since 1965, all of them at the political level.

Now, on to the cases which have come before the Supreme Court of Canada regarding the constitution. A total of 212 cases, notices and rulings by the court affecting the federal government and a provincial government. That is the result of the constitutional debate led by and for federalists. And this leads me to conclude that the federalists, particularly the Liberal Party, of which the Prime Minister has been a member for at least 30 years, and this Liberal government have been and still are responsible for keeping the constitution industry alive and well. They have sunk billions of dollars into it, which has contributed to the enormous debt we now face.

That is our real constitutional problem. We sovereignists do not want to talk about the Canadian Constitution. We are proposing a solution to our current problems. What we want is our own Quebec constitution, which is what we were told in February by 50,000 men and women across Quebec. They came to tell us about the values on which Quebec society should base its constitution.

There is a very broad consensus on the subject among the people of Quebec. We as sovereignists have a way to solve the constitutional problem. We do not want to talk about the Constitution, about constitutional renewal or fence mending. We want to propose a definitive solution.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding I would like to give an example of the impact of the Canada Social Transfer, of what happens when the government interferes in areas under provincial jurisdiction.

Consider post-secondary education, an area over which the provinces have sole jurisdiction. According to the federal government's policy, the policy of the Minister of Human Resources Development, transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education will be cut while, of course, certain standards will be set, which was unheard of in the past.

(1255)

This would include reducing the amounts of bursaries, obliging universities to raise their tuition fees and letting students borrow more. It seems to me that what the federal government, after putting us into debt over our ears, to the tune of more than \$500 billion, what the Liberals and the Minister of Human Resources depletion are suggesting now is to let students get into debt individually as well.

Now that we are in the hole as a country, they are telling students to do likewise. That is the federal government's policy and that is what this motion wants to condemn today.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Guelph—Wellington I am pleased to speak to the motion of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

My constituents have expressed to me their concerns and their hopes for the future of social services in Canada. They have participated in a number of ways in my constituency. They have come to a town hall meeting sponsored by me and attended by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development. They have written letters and made many telephone calls to me. They have completed the booklet that was developed by the minister of human resources.

They have given me one clear message: they want social services that protect those most vulnerable and will ensure that Canada and every province in Canada remain prosperous for many years to come.

The Leader of the Opposition is wrong when he attempts to suggest that the Canada health and social transfer restricts the provinces to the role of consultants. What we are attempting to do is create a genuine partnership with the provinces and territories and continue to build a strong and evolving relationship in our Confederation.

The people of Guelph—Wellington welcome any effort to better administer social services and to give the provinces more flexibility to allocate the resources where they believe they are most needed. They have also asked me to ensure that national standards remain and that the federal government not only continue to provide funding to provinces but also ensure that medicare and social assistance standards and principles remain intact.

They admire the Canada Health Act commitment to public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, probability, and accessibility. They know that these principles are part of the reason the World Health Organization today declared Canada one of the world's five healthiest countries in which to live.

If this government were to abandon the principles of this act we would betray the trust that has been placed in us by all Canadians. My constituents have elected me to be a part of a government that is realistic and compassionate, one that recognizes the changing times, the new realities, and demands new solutions.

The people of Guelph—Wellington are hard working and dedicated to their families and their communities. They believe that these principles must remain the foundation of the Canada Health Act and health care in our country.

The Leader of the Opposition and all members of his party can rest assured that Canada's health care system, a system that helps define this great nation to itself and to the world, will be fully protected by our government.

Our country has had a long tradition of compromise and dialogue. From the very beginning our Confederation has evolved, and the people of my riding have supported this evolution. They know that if Canada is to remain the best country in the world the government must respond to new challenges and work together to secure our future.

(1300)

The Minister of Human Resources Development will strengthen our social programs by inviting his provincial colleagues to work together through consultation and mutual consent to develop and improve programs which will benefit all Canadians.

My constituents have told me very clearly and often they want all levels of government to work together. They want our confederation to continue to protect them and their families from unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances. They know one of the reasons we are the best country in the world is that our social security network and our health system offer safeguards and protection from loss of employment or illness.

The Leader of the Opposition encourages unfounded rumours that the federal government has singled out the province of Quebec and is imposing special standards on the provinces under the Canada health and social transfer. This simply is not true. The Quebec government has been a leader in developing innovative social programs. For example, it has developed a program which encourages low income families with children on social assistance to increase their employment earnings and it inspires low income earners not to fall back on social assistance. These kinds of programs are exactly what my

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constituents have asked for; programs which encourage independence and build up the human spirit rather than programs which encourage the cycle of reliance.

In the past programs like these have not been shared under the Canada assistance plan. Cost sharing requirements under CAP are too restrictive. As well, the previous Quebec government came up with proposals for delivering social services for school children but these too were rejected because they did not meet the definition under the Canada assistance plan of welfare services.

It is because of these new and innovative programs sponsored and encouraged by governments like Quebec that the Canada health and social transfer is needed. The new transfer affords flexibility and allows the provinces to continue their important work in encouraging social service recipients and others to better care for themselves and for their families. Under the Canada health and social transfer Quebec and other provinces will have much greater flexibility; flexibility with responsibility to experiment with imagined ways of delivering social assistance and social services. What more could we ask for?

From these examples I hope the Leader of the Opposition and his party would be giving full support to the Canada health and social transfer legislation.

All of us were elected under unique situations and circumstances. Each of us in the House is here because our constituents were tired of politics as usual. They were tired of one level of government blaming the other and they no longer wanted to hear excuses as to why their best interests were not represented. They have asked us, no matter what party affiliation, to make the country better and to make its systems of social security and health better.

We have a choice. We can move ahead or we can linger in the old way of blame and suspicion. My constituents want better from me, better from the government and better from the opposition. They want us to work together to ensure Canada remains the best country in the world in which to live. They want positive new ideas. They want innovative approaches. Most of all, they want Canada to remain united for their benefit and the benefit of Canadians from coast to coast.

On October 25, 1993 the people of Canada gave us their hopes and their dreams for a better country. They want the provinces to manage what they do best and they want national standards which safeguard every single Canadian. They know the government is not conspiring to weaken the social fabric of Canada, but instead is attempting to strengthen it.

I invite the Leader of the Opposition to work with us, for his constituents and for mine, to build up the weak, to give aid to the sick, to protect the most in need and to encourage independence

*Supply*

to those who rely on government. The people of his riding and mine demand no less.

(1305)

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity today to talk about medicare and the Canada Health Act. I want to explain how and why the government supports medicare and why we on this side of the House will continue to support it.

The federal budget tabled in February was one of the most widely supported budgets in the history of Canada. Some people, in particular the Reform Party, say the budget raises questions about our commitment to health. They ask whether we will continue to have the capacity to maintain a national system and they ask whether we will uphold the principles of the Canada Health Act.

There are no grounds for dire predictions that the federal government will not be able to uphold the Canada Health Act or that Canada's health care system will disintegrate as a result of the budget. Take the new Canada social and health transfer. It will not diminish, weaken or erode the strength of our health system.

On many occasions the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health have been quite clear on the matter. Let me remind the House how clear the budget speech was on this matter. The Minister of Finance said no change will be made to the Canada Health Act.

The Minister of Health was equally clear when she spoke to the Canadian Hospital Association last March: "There is no change in the government's commitment or in my own commitment, to uphold and enforce the principles of the Canada Health Act". As the Prime Minister said in Saskatoon, for Canadians these principles are non-negotiable.

The word health was added to the title of the new transfer when the enabling budget legislation was introduced to the House. This was no accident. It confirms the government's intention to remain active in enforcing the principles of the Canada Health Act.

The new transfer agreement will be in a block funding arrangement. That move may worry some members but let us not forget block funding for health care and post-secondary education is now 18 years old. The established programs financing funding mechanism put in place in 1977 is a block funding arrangement. There is no requirement in it for provinces to spend money on health. However, what is there and what was nailed down in 1984 when the Liberal government passed the Canada Health Act is the requirement that provinces deliver health care services in compliance with the five conditions of the act or face a deduction from money transferred to them.

Some worry that under the current thinking about the Canada social and health transfer no clear dollar amount will be denoted as a health portion. Again it is worthy of emphasis that under the EPF funding there was no longer a relationship between what was called the health portion and the actual provincial expenditures. It was merely a historical artefact based on the national averages of some 20 years ago.

Nothing in the budget will change the government's technical ability to enforce the Canada Health Act's principles. The enforcement mechanism remains the same. The deductions from transfer payments are necessary; they will be made. Canadians can rest assured the Canadian social and health transfer will not reduce the federal ability to enforce these principles. We will enforce them because the principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration are ultimately rooted in our common values; Canadian values such as equity, fairness, compassion and respect for the fundamental dignity of all. We will also enforce the principles of the Canada Health Act because we support an economically efficient health care system.

(1310)

It is worth reminding opposition members that the principles of the Canada Health Act are not just words. They have meaning. I want to touch briefly on each of the principles.

The first principle of universality is that all residents in a province must be insured by the provincial health plan if it is to receive federal support. This means we must all have access to services. People cannot be deinsured because they might be too costly for the system to cover. We cannot be turned away from a hospital door because we have not paid our annual tax bill or some provincial premium. If we need health care we will be treated in the same manner as everyone else.

Accessibility on uniform terms and conditions is the second principle. It means we should not face any financial barriers in receiving health care or extra billing, user charges, facility fees or up front cash payments. If the service is medically necessary we will get it at a time defined by medical considerations, not by the size of our wallet.

The next is comprehensiveness. This principle recognizes Canadians have a range of health care needs and that those needs should be met. If we scratch the surface a little more we will see that comprehensiveness again means the practice of fairness. It would not be fair to ensure only some medically necessary services and not others. I do not believe we should choose at the federal level which services are medically necessary. In my view we should continue to interpret the Canada Health Act as requiring coverage of all medically necessary services.

The government will continue to take a position that if a province insures any part of the cost of a service it is an indication it believes it to be medically necessary and all of the costs should be covered.

Justice Emmet Hall in his original royal commission on medicare recommended a very comprehensive package. Liberal governments in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s accepted the concept of comprehensiveness, although not quite as broad a concept as Justice Hall's. Liberal governments in the 1990s will not turn their backs on these principles.

The fourth principle is portability. It means Canadians maintain their health care package when they travel or move. The portability principle is rooted in one fundamental element; underpinning our federation, it recognizes our mobility. Canadians are free to work and travel anywhere in the country without fear of losing their health care insurance coverage. Portability is what makes our national health insurance system truly national. Each separate health insurance plan may be provincial in origin but it is recognized nationally in every province.

The fifth principle is public administration.

(1315)

Our health insurance plans must be operated by provincial governments on a non-profit basis. In my view these principles never seem to get the same attention as others. But they should. It is the core of our ability to contain costs in the system and thus to deliver quality care at an affordable price. One would think that of all five principles our Reform friends across the way would certainly be able to relate to this one.

Public administration is a means by which to ensure the principles. Health care insurance is operated and funded through governments. We can guarantee that our health care is universal, accessible, comprehensive, portable, and that we have direct control over it. It is through public administration that we demonstrate our collective responsibility to the health care of Canadians.

I look forward to further comments this afternoon.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague on his remarks in which he stressed the principles advocated by the federal government, enabling it to impose national standards on provincial governments, particularly the Government of Quebec, in areas of jurisdiction that are strictly and exclusively provincial.

The hon. member, my colleague, can therefore convey to us the importance of these principles for the federal government, how dear they are to the Liberal Party. However, if we look at the

### *Supply*

facts, including Bill C-76, we discover the real principles behind the government's wanting to get involved in provincial jurisdiction, even though it no longer has the means to do so. After getting us in debt, as I said a few minutes ago in my remarks, the federal government, which will have roughly a 28 per cent share in the cost of the social programs of the Government of Quebec, after 1998, still wants to impose, it insists on imposing, national standards. But what are these principles so dear to the heart of the federal government?

Clause 37 of Bill C-76 speaks eloquently in this regard. I will take the liberty of quoting it:

In order that a province may qualify for a full cash contribution referred to in section 5—

that is, the transfers in health care,

—the government of the province—

(b) shall give recognition to the Canada Health and Social Transfer in any public documents, or in any advertising or promotional material, relating to insured health services and extended health care services in the province.

In concrete terms, it is the old "flag on the hood" principle, so dear to our Prime Minister. We remember the Prime Minister when he was the minister responsible for the adoption of the constitution in 1982, he was the one who made us swallow the current constitution, which excluded Quebec. He said: "All that interests the separatists is a flag on the hood. They like driving around in France, in Paris, with the Quebec flag, thus mocking their own people, the representatives of the Government of Quebec". Now here we are in 1995 with the "flag on the hood" principle in the Canada Social Transfer.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this principle, which we see in black and white in Bill C-76, where it says that the Canadian flag must appear on documents, cheques and so forth, when the federal government is involved, even though it is less and less involved.

(1320)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Unfortunately, the hon. member has very little time to respond to the remarks of the member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead.

[*English*]

Within no more than a minute I would ask the member to respond to the comment and question of the member.

**Mr. Culbert:** Mr. Speaker, I will try to respond as quickly as I possibly can to my hon. colleague across the way.

The number one point I would like to make is that it is called responsibility. A responsible government sets a commitment, a goal and a challenge. It is prepared to meet the challenges that were set in a very balanced and responsible fashion for all parts of Canada, including the great province of Quebec which I greatly respect.

*Supply*

As I mentioned in my speech, it should be done with the Canadian values of equity, fairness, compassion and dignity for all Canadians in mind. That is the way to do it in a balanced fashion.

If members of the Bloc concentrated their efforts on some of the areas indicated in the Prime Minister's speech on the weekend, they would be far better off than they are with their discussion of separation and dividing the country.

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to the Bloc's motion concerning the Canada health and social transfer.

While its wording is a little extravagant and its claim somewhat exaggerated, the motion's analysis of the CHST that it does not go far enough toward the decentralization of health, advanced education and social assistance is one that we as Reformers could agree with.

Like the Bloc, Reform believes that the federal government must give the provinces, which have exclusive constitutional jurisdiction over the programs, more freedom to design and administer social programs. We share the Bloc's belief that programs of this nature should be delivered by levels of government closest to the people rather than by distant federal bureaucrats. Unlike the Bloc, however, Reform differs in how to decentralize the powers.

The Bloc has only one solution to our nation's problems, separation, but we in the Reform Party do not want to destroy Canada. We want to build it.

Reform believes that the solutions to our problems lie not in separation but in legislation and negotiation. Our Constitution already grants us the flexibility we need. Over its first 128 years the Canadian federation has proved to be extremely malleable. It has bent and reshaped itself to meet the needs of the day. Even in the absence of full scale constitutional reform I am confident our federation will adapt again to the needs of circumstances in the next 128 years.

In defence of the government, the Canada health and social transfer is a modest example of rebalancing the federation through legislation. While the government's primary motive in creating the Canada health and social transfer was to save money, a secondary intention is undoubtedly to further decentralize programs. The most promising element of the CHST is the government's decision to remove all federally imposed restrictions on welfare funding except the residence requirement.

By shifting to unconditional block funding the federal government gives the provinces more freedom to experiment and to innovate. It will allow the people of each province to decide how best to deliver the services the citizens want. Unfortunately this decentralizing thrust is not extended to health care and advanced

education, the other two components of the Canada health and social transfer.

The federal government's refusal to amend or reinterpret the Canada Health Act and the pooling of health, welfare and education funds into a single transfer payment give Ottawa an even bigger stick with which to beat the provinces into submission. It is a backward step that will make it more difficult for the provinces to control their health care costs.

(1325)

This aspect of the Canada health and social transfer is a perfect example of the federal government trying to have its cake and eating it too. In the budget the Liberal government unilaterally reduced its cash transfers for health, education and welfare by some 40 per cent, yet at the same time it is continuing to insist that the provinces play by its rules.

This just is not right. If the federal government wants to set the ground rules in areas of provincial jurisdiction then it has to pay its share of the burden. If it is no longer willing or able to put up the dollars, which describes the present situation in Canada fairly accurately, it must be prepared to step aside and let each province decide how best to provide for its citizens' health care needs.

The truth is that the federal government cannot afford to use its spending power the way it did in the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s. The country is broke. It does not have the funds to deal with the programs as it has in the past. The federal debt, as we all know, is somewhere around \$550 billion.

Just as important in political terms, further centralization is a non-starter all across Canada, not just in Quebec as the motion indicates. People are demanding the power and decision making be pushed down to the lowest level of government, to the grassroots. The Liberals are strong believers in central government. We can believe in rigid national standards but we can simply no longer afford them either fiscally or politically. Nor are they administratively responsible at this time in our history.

There is an alternative path we can follow toward a more flexible and decentralized federation which will offer provincial governments the freedom they need to make the choices they want for their respective citizens. To illustrate the alternative vision I look at the Reform taxpayers' budget that was presented to this assembly.

An amazing fact that no one picked up on in the budget is that the Liberals, the party of compassion, cut almost twice as much from the programs that make up the Canada health and social transfer as Reformers recommended in their alternative budget. In our taxpayers' budget we recommended reductions of \$800 million in health, \$200 million in education and \$2.5 billion in welfare, for a total of \$3.5 billion of expenditure reductions over a three-year period. In contrast, the government's budget reduces the cash transfer components of the Canada health and social transfer by \$6.6 billion over the same three years. Who

*Supply*

has the most compassion in terms of the social needs of Canadians?

What distinguishes our proposal from the Canada health and social transfer is the decentralizing aspects of the taxpayers' budget. I would like to talk briefly about one element of the decentralizing initiative, the unconditional transfer of tax points to the provinces, which the budget of the Liberal government denies the provinces and Canadians.

The most significant difference between the CHST and our own Reform proposal is that we would transfer additional tax points to the provinces, whereas the Liberal budget would not. This is important for two reasons: first, because it provides increased flexibility and, second, because it ensures the stability of funding for the provinces.

On the first point, we all realize that the federal government can no longer continue to spend money it does not have. We in the Reform Party have openly acknowledged that and have stated publicly that as part of the Reform's deficit elimination plan we would cut \$3.5 billion over a three-year period in the areas of health, education and welfare. Reformers also realize that if provincial governments are to absorb reductions of this magnitude they will need the freedom to innovate and to discover more efficient ways of delivering services.

(1330)

That is why our tax point transfer is unconditional, with no strings attached. It is designed to provide maximum flexibility to the provinces of Canada.

On the second point, if provincial governments are to effectively provide these services then they must be given the resources to fulfil their responsibilities. They must be able to count on stable, long term revenue resources. Yet under the CHST this security does not exist. The federal government can unilaterally, at any time, reduce or alter the transfer to the provinces. This provides provincial governments with neither stability nor security.

Under the Reform's tax point transfer alternative, provinces would no longer have to guess how much Ottawa was going to send to them; they would know. This would allow them to extend their planning horizons, confident that money is going to be there. In addition, since the value of the tax points grows along with the economy, Reform's proposal would effectively increase funding for these programs over the medium and the long term.

In conclusion, Reform and the Bloc agree on the need for greater decentralization of powers to local and provincial governments. We also agree that the government's new Canada health and social transfer does not adequately meet this need. However, unlike the Bloc, we do not advocate destroying the

country; we advocate rebuilding it. I would hope the suggestions we offer as the Reform Party here today, including the concept of transferring additional tax points to the provinces, will mark a positive beginning in this rebuilding process in our Canadian social fabric.

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a case of strange bedfellows when we see the hon. member for Lethbridge joining forces with the Bloc: one is trying to separate us, the other trying to balkanize us, a different form of separation.

They propose we give all of this money to the provinces with no strings attached. Code word: break up the national health care program; do not give a standard payment for welfare; shaft those who have no consensus from one side of the country to the other. Those are the code words they use in the House every day. It is not fair to those who can least defend themselves.

On the welfare payments, you go to certain provinces and they ask you to take the next bus to British Columbia. That is the kind of compassion that comes from this kind of proposal.

The federal government has a right and a responsibility to stay in touch with those in need. When they set a national standard they should see that the money they transfer goes to meet that standard. That is the case with every program, and that should be put in.

For those people from Newfoundland to British Columbia and those in between it is important to see that their services are delivered equally. No one group in Canada should get better services than another when it comes to health care.

I am sick and tired of hearing remarks like: "We will give them the chance to do whatever they want". That is a great statement. They can do whatever they want with those who cannot defend themselves.

**Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member I want to say this. In this federation we are trying to build it is time that we start to trust our partners. The partners we must trust are the provinces. The 10 provinces of Canada must be trusted to take on responsibilities to meet the needs of their citizens, determined by the priorities of the citizens in their respective provinces.

I have witnessed in my political career for 32 years situations where provinces often had a greater care and a greater compassion than the federal government with regard to the priority needs of the provinces.

When I come to this House it is disappointing to hear someone who has been around this assembly for some period of time and to hear the Liberal government, which thinks it has all of the answers and wants to centralize everything in a centralized bureaucratic system, tell the provinces what to do. They think

*Supply*

that under that system they are going to meet the needs of the citizens. We will not build federalism with that kind of mistrust.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the West mentioned, in his speech, that he was committed to keeping the country together. He also stressed how important it was to negotiate.

(1335)

I would like to remind him that Quebec has long been asking in vain for a special status within Canada, in recognition of its unique French culture. This is not negotiating. The 1982 Constitution was forced on Quebec. We did not accept it, we tried repeatedly to negotiate. It would appear that the federal government is no longer interested in negotiating with Quebec. Once again, Quebec is losing. These are two reasons why Quebec wants to separate from the rest of Canada.

In his speech, the member also said that the federal government was bankrupt. Not only is it bankrupt, but as we saw, the Liberal government has no vision. It makes cuts everywhere. Without any vision, it lacks compassion for the less fortunate. This is not reassuring.

I want to tell you that another reason why we want Quebec to become sovereign, is that we will do better on our own, we know what our needs are, and we know how to solve our problems, if only the federal government did not interfere. This is why we want to separate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge):** Mr. Speaker, very briefly, number one, I would fight and stand shoulder to shoulder with Quebec and any other province in this nation so that we are all treated equally. That is a very important principle.

I had the opportunity over the years to negotiate with the federal government and stand shoulder to shoulder with ministers from Quebec to fight for our fair share of health payments: social service payments, housing grants and moneys from the federal government. The province of Alberta and the province of Quebec at the negotiating and bargaining table over and over again, and I can say this without exception, always had the same point of view. We were partners in negotiating with the federal government to get our respective share of either federal funds or legislation that was required to carry out our responsibilities.

We were never in conflict with our objectives. That was part of the federation that was very important. A part that is often overlooked by Quebec and by other people in Canada is that Quebec did have allies in Canada fighting for the same cause and the same purpose. That should continue in this federation. I would be disappointed if it did not.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this problem.

I had an opportunity to meet with some graduates in my constituency last Friday from three classes of high school students in three different areas. I asked each one of these classes, "Why do you think health, post-secondary education, and welfare are being reviewed in Canada today?" They said to me: "We think this is a political agenda. This somehow is something the politicians must do."

When I explained to them I took from some brand new federal documents from StatsCan the following figures. These figures are a fascinating indictment of some of the things we have tried to do in our country. Servicing the federal government debt will cost \$1,522 per person in 1994-95. The federal government in 1994-95 will spend \$268 per person on health and \$168 on post-secondary education. That is \$1,522 compared to \$268 and \$168.

The students in those three high school classes said to me: "Isn't that the problem then? Isn't that the problem for Quebec? Isn't that the problem for Alberta?" My answer is yes, that is the problem.

It would be very easy to be an opposition member and point fingers and blame the Liberal government. I do not think that is helpful.

In the same report it goes on to say—just in case those in Quebec think they can point the finger only at the federal government—that the provincial debt in Quebec is the highest in Canada, at \$8,413 per person.

(1340)

These figures go on to show all the provinces lined up in terms of their debt. The next closest is Nova Scotia, with \$8,405, all the way down to Alberta, at \$1,404 per person. I invite members to look at these documents. They are publicly available.

It is not sufficient to stand back as an Albertan and say it is the problem of the federal government. This is a Canadian problem, a problem far too big to be pointing fingers at.

I have had occasion to try to determine who is leading the debate in Canada. My big interest is health care, and I find that the public is far ahead of the politicians in this debate. The CBC has just done a four-part program on the future of our health care system, something that is unheard of in Canada. At the end of their four-part program it did a survey and asked Canadians if health care, the way it is set up today, is affordable. This question was not asked in a political sense; it was asked to practical, commonsense Canadians: Can we afford health care the way it is set up today?

Before I go to the answer, 57 per cent said health care was the most important government social program. I agree. However, about 90 per cent of Canadians polled in that survey said they expected medicare would cover fewer services in the future; 45 per cent predicted all necessary services would be retained;

another 45 per cent said only the most essential services would be covered and that most people would have to pay for much of the other health care needs.

When Reformers stood in the House last Thursday to initiate the first debate on health care in the House literally in years, an old time parliamentarian said to me: "Is it not interesting who should initiate this debate on health care? There has not been such a debate for years." When we stood in the House and initiated this debate, the press said you cannot talk about this, it is a sacred program; you cannot talk about changes to health care. However, the public in Canada says otherwise. I think the public is ahead of the politicians.

Can we trust the government to do what is right? Can we trust the party opposite, the government of the day, to do what is right? I do not believe that we could hope for anything but. On health care, this government will do what is right. Canadians value this program so strongly that no one could get away with doing what is wrong on health care. Can we trust the government to move in the right direction on health care reform?

I listened to the Prime Minister say he felt that health care needed to return to basics. When my province asked for a definition of the basics, the hands went up and the answer came: "No chance for that". A senior medical practitioner in Quebec said virtually the same thing. And this is new information. It comes from the senior general medical practitioner in Quebec who said there needs to be a change in the way health care is delivered because "the Quebec public health care system is on the brink of bankruptcy." Those are Dr. Clément Richer's words, not mine.

Is the rhetoric sufficient on social program review? It is not. Are promises that were made in the red book 18 months ago sufficient on social program reform? They are not. Quebec is asking and I believe the Bloc is asking to be treated fairly under the new proposals. I support them in that request. They deserve to be treated fairly as does every citizen in Canada. Shall we blame, argue, point fingers? My advisers say no, we need to find solutions.

(1345)

The motion the Bloc has presented is well intentioned, however, it does not point to any solutions. It seems to me to be pointing fingers. Members of the Bloc should look at Quebec's own debt. Look at the \$8,400 worth of provincial debt. Consider that with the \$18,000 of debt which is federal. The two go hand in hand and are extremely important.

I ask the question, what will keep Quebec in Canada? Surely that is my desire. Quebecers need the freedom to nourish their culture and their language. They need authority over areas of provincial jurisdiction. I feel that Quebecers looking at Canada

### *Supply*

as most Canadians look at Quebec, equals working toward a common goal. The rhetoric will die out. Practicality will win out.

I listened to the Minister of Health ask on Thursday, how would Reformers coerce the provinces into following national standards, and I shake my head. The provinces do not need to be coerced into following social program review. They need to have the tools. They need to have the information. They need to have the co-operation. They need to have the work of every single man and woman in these chambers.

It is a privilege to be a member of this House. When parliamentarians argue and gripe and frown and grimace at one another it sometimes detracts from the importance of the job that we do here. I dedicate my service to try to make sure that we have good social programs in Canada, programs that will survive the economic crisis we are in. That service is too important to be denigrated by arguing.

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the pleasure of meeting with a representative of a community group on Somerset West in my riding of Ottawa Centre. The subject of discussion was the Canada assistance plan.

Groups have called on the federal government to enter into discussions with the provincial government in order to ensure that there are standards, objectives and goals and that the priorities are set straight. Also, they have called on the federal government to ensure that community groups such as the organization I mentioned are involved in the process when it comes to the delivery of programs or the setting up of principles. I support their demands.

I bring to the attention of my colleagues section 36(1) of the Canadian Constitution. It permits the federal government as well as the provincial government jointly to promote equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians to further economic development and to reduce disparities.

In fact, the federal government has a significant responsibility to ensure vertical equity among Canadians as well as horizontal equity among the country's regions. That is exactly what the government set out to do in the 1995 budget. I refer to page 53 of the budget.

The Minister of Finance stated that the federal government under the leadership of the Minister of Human Resources Development will invite all provincial governments to work together on developing through mutual consent a set of shared principles and objectives that could underlie the new transfer. In this way, all governments could reaffirm their commitment to the social well-being of Canadians. In other words, the government is committed to building consensus among the provinces and not imposing it on the provinces.



*Supply*

The submissions of both opposition parties seem to be clashing with one another. They are flying in different directions and missing the point of what this government is trying to do. What this government has tried to do is to consult with the provinces.

(1350)

Did the hon. member have any representation from his constituency, as I did in mine, on the need for consultation and the need for setting minimum standards and goals and objectives when it comes to CAP transfers or block transfers to the provinces?

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Mr. Speaker, I can frankly say that I have not had any such consultations. In my part of the country the general consensus is that the federal government is too intrusive and has lost its moral authority. The \$1,522 debt that it has discharged on every person in Canada has left them without the ability to do what they have traditionally wanted to do. Therefore there is no sense of that in my part of the country at all.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my Reform Party colleague for his presentation. He spoke about the Quebec debt being very high, as high as \$8,400 per capita, and said that Bloc Quebecois members should look at what is happening in their own province before they point a finger at the federal government.

I think there is not one Bloc Quebecois member who rose in this House to say that Quebec's debt is unimportant and that we should not be concerned, quite the contrary. Members of the Bloc Quebecois and of the Parti Quebecois government know that during the ten years of Liberal government, the debt has more than doubled and that something has to be done about that situation.

The member also accuses our Bloc colleagues of not proposing solutions in this debate. Let me remind him that solutions were proposed, again by all stakeholders from the Quebec government. I would like to hear what he has to say on that point. When we speak about manpower training, there is a consensus in Quebec. All stakeholders, whatever their political affiliation, want the federal government to withdraw completely from that area and let Quebec take over. We ask the same thing for health and education. We want the federal government to transfer tax points and let us manage those areas. We will do so very efficiently.

*[English]*

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Lethbridge said, there is a common ground between Quebec and many other parts of the country. On this issue where it speaks

specifically about withdrawing from areas of provincial responsibility we do have common ground.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have a few minutes to participate in this opposition day debate on the Canada health and social transfer initiative put forward by this government.

Many things have been said about the recent budget by the Minister of Finance, mostly good things. Canadians have significantly expressed their support for this budget in poll after poll. On radio and television talk shows they expressed their support in vast numbers for the federal government's recent budget. This budget, I might add, will no doubt go down in history as a significant step forward for this country.

As Canadians see this budget as an opportunity to put the government's finances back on track after so many years of mismanagement, it would seem that the NDP in Ontario see this as an opportunity of a different sort. Our Bloc colleagues in this House see the budget as a chance to take something away from what has become a very positive discussion for Canadians.

Let me take a few moments and relate my thoughts on what the NDP is attempting to do in Ontario by focusing on the federal budget. It is clear that the NDP in Ontario does not have a record it can reliably depend on to get it through the Ontario election which is now under way. In fact, some of my colleagues may have received in the mail a package from the Ontario government called "The 1995 Ontario Budget Plan". It is a small document outlining what the NDP claims to have done and will do if re-elected.

(1355)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order. I would caution the hon. member on the use of accessories or props. If he is going to quote from a document, I understand that full well. Otherwise I would caution him on the use of props.

**Mr. St. Denis:** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of referring to this document is to bring to the attention of my hon. colleagues that the NDP has attempted to hang its success on the federal budget. I dare suggest to the Ontario NDP that this attempt will fail. Canadians have too much respect and regard for their federal finance minister to be taken in by a plan such as this.

In fact, the Canadian Federation of Students made a presentation to the finance committee earlier today. They expressed concerns about the budget but they put forward positive ideas. I suggest that the Ontario NDP should be looking for positive ways to make this country work.

Our Bloc colleagues are attempting to use the budget as an opportunity to make gains on their own agenda. The agenda of the Bloc is quite obvious. There is no need to remind the House and Canadians what the Bloc agenda is. As the motion says in part, the Bloc is questioning what it alleges to be an imposition of standards on the provinces. Nowhere in the federal budget is

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the finance minister or this government imposing standards on the provinces which in the first place are not there, or in the second place are standards which Canadians do not want.

I know that during my election campaign in the fall of 1993—

**The Speaker:** My colleague, of course, will have the floor after question period.

It being 2 p.m., we will now proceed to statements by members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Canada's firefighters.

This week firefighters from across the country are meeting in Ottawa for the International Association of Firefighters fourth annual legislative conference.

These brave men and women are an integral part of every Canadian community. With little regard for their own personal safety they battle in the most dangerous of conditions, providing Canadians with peace of mind.

Their exposure to infectious diseases is a major reason firefighting is one of the world's most dangerous professions. Firefighters routinely provide emergency medical treatment in unsanitary field conditions on patients they know nothing about. This results in firefighters being occupationally exposed to a variety of dangerous contagious diseases.

Firefighters who have been exposed to infectious diseases need to be further informed of this fact so they can seek medical monitoring and modify their behaviour to avoid further transmission. It is my hope that the federal government will soon provide this information.

I salute Canada's firefighters.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### POLICY ON BILINGUALISM

**Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, because of a difference in the French and English versions of the federal income tax return, French-speaking Canadian taxpayers

living temporarily outside Canada will pay more income tax than their English-speaking counterparts.

Line 419 of the French version refers to a 4.56 per cent surtax, while the surtax in the English version is only 3 per cent.

The Commissioner of Official Languages, Victor Goldbloom, was totally justified in saying in his 1994 report that the bilingualism policy was still poorly implemented more than a quarter century after its adoption.

How can the government justify such a lack of rigour where the equitable treatment of francophones in Canada is concerned?

\* \* \*

[English]

### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, firefighters and paramedics respond when we call 911 for their help. They rush to our aid with little regard for their own personal safety. Sometimes they are injured. Sometimes they are infected. They approach Parliament this week with a simple request: "Inform us if we have a risk of infection". This proposal will not produce new testing, will guarantee patient confidentiality and would never result in someone going without the help they desperately need.

In a sense the firefighters are calling 911 to the Minister of Health but she has put them on hold. They deserve better. I call on the health minister to act now.

\* \* \*

### LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence announced the Liberal government's acceptance of the proposal to double, perhaps triple, the number of low level military flights that take place over Innu territory in Labrador and Quebec.

The military aircraft fly at 30 metres above the ground, disrupt wildlife and imperil hunting and fishing grounds. Caribou are often found starved, too frightened to eat. The Innu, who live off the land and its animals, worry about the future of their traditional way of life.

The government is aware that its environmental assessment panel admitted the impact on the environment and aboriginal rights is unknown and refused to listen to issues raised by aboriginal people relating to their land.

The Innu have never signed a treaty with the Canadian government for the use of their land and the government has never asked permission to conduct these military flights over that territory. All the Innu people want is a life of peace.

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All people deserve respect. As the minister of Indian affairs said recently: "It's their territory. They have a concern. It's a legitimate concern".

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### HAROLD BEAUPRÉ

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the morning of April 17, 1943 a Lancaster bomber with a seven-man crew, part of the 83rd Squadron, crashed in German occupied France after a raid on Manheim, Germany. The pilot, Pilot Officer Glen McNichol, was killed in the crash and the six survivors were taken prisoner.

Pilot Officer Harold Beaupré, one of the survivors, was liberated from a prisoner of war camp in Lubeck, Germany on May 2, 1945. Today marks the 50th anniversary of Mr. Beaupré's liberation.

Two months later, on July 2 Mr. Beaupré became a prisoner of love and married his wife Margaret. Mr. and Mrs. Beaupré raised four children and continue to run their business, Beaupré Stamps, in uptown Waterloo. They continue to contribute to the social and economic life of their community.

To Mr. Beaupré and to all Canadians who served in the two world wars, the Korean war and the ones involved in past and present peacekeeping, we give our thanks and admiration.

We will always remember the sacrifices they made and continue to make for Canada.

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### REFORM PARTY

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the last federal election a political party in Canada promised to lower spending on federal administration and reduce subsidies to businesses. This party also promised cuts to national defence and argued for improved social spending by refocusing benefits on those most in need. These promises were made by the Reform Party in the blue sheet.

However when the Liberal budget delivers and improves on these promises the Reform leader calls them dishonest and cowardly.

Canadians have made it clear that they do not want politics as usual. They reject doom and gloom and Reform Party sophistry. Canadians want leadership and compassion. That is why in poll after poll they continue to support their Liberal government.

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### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week the International Association of Firefighters is holding its fourth annual conference in Ottawa.

Professional firefighters risk their lives daily in an effort to save the lives and property of their fellow citizens. They are the largest providers of field emergency medical care. In the course of saving lives firefighters and emergency medical personnel are exposed to danger, disease and hazardous materials.

The International Association of Firefighters is committed to ensuring that all firefighters are provided with the most accurate, updated information regarding the emergency situation to which they must respond.

Along with my colleagues in the House, I congratulate and thank all firefighters across Canada and around the world on a job very well done.

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(1405)

[Translation]

### 2002 OLYMPIC GAMES

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs could not resist pulling another dirty trick on Quebec at the convention of the Quebec wing of the Liberal Party of Canada last weekend.

Showing incredible contempt, Quebec's political godfather in the federal cabinet said that the referendum report was hurting Quebec City's chances of hosting the Olympic Games in 2002, even though both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister told us that all Canadian diplomats were actively supporting Quebec City's bid to the International Olympic Committee.

We hope that the Canadian embassies and consulates responsible for promoting Quebec City's bid will do their job without paying attention to their boss's comments.

After the Prime Minister said that Quebec City was prevented from hosting the G-7 summit because the Canadian flag does not fly in front of its city hall, the federal government is once again resorting to threats in the matter of the 2002 Olympic Games.

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[English]

### LIBERAL PARTY

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the governing Liberals are proving once again that they are no friend of Saskatchewan. The last federal budget hit Saskatchewan with cutbacks in agriculture, the Crow rate and an increase in fuel tax.

In the face of this sacrifice in Saskatchewan the minister of public works has the nerve to announce that the government is giving \$4 million to the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto.

The government cannot find money for farm support, but it can fund cultural centres. It says it no longer has money for grain transportation but it will continue to fund fat, gold plated MP pension plans.

The Liberals have no cash to stop booze and gun running into my province from the United States but it can find millions of dollars for gun control registration that will have no effect on crime.

The Liberal government can borrow billions of dollars to fund its own pet projects at the expense of hard working, taxpaying farmers.

It is clear that this government is no friend of Saskatchewan and her future generations.

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### FIREFIGHTERS

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, exposure to infectious disease is a major reason why firefighting is one of the world's most dangerous professions.

Firefighters routinely provide emergency medical treatment in unsanitary field conditions and are exposed to infectious disease.

I would like to know why the Minister of Health has failed to commit to a national protocol regarding infectious disease notification. Will the minister commit to a national system for the safety of our firefighters, their families and the rest of society?

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the world community is looking to Canada and other industrialized nations to set a good example on the pressing issue of climate change.

Certain gases, most notably carbon dioxide, collect in the earth's atmosphere and trap heat. Most carbon dioxide is produced in industrial nations from burning coal, oil and gas. Thus we must find ways of reducing the consumption of these fossil fuels.

Climate change is not only an environmental issue, but also an ethical issue. If Arctic ice caps melt and oceans rise, the lives of millions of coastal and island people around the globe will be in danger. It is important that Canadians understand the cause and effect of climate change.

Therefore I urge the government to do everything in its power to launch a public education and awareness program to explain the complexity of this issue.

[Translation]

### QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY

**Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in *Le Journal de Montréal* this morning, the Bloc leader is quoted by Martin Leclerc as saying that the solution to poverty issues lies in a sovereignty plan. The things you hear.

The Quebec separation plan creates pervasive uncertainty and aggravates the problems confronting us, including poverty. With its plans to separate, the Bloc Québécois will do anything to win its ideological war, even sacrifice an entire generation of young Quebecers.

[English]

Let us try to convince the Leader of the Opposition that we should work together to win the real war, the war against poverty.

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### NATIONAL COMPOSTING AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week, National Composting Awareness Week, we celebrate the benefits of composting, both to reduce waste and to create nutrient rich earth.

Composting facilities across Canada process almost 700,000 tonnes or about 11 per cent of the organic waste produced each year, but it is believed that about half of the total waste stream could be composted.

About a million Canadian households also divert 200,000 tonnes of their kitchen and yard wastes through back yard composting. I commend those that realize the importance of composting and I urge all Canadians to get involved in this valuable program for life.

We must reduce the amount of garbage in our landfills if we no longer want to be counted among the most wasteful people on the planet.

\* \* \*

(1410)

[Translation]

### LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence announced yesterday that he fully endorsed the report of the panel reviewing the issue of low level flights in Labrador and Quebec. Interestingly enough, the Minister of the Environment, to whom the report was also directed, did not speak up. Her silence can only mean that her colleague's decision defies even the most elementary rule of prudence, which says that the impact of such a drastic increase in the

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number of flights should be assessed before a decision is made, not after, as the defence minister is suggesting. [English]

The Minister of the Environment, who boasts about making Canada a world leader in environmental matters, will have to bear the political burden of this decision, which is contrary to the principles of sustainable development, caution and prevention she talks about day in and day out.

\* \* \*

[English]

**LIGHTSTATIONS**

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the coast guard lightstation services project went to 28 B.C. locations and cost \$202,000. Its report is now more than one month old and will be released today.

I hope the current minister responsible has read it and will conclude what the B.C. public has concluded. Public consultations with 1,397 residents, mariners and aviators, representing hundreds of thousands of users, indicate that opposition to destaffing B.C.'s lightstations is widespread, often vehement and overwhelming.

The rationale is solid. Public safety, drug interdiction, science and sovereignty are paramount. The only minister from B.C. stated he would support keeping staffed lightstations if coast guard consultations said the public wants them.

The people have now spoken.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUEBEC SOVEREIGNTY**

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the main problem of the P.Q. government is its obsession with Quebec's separation, regardless of the real problems affecting its citizens.

In his book entitled *Moi, je m'en souviens*, Pierre Bourgault clearly outlines the problem and I quote him: "There is something more important than the fight for independence and that is the fight against poverty. Why put aside these social concerns, which have always been part of separatist thinking? Ultimately, would it be the separatists, much more than the people, who are inconsistent?"

It is high time that the P.Q. and the Bloc Quebecois realize that Quebecers expect from their elected people that they deal with the real problems and put an end to their obsession with separation.

**VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY**

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to reflect on the courage, strength and determination of the Vietnamese community in Canada. This past week marked the 20th year since the end of the war in Vietnam.

The war was not just a convulsive era in world history. It was a horrific nightmare for its victims. A Vietnamese proverb teaches that if a parent is cruel, the children will choose another.

When the war ended it did not bring peace to the people of Vietnam. Refugees fled a cruel parent in rickety boats, risking their lives to escape. Many of them made it to Canada. In fact, Canada has resettled more than 145,000 Indo-Chinese asylum seekers since 1979.

The boat people, 23,000 of them, came to Canada where they faced new challenges, but as part of a welcoming Canadian family. These brave people have brought success born of their industrious nature. They have also enriched Canada's diverse social fabric.

On behalf of this Parliament I would like to pay tribute to the Vietnamese community in Canada. Vietnam's loss has been our reward. I would like to pay tribute to Vietnamese Canadians and to applaud the spirit of generosity and hope that brought them to us and to give thanks that today Vietnam is a place of peace, not war.

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**THE HOLOCAUST**

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Sunday I spoke at the Holocaust Memorial Service held in Fredericton. This year's service marked the 50th anniversary of the liberation by allied forces of the Nazi death camps.

These camps are the graveyards for millions of individuals, the vast majority of whom are Jews. They committed no crime. They broke no laws. They did nothing to deserve the medical experimentation, tattooing, forced labour and gassing they endured. It is a blight against humanity that anything so unspeakable could occur in what we think of as a civilized society and that it could go on for so long.

(1415)

If anything can be gained by the inhuman crime that was the Holocaust, I hope it is awareness on the part of every individual to be on guard against attitudes that could lead to anything resembling this atrocity from ever happening again.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***SEAGRAM**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, early in April, the Minister of Canadian Heritage made a discreet trip to Los Angeles, on the very day Seagram's took over MCA. He went to Los Angeles accompanied only by his executive assistant, without any senior officials and without any advance briefing by his department, which is customary prior to a minister's trip abroad.

My question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. How can he say he did not talk to the people at MCA and Seagram's in Los Angeles on April 10, when according to the *Hollywood Reporter*, he was MCA's guest of honour at a dinner the day after MCA was acquired by Seagram's?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is true I had lunch in the cafeteria or just outside the cafeteria at MCA.

**Some hon. members:** Ah?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Dupuy:** If any details are required, here they are. We had chicken and ice tea.

I met representatives of major U.S. studios located in the Los Angeles area. I was never even remotely involved in any aspect of a transaction between Seagram's and MCA. I said it before and I say it again, I was there to defend Canadian interests, the interests of an industry that is important to Canada—the film industry—and I would expect the opposition to support these efforts to defend and promote the interests of an industry that is Canadian and located in Quebec as well.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I knew that Foreign Affairs was cutting down on spending by ministers abroad, but making them have lunch in cafeterias is going a bit too far.

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

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**An hon. member:** How times have changed.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Indeed they have.

Will the minister admit that he went to Los Angeles at the invitation of Allan Karp, president of Cineplex Odeon which belongs to the Bronfman family and MCA and is a party to the transaction concluded the day he arrived in Los Angeles?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have contacts with all players in the Canadian film industry, whether they are in distribution, production, post-production or movie-theatre chains. So it is

entirely normal I should have contacts with Cineplex Odeon, one of the big chains. However, at no time during my contacts with Cineplex Odeon did I discuss what was happening, in other words, the acquisition of MCA by Seagram's.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, would the minister confirm that two of the guests of honour at his lunch on April 10, Mr. Wesserman and Mr. Sheinberg, the two top executives at MCA, were actually having lunch in the room next door with Edgar Bronfman senior and junior?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I could not be in two places at the same time. I was where I said I was. Where Mr. Bronfman and the others were? I was not there. I was not a witness. It is too bad the Leader of the Opposition keeps flogging a dead horse.

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

(1420)

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we recently learned that Cineplex-Odeon, which belongs to the Bronfman trust and to MCA, proposed to merge with Cinemark, an American company, to create a North American mega movie theatre company called Cineplex International. According to the *Globe and Mail*, if the transaction is completed, Americans will have a 42.6 per cent interest in Cineplex International, while the Bronfman/MCA group will hold 38 per cent of the shares of that company.

Considering that such a transaction would put Cineplex-Odeon under American control, will the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us if he expressed his strong disagreement to Cineplex-Odeon's president, Mr. Karp, who happens to be the person who invited the minister to Los Angeles, given the impact of such a merger on the control of Cineplex-Odeon movie theatres by the American majors?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I never discussed this issue, either directly or indirectly, with Mr. Karp. The ownership of Canadian or foreign businesses does not fall under my jurisdiction, but under that of the Minister of Industry. I can confirm that this issue is neither directly nor remotely related to my department.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised by the minister's answers. He behaves as though he were not a member of this government. Is he still? We think so.

Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage not agree that, as the minister responsible for culture and communications in Canada, his primary responsibility is to clearly tell those who might be tempted to conclude a transaction deemed unacceptable by Canadian cultural groups that he and his government will fight tooth and nail to protect the Canadian industry?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that I strive to protect Canadian content on the information highway and in the audio-visual sector as a whole. I do it here in Canada, I did so in Brussels during the G-7 meeting and I will continue to do so.

Why protect Canadian content? So that we have our own identity, our own culture. How are we going to do it? By supporting cultural industries which produce this Canadian content.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government's red book contains many high-flown promises including one to proceed full steam ahead with the undefined concept of aboriginal self-government and generous interpretation of treaties.

Could the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development give us an update on what he and his department are doing to fulfil these promises?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is community based self-government with about 40 First Nations. There are the so-called land chiefs negotiations.

In Alberta we struck the first deal for moving gas and oil to aboriginal people, probably followed by another four or five.

In Saskatchewan there are nine co-management agreements. We are starting co-management in Saskatchewan.

In Manitoba we have dismantled the whole province. The province is now at the table.

**An hon. member:** They will be pleased to hear that.

**Mr. Irwin:** The member asked a question. I am sure he wants to be informed.

In B.C. the treaty process is moving. I am pleased to announce it is now supported as of the weekend by the Lutheran bishop, the Ukrainian Catholic bishop, the Anglican bishop and the Roman Catholic bishop for the first time.

In Ontario we are negotiating with NAN for dismantling and moving jurisdiction of education in treaty 3 that is around Fort Frances, which the hon. member never gets to.

(1425)

In Quebec we are working with all 10 First Nations plus the Inuit.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to hear the minister is dismantling the province of Manitoba.

The minister implies that the government is committed to the concept of self-government and resolving treaty issues. However at the same time the minister's officials are advising him in a slightly different direction.

I quote from the minister's leaked briefing notes which advise the minister to bring the high expectations of the aboriginal community to manageable levels so that the federal government will avoid being placed in a position of trying to explain why it is not keeping its red book promises.

My question is for the minister. Why is the minister in his public statements raising high expectations with respect to aboriginal self-government while being advised in private by his officials to reduce high expectations for self-government and to avoid red book promises?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the leader of the Reform Party, what I say in private is exactly what I say in public.

With the aboriginal people I say just this. We have to scope out exactly what this means. That is part of the treaty process. If the leader of the Reform Party wants to know what I saw in my briefing books he should have been at the opening meeting with treaty 6 where I said just that. I signed a memorandum of understanding with treaty 6 in Alberta and said just that. It is in the public speech that was released. He probably got it from one of the Calgary papers.

We have to scope out exactly what this means. It is exactly what we did publicly in the treaty 6 memorandum of understanding. It is exactly what we will do with the Iroquois, with the Murray treaty in Quebec, always publicly and always straight up. We are making progress.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this advice is contained in ministerial briefing notes dated April 18, 1995. Many Canadians suspect from the minister's past behaviour that he does not read his briefing notes or follow the advice from his officials.

In the rash statements made by the minister with respect to self-government, do we not yet have another instance of an impetuous minister operating oblivious to the concerns of his officials and making rash statements publicly that he is advised against making privately?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting for the famous aboriginal policy of the Reform Party. The leader has

*Oral Questions*

done once again what he usually does. When he cannot deal with merits, when he cannot deal with compassion and when he cannot deal with issues, he personally attacks me.

I am doing my job. The hon. member should be doing his job if he is serious about helping the native people of the country.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The minister will announce today the appointment of a committee chaired by a friend of the government, Mr. Pierre Juneau, whose task will be to examine the operations of the CBC, the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada. Now, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage should table its report on the CBC by the end of this month.

How can the Minister of Canadian Heritage rationalize the appointment of a special committee chaired by a friend of the government when a committee of the House of Commons is preparing a report on CBC operations?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, nobody can question the qualifications of Mr. Pierre Juneau, who is a distinguished Canadian, one of the greatest experts we have in this country, and a French-speaking Canadian on top of that. I am outraged at such a disgraceful attack.

As to the review that is being launched, it was announced in the budget, and it is not at all incompatible with the report of the standing committee.

(1430)

The task of Mr. Juneau and of other committee members is, in fact, to examine the standing committee's recommendations, and they must take those recommendations into account.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, are we to understand that, by setting up that new special committee, the minister is about to repeat what happened in the case of Power DirecTv, where he appointed a panel whose made-to-measure recommendations backed the federal government's decisions?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very kind for the hon. member to suggest I wield so much power I can pull the strings. That is not the case. That committee will be totally independent. Its terms of reference will allow a thorough examination of the issue. When the report is handed to me, I will consider it. That is all.

[*English*]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in the secret briefing document mentioned by the member for Calgary South-west the minister states: "By responding to treaty issues the federal government will avoid being placed in a position of trying to explain why it is not keeping its red book promises."

Clearly the minister is cynically going through the motions. He is following an incoherent and unprincipled approach.

In light of the revelations in the secret briefing document, will the minister admit he does not actually have an effective and practical treaty policy?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about principle. The hon. member's riding is 30 per cent aboriginal. Within his riding I saw a certain generosity, which I do not find in the member, from the people of Terrace, Prince Rupert, Stewart, Smithers, Kitimat and Port Edward.

Out of curiosity last week I checked with the Vancouver office and did a comparison on Jim Fulton who represented the same area as the member. Jim Fulton sent 600 letters in four years regarding aboriginal people. This member has sent two letters in a year and a half—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Irwin:** On principle from the hon. member I will not wait for his letter.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in the leaked briefing document the minister warns his cabinet colleagues that after 18 months of confusion: "The federal government cannot postpone the development of an effective and practical treaty policy".

Obviously the minister has no such policy. Will the the minister promise that if he ever does manage to develop a coherent policy he will share it with minor players like Parliament and the Canadian people?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the question.

**The Speaker:** I invite, without preamble the putting of the question. The hon. member for Skeena.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, will the minister promise that if he ever does manage to develop a coherent policy he will share it with minor players like Parliament and the Canadian people?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I disagree that Parliament and the Canadian people are in the same category as my hon.



*Oral Questions*

friend suggests. I am quite happy to share the treaty process on inherent rights with Parliament as soon as it is available. I hope to have it available fairly quickly.

\* \* \*

(1435)

[Translation]

**BOSNIA**

**Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Following a Croat offensive against the Serb enclave Krajina, Serb forces retaliated by taking 115 police officers and peacekeepers hostage. In addition, the UN's special envoy, Mr. Akashi, left Sarajevo yesterday without a signed agreement on extending the ceasefire in Bosnia.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs update us on the situation of the hostages and can he reassure us that everything has been done to protect Canadian peacekeepers stationed in Bosnia and Croatia?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the situation is certainly very serious and we hope that the representative of the United Nations, Mr. Akashi, will be successful in negotiating with the parties, on the one hand, the release of the hostages, and, on the other, a ceasefire which would bring lasting peace to this part of the world.

I can reassure the hon. member and the other members of this House that we are taking appropriate measures, in collaboration with the other countries which have contributed to this UN peacekeeping mission, to protect the soldiers participating in this mission as much as possible.

There are risks inherent in being a soldier, by the very nature of the work, but we are also aware that we cannot keep troops in a situation where the role they are intended to play as peacekeepers no longer has its place. That is why we are in the process of re-examining the whole issue in collaboration with the other governments concerned.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has said a great deal about negotiations. Can he confirm that the UN has made no progress during its negotiations with the Serbs on the reopening of the humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo, and will he admit that he fears that the end of the ceasefire marks the beginning of out-and-out war?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we regret that the parties did not accept to extend the ceasefire period. However, we hope that the fact that the ceasefire is over does not necessarily mean a new onslaught of hostilities. Efforts have been made to bring the parties to use

restraint and to not resume hostilities, even though they have chosen not to renew the ceasefire.

We are perfectly aware that the situation could deteriorate. That is why we have placed our trust in the representative of the United Nations, whom we support in all of his efforts.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has recently appointed a chief federal negotiator to help interpret the recently recognized 1760 Murray treaty. This leaky brief, or should I say leaked brief, of the minister states: "Our participation could not be postponed for fear of being perceived as not wanting to discuss the treaty and allowing Quebec to take the lead in a tense political climate".

If the government is only participating because of the Quebec sovereignist agenda does the federal negotiator have a real mandate to interpret the treaties in contemporary terms as promised in the red book?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Murray treaty was signed by General Murray. The Iroquois, who were allies of Quebec, found themselves on the wrong side of the battle line. It allowed them to get back into Quebec. However, it is vague.

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** Very vague.

**Mr. Irwin:** Why does the hon. member not check that? He has probably never heard of the Huron and probably does not even know where the Murray treaty launched them. I will give him this lesson.

Max Gros-Louis is the leader of the Hurons. Both the province of Quebec and Mr. Cliche through the premier and the government want to negotiate the Murray treaty, and we are. The negotiator is there. It is up and going. I am sure that when the results come out, long after the government has been defeated—pardon me, after the Reform Party has disappeared, Freudian slip—this will be very—

**Some hon. members:** Order.

(1440)

**Mr. Irwin:** Let me finish. This will be very important because it will give the leader of the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I was chuckling because of the difficulty the minister has as he stumbles over the word plan. He has no plan.

*Oral Questions*

Quoting once again from the leaked document: "The aim is to develop a strategy to address the red book commitment, manage expectations and develop federal views on the substance of a contemporary treaty process". The government does not intend to address treaty issues until this fall and until then, "there will be no authority to commit to substantive treaty processes".

How is it possible for the federal representative to negotiate in good faith with First Nations in Quebec when he has no authority?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do have authority. My friend talks about a leaked document. Perhaps he should talk about a stolen document which would be more appropriate.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** In the sense of the word and the way it was used I ask the hon. minister to please withdraw the word "stolen".

**Mr. Irwin:** Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw the word. I would not suggest the Reform Party would steal anything, let alone a good idea.

If the question is whether we have authority and are negotiating, the answer is yes. We are negotiating and my negotiator does have authority. We will be working in concert with the province of Quebec.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

On April 13, in an unprecedented decision, the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans revealed his plan for managing snow crab in 1995, which will deprive Quebec fishermen of 400 tonnes of crab, which will be transferred to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. This improvised transfer will mean the loss of 40 plant jobs and over \$3 million for fishermen of the Gaspé and Magdalen Islands.

How does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans justify his decision to transfer 400 tonnes of crab fishing quota from Quebec to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia?

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and for his interest in the management of the snow crab fishery in the gulf since this fishery is extremely valuable for all of the participants.

The member will know that literally thousands of inshore fishermen, small boat fisherman throughout Atlantic Canada,

including fishermen in Quebec, have been asking for a share of this resource during a time when prices are at a historic high and when landings are at a historic high.

Therefore, I have taken a decision which gives many fishermen in Quebec an opportunity this year to participate in the snow crab fishery on a temporary basis when prices and landings are high. As those prices and landings turn down, the historic share between the provinces in snow crab returns exactly to normal.

If my friend is telling me, and he may want to correct himself, that he does not want anybody but those who already have access to the resource, those who already have big incomes, to share in the wealth, then perhaps he can tell me that is the position of the Bloc Québécois, but I would be surprised.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister talks of sharing, but is he aware that this is the third decision by the federal government in only six months that is unfavourable to Quebec fishermen?

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot absolutely assure the member there is no change in the structure, no change in the sharing arrangement in access on a permanent basis for those who have permanent licences in snow crab.

(1445)

If the member's concern is fairness, then I ask him to listen to what I am saying. The only change this year is temporary. Literally some of the boats in the midshore made \$600,000 to \$700,000 per boat last year. It is to take some of that tremendous wealth and for this season with high prices and high quotas to share some of the resource.

I believe my hon. friend would want to support that kind of initiative to ensure that the fishermen of Quebec are given a fair and balanced share of the resource.

\* \* \*

**PACIFIC SALMON FISHERY**

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

For the past few months Canadians have applauded and supported the federal government's tough stand on what has become known as the east coast turbot dispute. There is an equally important fishery on the west coast which is under pressure from environmental factors as well as unresolved disputes with the United States.

*Oral Questions*

Will the minister assure this House that he is prepared to take equally principled and responsible measures to ensure the long term viability of the Pacific salmon fishery?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question on the Pacific salmon fishery. Indeed an important part of Canada's heritage is the tremendous resource called the Pacific salmon in the greatest river bar none in this country, the Fraser River.

I want to assure him and all the fishermen in the House that as recently as last week I met with the U.S. ambassador and the negotiators for both Canada and the United States. We are looking at the possibility of bringing in a mediator to resolve our outstanding differences in the Pacific salmon treaty.

In the interim I assure the House and the people of Canada that we will have the toughest conservation regime which has ever been put in place to ensure the preservation of the Pacific salmon stocks in 1995.

\* \* \*

**ABORIGINAL FISHING STRATEGY**

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I have in my possession a leaked secret document from the minister's department which states: "The fisheries situation has become volatile as more and more aboriginals try to exercise perceived fishing rights to the detriment of a properly regulated fishing industry".

Why does the minister continue to allow the native fishing protest on the east coast and why does he continue to defend the aboriginal fishing strategy on the west coast when his own advisers are confirming that native fishing is not properly monitored and has become a severe threat to Canada's fishing resource?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the hon. member on one point. There has to be monitoring of any system we put in place. As the minister of fisheries made quite clear, we have to have monitoring internationally. We have to know figures, so I agree with that.

As far as the volatility is concerned, I will tell the hon. member why there is volatility. It is because on April 28 on a B.C. open line show he called the natives of B.C. non-contributors.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Some hon. members:** Shame.

**Mr. Irwin:** He said: "Well certainly, Ben, and the whole thing that is dividing the native and non-native population is the fact, you know, so many people are just not in agreement with

non-contributors", referring to the aboriginal people. As long as Reform has this attitude there will be a volatile situation in B.C.

Going back to what I said, the majority of the people in B.C. want to do the fair thing with the aboriginal people who live there.

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, consider that these secret documents speak of the detrimental effects of native fishing. Consider that millions of west coast salmon went missing in 1994. Consider that the Fraser River report slams the AFS pilot sales project as not being effectively monitored. Will the minister today take the advice of his own officials and protect our fisheries resource by immediately calling for a suspension of the aboriginal fishing strategy?

(1450)

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the questions about the aboriginal fishing strategy which is administered by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Let me respond by saying to the member that it is tragically easy but patently irresponsible for people to stand and suggest that one category of Canadians is responsible for all of the problems in the fishery. All of us bear responsibility from every community to the fishery. It is transparently partisan in the worst sense of the word to single out one community and blame it for the problems we have had.

There are 35 recommendations in the Fraser panel report. All 35 recommendations within an hour of being publicly launched were accepted by this government. All 35 recommendations are going to be implemented. The cost of conservation will be borne by First Nations peoples yes, and by everybody else who participates in the fishery as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS**

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question as well is for the Indian Affairs minister.

The government agreed to an increase in the number of low level flights over Labrador and Quebec. Despite aboriginal protest, the government's decision will result in close to a threefold increase in the number of low level flights. This position faithfully reflects the Canadian army's point of view and does not take into account the people concerned nor the opinion of many environmentalist groups.

Can the minister tell us if he endorses the decision taken by his defence colleague and how he intends to justify it to the aboriginal people concerned, who are steadfastly opposed to these flights?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the decision I announced yesterday which accepted most of the recommendations of the environmental assessment panel report is a government decision. It is a collective decision. It is a decision that was taken in the best interests of all Canadians with respect to the obligations we have to our allies as part of the NATO alliance.

It is one where the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to benefit in excess of \$100 million a year. Over 1,000 people will continue to be gainfully employed, 30 per cent of them from the aboriginal communities.

To assure those who believe that the continuation and even the expansion of the number of flights is perhaps environmentally unsafe, we have accepted the recommendation to set up an institute for monitoring the environmental concerns. A third party will be appointed to make recommendations in the setting up of that institute. We fully expect the aboriginal communities to be equal partners in the establishment of the institute.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is still for the Indian affairs minister.

How can the Indian affairs minister, who is letting the national defence minister answer for him, be an accomplice in the decision taken by his defence colleague, in view of the fact that he is the trustee of the rights of the aboriginal people and the custodian of their interests throughout Canada? I want the minister to answer this question.

*[English]*

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence is the lead ministry on this file.

In the deliberation on the environmental assessment panel's report a number of ministers were involved, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, my colleague from Newfoundland, and of course, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. At all times we were very sensitive to the concerns of the aboriginal peoples and in particular, the Innu who have some difficulty with the recommendations and will have some difficulty with the implementation of this report.

We are inviting all aboriginal Canadians concerned, especially the Innu, to take part in the institute to absolutely assure all of us that the monitoring is done in a proper and safe manner so that these flights can continue.

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are quoting directly from this leaked document.

The minister of fisheries should put his smart remarks to the minister of Indian affairs.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

(1455)

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, perhaps on both sides we are getting more and more into debate rather than questions and answers. I would invite the hon. member to please put his question.

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, this document from Indian affairs shows over \$32 million has been handed over to 10 Indian groups to negotiate self-government. To quote from the document: "Central agencies are concerned about cost and dispersal of effort on aboriginal files. DFO and health want action on treaties to support operational policies".

Will the minister of Indian affairs confirm the tremendous significance of this statement that not only does he not know what he is doing or what in the world his policy is, but he is also dragging down and impeding the initiatives of other government departments which are pressuring him to get on with solving his problems?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what category the hon. member is talking about. If he is talking about community based self-government, this program had gone on for about eight or nine years before we arrived back in government. If he is not, he will have to clarify it later.

As far as what Reform is doing here today, I have this reflection. The Reform Party does not care about the 1760 Murray treaty or the Hurons, the Cree, the Ojibway, or Treaty 6. What Reform wants to do is to go to its last issue in B.C. and disrupt the B.C. treaty process. That is Reform's agenda.

We have spent the better part of a year and one-half getting 120 First Nations to the table. That is something the Reform could never do in the millennium. They are negotiating and we are committed to the B.C. treaty process, no matter what the Reform members do or how disruptive they are.

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the hon. member knows the Reform agenda. Perhaps this question might help him out a little bit.

Since 1991, \$4.6 million has been granted to the Siksika first nation in Alberta to negotiate a self-government agreement. We now learn from this document that the Siksika dropped out of the process so it could pursue negotiations from a direction beyond

*Privilege*

the mandate of current federal policy. In fact, we now learn there is no federal policy, so is it any wonder it dropped out.

Can the minister tell the House if there is any recourse to recoup the \$4.6 million blunder?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, by way of background, in Alberta where the Siksika are, the treaty is sacred. They say it is sacred and they do not feel we have fulfilled the spirit and intent of the treaty.

Chief Strater Crowfoot is one of the pre-eminent chiefs in this country. He has had a difficult time with his first nation. The difficulty is that he wants to establish trust with the federal government. We will work with him and hope that he gets back into the system.

Rather than saying that Strater Crowfoot and the Siksika are temporarily out of the process, I want to go back to what the Minister of Justice said when members of the House voted for gun control. Forty First Nations are still in the process and still working toward completion.

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**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

This government has always supported small business and it is the government's belief that small business is the key to continued prosperity and the creation of employment. Will the minister outline for us some of the government's current plans and actions to assist small business to grow and prosper?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to hear a question with a preamble I agree with.

First I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of the Standing Committee on Industry and members of the House of Commons who contributed to the work on small business. As well there are the committees chaired by Phil O'Brien and Brian Gray. They did excellent work in advising the government on small business.

(1500)

I would like to mention that reform of the Federal Business Development Bank mandate and lending authorities is coming soon. We have extended and increased the limit under the Small Businesses Loans Act. We have maintained the small business deduction and the capital gains exemption for small business. We have increased the funding for CANARIE, in its efforts to bring the small business community on to the information highway. We have increased funding for tourism promotion, which is going to help small business across Canada. We have seen improvements in the—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The final question: the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

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**INFECTIOUS DISEASES PROTOCOL**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government.

As the government knows, the international firefighters are having their convention in town, and they are very frustrated by the lack of progress with respect to the setting up of an infectious diseases protocol. There is wide support for this protocol in the House, and I would like to ask whoever is speaking on behalf of the government on this issue today why there has not been progress. When will there be progress? Will the government commit to bringing in this protocol before the end of the year?

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that this government supports that process very much. It is very concerned with the health and protection of frontline workers such as firefighters.

As a result, and because of that commitment, the government has assisted firefighters in setting up a meeting in January of all the stakeholders to discuss this issue. That will be followed up with a meeting in June.

The government also has protocols on the agenda for the ministers of health conference. Setting up protocols is in the provincial jurisdiction. It does not have to do with hospitals.

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**PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, I would like to draw to your attention today the presence in the gallery of two laureates for the Nobel prize in chemistry: Dr. Gerhard Herzberg in 1971, and Dr. Michael Smith in 1993.

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

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

PRINTING

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address a matter of privilege today.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, a question of privilege is raised when an individual member of this Chamber feels that something has occurred that infringes upon the ability of that member of Parliament to do his or her job.

A matter of privilege should be raised at the earliest opportunity, and just this morning I received a letter that has prompted me to rise today on this matter.

*Privilege*

(1505)

The point I wanted to make is prefaced by comments concerning a recent Board of Internal Economy decision relating to the production of minutes for committees. I feel that the Board of Internal Economy provided us with extra support when it decided that the minutes of committees could be transferred electronically. I supported and I do support the decision by the Board of Internal Economy that allowed us to have quicker access to committee minutes via the computer process.

However, the printing branch of the House of Commons has interpreted a decision of the Board of Internal Economy in a way that I believe jeopardizes my ability to do my job well. That decision is as follows. As a result of the minutes not being printed by the House of Commons any more and simply put on to electronic transfer, individual members of Parliament such as myself have to print off the minutes from our computer in order to read them, review them, have them handy, carry them on an airplane and that sort of thing. The minutes are no longer available from the House of Commons committees branch or printed anywhere.

I have a number of constituents upon whom I rely for advice in helping me to understand certain pieces of legislation, certain bills and certain matters before the House. When committees meet to study those issues I have always had minutes of the committee available to circulate among the people within my constituency upon whom I rely for advice to do my job.

Today, on a request of mine from Thursday of last week, the printing unit of the House of Commons refused to print copies of minutes reproduced off my computer so that I could then circulate that to members of my constituency who would provide me with the advice I need to help me do my job. I need the feedback from the people in my constituency on the work that is going on here in Ottawa to ensure that the work I do here represents their interests and also ensures that I understand completely the impact of government legislation, programs, and policies on the people of my own constituency as well as across Canada.

Earlier this year, as you will recall, Mr. Speaker, because we communicated on this matter, on the firearms legislation I had asked if I could print copies of the firearms legislation to distribute in my constituency. I was informed that was not an option for me to consider.

The Minister of Justice has now appeared before the House of Commons committee on justice studying Bill C-68, the bill that I could not print in order to circulate to my constituency. I wanted to reproduce the minutes of the minister's statement to the committee, and the printing branch of the House of Commons told me that I could not have anything out of committees printed. As a result, I cannot service the people in my constituency who want to know what the government is saying on these issues.

**The Speaker:** With all respect to the point the member is making on a point of privilege, I have a little difficulty with agreeing, at least in this respect, that it would be a point of privilege. However, might I suggest to the hon. member that if he could draft a note to the Board of Internal Economy perhaps they could get an answer back to the hon. member. If at that point that is not acceptable, then we might pursue this not as a point of privilege but perhaps as a point of order.

I wonder if the hon. member might consider doing this in the interest of getting an answer as quickly as we can for him in this particular dilemma.

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, allow me just one minute to respond to your comment and conclude my remarks.

When I requested the attention of the Board of Internal Economy on the printing of the firearms legislation itself, that process served as a delay. I ended up not being able to respond to my constituents who had an interest for more than two weeks because of the process of the Board of Internal Economy.

(1510)

Although I will pursue the matter of a letter to the board, because I think the printing branch is not interpreting the board's decision correctly, more importantly, I do think that my privileges have been breached here, because I am not able to do my job if I cannot communicate the work of this Chamber to the people I represent. That is a breach of my privileges, and I want that considered, despite what the Board of Internal Economy does.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to very briefly submit that not being able to get an unlimited amount of copies of anything does not constitute a point of privilege.

Second, I understand that the request in question was for 150 copies of a particular document produced by a committee. Even in the days when those were produced by the House itself, those were not quantities usually available to members of Parliament.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that your suggestion that this matter be brought before the board as a request from the hon. member is a good one, notwithstanding the fact that the quantities sought, if they were given to all members, would in fact negate any saving we have been trying to attempt to achieve with the board over the last number of months through our deliberations.

**The Speaker:** If we would agree, I think we will proceed in this fashion.

We have the spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy saying that this will be taken up at the earliest possible time. We have the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake saying that he will indeed draft a proposal or a letter questioning

*Supply*

the process and asking for clarification. At this point, I wonder if the hon. members would hold this in abeyance.

I am well aware of what the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake said with regard to his privileges. Of course I will take that all into consideration. If I feel it is necessary, I will get back to the House with a decision at that time.

Is this on the same point?

**Mr. Taylor:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I gave the hon. member a minute and he was to conclude. I would hope that in a few seconds he would be able to wrap this up.

**Mr. Taylor:** Yes, I can, Mr. Speaker.

I must comment on two points the hon. whip made with regard to what has happened in the past. He talked about requests for unlimited copies. I think the House is aware there are limitations on printing, that we all know those limitations and we all live within those limitations. That is not a problem. We are not asking for unlimited access to printing.

Second, the member said this has not occurred in the past. I have constituents who have received printed copies of committee minutes from me for the past six years. This has not been a problem in the past for me.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member and I will close the debate at this point.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SUPPLY

#### ALLOTTED DAY—CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER

The House resumed consideration of the motion and the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** According to my notes, the hon. member for Algoma has five minutes remaining. The hon. member for Algoma.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, just before we broke off for question period I briefly made the point that even though Canadians in vast numbers approved of the recent federal budget, we have in the media almost every day attempts by the NDP government in Ontario to use the budget as some kind of a lightning rod in a desperate hope to win the Ontario election. We also see the Bloc Quebecois attempt to use the budget to further their own ill-founded cause. In spite of Canadian support we see these attempts.

(1515)

The Ontario NDP failed to recognize that a recent poll indicated that some 72 per cent of Ontario voters supported the federal budget. It is putting out its own numbers which are a twisting of the facts. The Ontario NDP claims that the federal budget, including the Canadian health and social transfer initiative, represents a cut of something like 54 per cent to Ontario even though Ontario has 38 per cent of the population.

This is simply not the case. Even though Ontario has 38 per cent of the population, the actual budget impact on Ontario is something like 35 per cent. The Ontario NDP has attempted to include the equalization payments.

Certainly the NDP in Ontario would not be against the better off provinces helping those provinces which are less well off. In fact, the transfers to Ontario under the Canada health and social transfer represent only 2 per cent of the provincial revenues forecast for the year 1996–97. The treasurer for Ontario has admitted that.

Recently the NDP has put out numerous documents in an attempt to use the federal budget to further its election cause in Ontario but this strategy will fail. The number of phone calls I received after the budget against that budget were very few in number, barely a handful. Most people I talk to are very supportive of the budget.

The central theme of the Bloc's motion suggests that the federal government intends to impose new national standards on the provinces. In fact the federal government is providing an opportunity while at the same time it is taking modest measures to rein in federal expenditures.

The case of Ontario again is typical for the provinces. The cut that the federal government is making to its own programs is greater than the cut in transfers to provinces.

The Bloc motion suggests that the federal government is going to impose new standards on the provinces. Canadians want standards. They have already accepted and want to keep the standards that have been established for many years in the health care area. I repeatedly hear from my constituents that they would like national standards in post-secondary education. These will not be imposed on the provinces.

The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Human Resources Development have stated that any new standards will be created in consultation with the provinces. Recent polls have indicated that Canadians want to see a strong set of national standards in all areas of health, social services and post-secondary education. I support that but this will not be imposed on the provinces by the federal government.

What we see is an attempt by the NDP in Ontario and the Bloc Quebecois, in the absence of their own constructive agenda, to attempt to use the federal budget as a means to further their own cause. I suggest that this is doomed to fail.

*Supply*

I had briefly mentioned before question period that the Canadian Federation of Students had made a presentation to the finance committee this morning. One of the recommendations of the federation is that Bill C-76 be amended to compel the Minister of Human Resources Development to invite all stakeholders affected by the Canadian health and social transfer to participate in developing a set of shared principles and objectives for it. This is the kind of positive thinking and leadership hoped for from all quarters. I commend the Canadian Federation of Students for that.

(1520)

In conclusion, the agenda of the Bloc is obvious. In Ontario, the agenda of the NDP is obvious. We look forward to the demise of those agendas in the months ahead.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague says that the government does not intend to create new national standards, whereas Bill C-76 refers to new national standards that will be implemented only "where appropriate". Does it mean that a consensus from the provinces will be needed to implement these new standards?

I find it a little strange that we are talking about new national standards when negotiations with the different provinces have not even taken place. It seems to me that, when we want to establish new standards, we first reach a consensus with the provinces and then implement them. We are currently doing the opposite. We are putting the cart before the horse.

So, I would simply ask him this question: What does he think about Bill C-76, which does not provide for a consensus with the provinces before implementing the new act? We should negotiate first.

*[English]*

**Mr. St. Denis:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

The member is attempting to suggest that the federal government is putting the cart before the horse. What we see in this motion is an attempt to detach the cart from the horse.

If the hon. member would re-read the budget reference to national standards it is quite clear that there is no attempt or plan to impose standards. Those standards which exist now in the area of health care are fixed. There is no negotiation and no debate of those standards.

However, when the suggestion is made in the budget documents that the provinces, through the Canada health and social transfer, will have more flexibility, how can that be interpreted in any way except that there will be more flexibility, in concert with the provinces' national standards in the area of social transfer and possibly in post-secondary education. That will be

looked at in co-operation with the provinces. There is no hint whatsoever of the imposition of standards.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when the government dumps some responsibilities on to the provinces without also sending them the money to face these responsibilities, there is a huge problem. We know that there are 800,000 unemployed people and welfare recipients in Quebec. In fact, there are 800,000 welfare recipients alone. My riding of Matapédia—Matane alone accounts for almost 40 per cent of them. That is totally unacceptable. My question is: Unless my colleague is able to accomplish some great miracle, how can the government offload some responsibilities while, at the same time, tightening the belt?

*[English]*

**Mr. St. Denis:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The fact remains that federal money is being transferred to Quebec and to all the other provinces and territories.

The federal government, by and large, has no regime of standards with its transfers with the exception of health care, but it is transferring vast sums of money. To me it is not unreasonable to negotiate with the provinces standards in areas other than health care. I believe that goes with the responsibility of transferring funds to the provinces.

(1525)

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am confused. I am confused by the motion because it talks about national standards as being things which are not desirable to Her Majesty's opposition. Yet last Thursday, on opposition day, the health critic for the opposition party, Mr. Daviault said:

*[Translation]*

"In Quebec we have no trouble with the five criteria. As far as we are concerned, they represent a minimum consensus".

*[English]*

The other health critic, Mrs. Picard, said: "We believe in the Canada Health Act principles". Philippe Paré in the debate said: "I think there is not one Canadian or Quebecer who questions the importance—

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Pomerleau:** I think, Madam Speaker, that members cannot be referred to by name in the House, and I would urge my hon. colleague to remember this.

*[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** We do not use the names of members of Parliament in debate.

**Ms. Fry:** Madam Speaker, I apologise.



*Supply*

Another member of the opposition party said: "I think that there is not one Canadian or Quebecer who questions the importance and value of the five principles set out in the Canada Health Act".

The hon. critic again said that the federal government should uphold the five principles. Maybe I am not confused, maybe members of the opposition are confused.

The five principles of the Canada Health Act embody the whole concept of what is most important to Canadians. What Canadians constantly use to define themselves as a people is Canadian medicare. It is an example of how federal principles can act in partnership with provincial governments, which administer the program, to make things better. The Canada Health Act enhances medicare. It continues to tell us who we are as Canadians. It binds us together in terms of our values, in terms of equity, in terms of fairness and in terms of compassion.

In 1984 when the Canada Health Act was introduced it was unanimously agreed on by all parties in the House.

It makes sense. The Canada Health Act binds the country together while at the same time it gives the regions the freedom to be able to administer and decide with flexibility what it is they require in their region. I would like to use the Canada Health Act as a very good example of how we can have national standards, enshrine them in legislation and yet give freedom to the provinces to administer that act. It has worked extremely well.

National principles tell us that we have an objective which we are all working toward. At the same time we allow the provinces to decide how they will meet those objectives, based on things such as their economy, the needs of their people, geographic and demographic differences. It gives the provinces freedom but at the same time it holds the country together.

We should look again at what the Canada Health Act has given to us. We are one of the few countries in the world that enjoys a high standard of living, the best quality of life. The GATT, when it looked at the measurement of outcome, which is infant mortality, we rank second or third in the world in terms of those measures and those outcomes. Obviously national standards legislated with provincial jurisdiction to administer has worked. Canadian medicare is an example of how well it works and how well it can give us flexibility at a time when global competitiveness is what we are talking about, when Canada needs to be competitive with the rest of the world.

(1530)

It makes sense to me that the federal government would transfer money to the provinces to administer other aspects of social programs, post-secondary education and social assistance, in the same way, looking toward a national objective that could be competitiveness.

The human resource will be the resource of the 21st century. Canada's medicare has enhanced our human resource potential. It has given us a competitive edge in terms of the fact that healthy people work. The less sick days, the less time off work, which makes any business profitable and give us an economic and competitive edge.

If we negotiated with the provinces for a set of national standards for post-secondary education and training, we would enhance the ability of the country to be competitive and to have trained people able to compete with the rest of the world.

This makes sense to me. I started off by saying that I was confused. I end by saying that this is not the real question. It is a political and hidden agenda by a group that does not really want to do anything but destroy the country and fragment what it has meant.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I was very happy to hear the comments made by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre, except for her conclusion that the denunciation by the official opposition of the federal government's interference in areas of provincial jurisdiction is politically motivated and does not meet any of the population's concerns. Her speech also suggests that the Bloc Québécois should willingly agree to let the federal government interfere, as I said earlier, in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

I will give her an example and I would like her to give me her opinion on this. In Quebec, there is a consensus among all the stakeholders, that is, the political parties, the unions and the employers—where sovereignists are few and far between—with regard to manpower training, which is in fact an extension of the educational jurisdiction. There is a general consensus to call for the recognition of Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction in this area.

The federal government, your government, continues to reject this demand, which, I repeat, has nothing to do with the constitutional options of political parties but which represents a consensus. This is an outright rejection by the federal government. The same goes for all other areas of jurisdiction. That is why we oppose federal government interference. Again, we are saying that the federal government should withdraw, transfer to the provinces the tax points corresponding to these expenditures and let them administer these programs in the best interest of their people. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this.

[*English*]

**Ms. Fry:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member suggested that he does not understand why I would say this is a political agenda. It flies in the face of common sense. That is why I say there must be another agenda.

*Supply*

Surely we are talking about creating a set of principles. As I said earlier, principles give us a national objective. We are talking about making Canada a competitive country. Nowhere else do I see the ability to pull together as a country, to cross interprovincial barriers. Then we could have a common principle of training and an agenda saying what we aspire to as a country. At the same time we could give more autonomy to the provinces so they could develop appropriate programs and appropriate ways of dealing with their provincial and regional needs.

(1535)

I do not understand what the hon. member has a problem with unless, as I said before, the problem is purely a political one; unless, as I also said before, we want to balkanize the country into 10 little provinces, 10 little mini-countries and 2 little mini-places in the north that we can call whatever we choose to call them.

Is that what the hon. member aspires to? What he is saying does not make sense to me.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this motion tabled this morning by the Leader of the Official Opposition is the kind of motion which would bother the people across the way, as it makes a major amendment to the budget which, as it stands, literally spells disaster for Quebec.

The measures contained in the budget, especially for the next three years, does neither Canadians nor Quebecers any good.

This budget is nothing but smoke and mirrors, the effects of which we will see, of course, in two or three years. The Minister of Finance claims this is how Canadian federalism can be renewed. I think that he is going about it the wrong way. One thing is sure in all this: Quebec must get out of this system on the double. This government does not have the courage to announce before the referendum the specific measures hiding behind this budget. It takes advantage of the situation and better enjoy it while it can because I suggest this is the last year that a government which does nothing good for Quebec will debate to help itself to \$29 billion of Quebec taxpayers hard-earned money year after year after year.

Once again, the official opposition is offering the Liberal government an opportunity to correct this unacceptable situation, a situation caused by one of their own, namely the Minister of Finance, who should really be called minister of family trusts or minister of large corporations.

The Minister of Finance expects this whole budget charade to climax after the referendum. Unfortunately for him, there will be no time for his scenario to come to a conclusion because, after the referendum, Quebec will be a sovereign state.

Between 1977 and 1994, Quebec has seen its federal transfer payments for health, education and welfare drop from 47 per cent to 37 per cent, as Liberal and Conservative governments succeeded one another in this place, passing the puck back and forth but essentially pursuing the same policies. This year again, the Liberal government is continuing the work of the Conservatives by reducing social transfers by up to 28 per cent. This translates into a shortfall of nearly \$2 billion for the Government of Quebec. That is unacceptable and wrong.

In 1983-84, federal transfers accounted for 29 per cent of Quebec's budget revenues. In 1997-98, they will account for a meagre 12 per cent.

(1540)

Although several initiatives included in the budget provide for a withdrawal of federal financial support, the federal government will interfere even more in the areas of health, post-secondary education and social assistance which, as you know, Madam Speaker, come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction. This is a shame.

Once again, the cuts announced in the recent budget will directly hit the poor. As is customary for the Liberals, the budget measures will not affect the well-to-do, because this would harm the Liberals' good financial relations. However, these measures will affect those who barely have enough to survive, and I mean survive, not live.

Quebec's finance minister, Jean Campeau, estimates that the cuts in transfers to the provinces will result in the federal contribution to social programs going down from 37.8 per cent to 28.5 per cent, over a two year period, that is in 1997 and 1998. The federal government just keeps offloading on to the provinces.

Last week, it was also revealed by the Canadian Council on Social Development that 17.6 per cent of Quebec families live below the poverty line. That rate is the highest in the country. This is a concrete result of a sick federalism which simply does not want to evolve. Also last week, we learned that 800,000 Quebecers have to rely on social assistance. Again, this is a consequence of federalism.

Premier Parizeau himself referred to that all time record as a national catastrophe. Why is that? It is because this government did not fulfil its red book commitment to create jobs. During the Liberal convention held last weekend, the Prime Minister even had the nerve to say that unemployment should be everyone's priority. However, with the red book, with so many promises, including some by the Minister of Finance, absolutely nothing is being done. No concrete measure was announced in the budget to put Canadians back to work.

Even the labour minister does all sorts of things, except find stable and lasting ways to allow Canadians to work without losing their dignity in the process. In fact, the minister's first action here was to pounce on workers. If the government wants, once and for all, to tackle the issues of duplication and unemployment, it should immediately withdraw from all areas

*Supply*

which come under provincial jurisdiction and give to the provinces the federal taxes representing the equivalent amounts. This is a simple, easy and efficient way of doing it.

Madam Speaker, since my time is up, I will conclude by saying that the electoral platform of this government included a commitment to put Canadians back to work. After 18 months in office, it is now obvious that the government is unable to fulfil that promise. Consequently, it should leave that responsibility to governments which are competent, which are close to the public and which can take action. I am referring of course to the provincial governments, including the Quebec government.

(1545)

I ask all the members of this House to denounce the will of the federal government to restrict the provinces to the role of mere advisers by imposing on them new national standards for social programs.

Our constituents sent us here to protect their interests. Let us not disappoint them. Let us act, in all conscience, to ensure their well-being. Let us say no to this offloading of \$7 billion on to the provinces.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the official opposition motion before us, with all respect, distorts the intent of the federal government's position as it relates to the Canada health and social transfer program.

It has been known from the beginning from the proclamations of the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Human Resources Development that this new program, the details of which will be negotiated with the provinces, is aimed at giving provinces more flexibility to deliver on areas of exclusive jurisdiction, in the areas of health, post-secondary education and social assistance.

The government has said it does not mean a free for all. What the Bloc fails to recognize is that three out of every four Canadians, according to a poll last year, said they like national social programs.

When we speak of national social programs they have to be national in scope. If they are national in scope, it follows the national government has to have a say.

The new program is also aimed at ensuring all provincial governments acknowledge and affirm the importance of treating all Canadians equitably, of ensuring citizens from coast to coast have equal opportunity of access to the same standard of living, to the same opportunities in education for youth, to the same

levels of support for the poor, to the same quality of care in health for the sick.

The new federal transfer program clearly recognizes the exclusive jurisdiction of provinces. What the Bloc has failed to recognize and refuses altogether to acknowledge is the unity and equality of all Canada's citizens.

The new program is not about imposing new standards and is not an arbitrary one. It is about affirming our national commitment to the five principles of medicare to which all Canadians subscribe. We know that. It is about reaffirming our national commitment to give our youth the best type of education and training. It is about reaffirming our national commitment to assisting the poor who have become under privileged beyond their control wherever they come from.

Do the member and his party want one class of poor in one province and another class of poor in other provinces? Do the member and his party want one class of education for the rich and one for the poor? Do the member and his party want medicare to be destroyed? Perhaps the ultimate question is do the member and his party not want one Canada for all?

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I would like to remind members of the official opposition that the period provided for questions or comments is five minutes.

I recognize the hon. member for Chicoutimi, if he wants to respond. He still has two minutes left.

**Mr. Fillion:** Madam Speaker, of course the official opposition does not need the advice of anybody in this House. In his comment, the member said that he did not want to create categories of people who are more educated or less educated than others. Only the provinces can give these kinds of assurances to their people and guarantee them that there will not be different categories within the system. Everybody should clean up their own backyard.

(1550)

The Quebec Liberal Party wants a decentralized federalism, it wants the federal government to give the provinces, particularly Quebec, all the tools they need to govern themselves, whereas, in this House, members of the Liberal government are trying to stop progress in its tracks. I wonder who in this House wants to create different categories. The answer is simple: it is the members opposite with a federalism that they are not even willing to renew.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise in this House to strongly support the motion put forward by the leader of the official opposition, on behalf of my constituents and all those who will be affected by this bill, because these

*Supply*

are the people who will fall victim to the questionable schemes of the current government.

In his motion, our leader denounces the will of the federal government to restrict the provinces to the role of mere consultants by imposing on them new national standards for all social programs. He also denounces the interference of the federal government in the health, post-secondary education and social assistance areas.

Federal interference in these areas is not just another Constitutional issue, because it will have very real consequences on the daily lives of our constituents. Let us examine how this will come about.

Bill C-76 is the statutory instrument the government intends to use to implement its budget. So, it is a very important piece of legislation even though it looks daunting at first glance. When you analyze it, you realize that it can have a tremendous impact on programs. This year, however, the government had quite a surprise in store for us. It slipped into Bill C-76 some words which will have significant consequences on Quebec and on the rest of the provinces.

For example, the part concerning the Canada health and social transfer deals not only with health and social assistance, but also with health, post-secondary education, social assistance and social services. This is important. The federal government is interfering in areas which, as you all know, come mostly under provincial jurisdiction, as defined in the Constitution Act, 1867. The federal government must have a reason to act this way.

When you read the other provisions found in this bill, you realize that this type of interference is pernicious. It allows the current government to control provincial activities and programs. If a province implements a policy or a program the federal government does not agree with, parts, or all, of its subsidies will be cut. This is a disgrace, because, as I said before, all the areas affected by this bill come under provincial and not federal jurisdiction.

Under this bill, the government will also have the right to determine what represents a good program. That is right, to make things a little worse, the federal government will be able to decide, all by itself, what is a good program that deserves to be financially supported and what is a bad program that deserves to be condemned.

I remind the House that we are talking about a whole set of programs—education, social assistance, social services and health—which directly concern the public. We might as well abolish provincial governments and let the federal run everything.

Let me remind the House and my constituents that the subsidies about to be cut come from tax revenues and that these revenues come from the taxpayers who live in the provinces.

(1555)

Let us look at the strong possibility that the federal government will not like the programs that the Quebec government puts in place. In the current scenario, the outcome is very simple. The federal government will inform Quebec, and if the province does not get in line, deciding, on the contrary, to keep its programs, Ottawa will cut its funding. This money will have come from the pockets of Quebecers, but would be used to fund other provinces' programs because the patriarchal federal government will have decided to punish the prodigal son, Quebec.

Quebecers want nothing to do with a wholesale delegation of powers to Ottawa. At the very least, the federal government should respect the distinct character of the Quebecois people. On this issue, 50,000 witnesses who appeared before the commissions on the future of Quebec requested more autonomy for Quebec. In concrete terms, this federal invasion is already damaging for Quebecers; if Bill C-76 is passed, the situation will be even worse.

In my riding, 25 per cent of all families are headed by single parents. And 79 per cent of the population in my riding lives in rental housing, and three quarters of these rental units were built before 1960. Of these households, 38 per cent sink over 30 per cent of their income into housing costs. In my riding, 29 per cent of the families are considered to have low incomes. In the downtown core, one person in three lives below the poverty line. The life expectancy of people living at the foot of the Côte d'Abraham is 10 years shorter.

That is reality according to taxpayers, some taxpayers in my riding. These people need assistance programs: employment, housing and daycare assistance, income supplements. The taxpayers in my riding will be taken hostage, despite themselves, by a government which has set its sights on job training and employment assistance programs which only confuse and discourage the unemployed and cost taxpayers a fortune.

Just think of all of the educational programs which interfere with the ministère de l'éducation's mandate. They are legion and, above all, cost the taxpayers of Quebec a lot of money.

Where did this obsession with controlling everything come from? Does Ottawa believe that Quebec is unable to take care of its own affairs and its population? If so, it should be said loud and clear: it will get a response from the population.

In closing, I would like to say to the members of this government: "Hands off, you ultra-centralists. Let the provincial governments, which know their populations and their needs better than you, handle their own affairs. Until the whole issue is settled once and for all, you had better listen to Quebec".

*Supply**[English]*

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened very attentively to the hon. member's speech. While I do not question the sincerity with which she spoke, I do question her understanding of some of the essential elements associated with block transfers to the provinces.

I am quite surprised she would be against this measure taken by the government because it essentially addresses some of the concerns she cited in her speech.

I will be extremely specific on this issue because sometimes facts, figures and proper statistics are missing in debates in the House of Commons, particularly when they originate from the opposition.

As a result of the new transfer we are able to support programs like APPORT. Because of the restrictive nature of the Canada assistance plan, prior to this transfer we were not able to do that.

SUPRET, a work income supplement that preceded APPORT, was rejected under CAP. Now because of the new arrangement with the provinces that could be supported. The Quebec sales tax refund and various social services provided in schools were submitted for CAP cost sharing during the 1970s. These were rejected because they did not meet the CAP definition of welfare services. These are just some of the examples.

(1600)

The hon. member must understand that by having the Canada social and health transfer we are responding to the call by provincial governments to build in the type of flexibility that speaks to co-operative federalism, something the hon. member should reflect on.

Has the hon. member taken the time to clearly look at all the issues, at all the programs rejected prior to the establishment of the Canada social and health transfer? Will she reconsider her position and applaud the government for this excellent initiative?

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Gagnon (Québec):** Madam Speaker, I see the hon. member did not quite understand what I meant. If I misunderstood, then everyone in this House misunderstood.

When I look at the provisions in this bill, they propose a certain amount of flexibility but then go on to say that the federal government may do such and such for the purposes of "maintaining national standards, where appropriate—". What happens if the programs proposed by the Government of Quebec do not suit you? The bill goes on to say: "—maintaining national standards, where appropriate, in the operation of social

programs". This means that if these programs do not suit the present government, it will create a national standard.

What will happen to the Canada social transfer for education, if we consider that Quebec accounts for 25 per cent when deciding whether it is appropriate or not and the remaining 75 per cent will be able to vote on national standards? What will happen in the education sector, when we realize that this area comes under the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec and we have a francophone majority in Quebec, while you constitute an anglophone majority in Canada? National standards might not be appropriate to the education system in Quebec.

I realize that the parliamentary secretary is exercising his own judgment in this debate, but I do not think he has the requisite sensitivity to decide which programs could be implemented in Quebec.

*[English]*

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have a specific question on health.

Before we had national medicare there were not the five principles for it. Now we have them following the federal-provincial negotiations of the past.

Does the member agree with the preservation of universality, accessibility, portability, comprehensiveness and public non-profit administration of our health care system, and the absence of user fees and extra billing?

*[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. The hon. member for Québec, very briefly.

**Mrs. Gagnon (Québec):** Madam Speaker, we are really at cross purposes, because the other side seems to confer an entirely different meaning on certain words. When you say: "We want to be flexible", well, flexibility means transferring the money and telling the provincial governments: "Do with your programs as you see fit".

You do not talk about national standards when you want the provinces to be autonomous in certain areas.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Resuming debate. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. If I understood correctly, you intend to share your speaking time with the hon. member for Outremont.

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, with the tabling of their motion today, the separatists continue their propaganda campaign.

*Supply*

(1605)

The Bloc Québécois is simply repeating a position that is contrary to fact, contrary to the budget and contrary to reality. Accordingly the government will vote against the Bloc's motion. The budget underscored our desire to give Canadians good government in Ottawa. The budget marked the start of a new era and of a new way of managing the federation that is simpler, more efficient and more mindful of the provincial governments' jurisdiction.

The budget gives the provincial governments all the manoeuvring room they require to meet the needs of their people. We took steps to reform the provincial transfers, and our action plan will lead to a system that operates better and is financially sustainable. We maintained our commitment to equalization payments—one of the pillars of Canadian federalism.

However, in 1996–97, the other major programs—the established program financing for health and post-secondary education and the Canada assistance plan—will be consolidated into a single block transfer: the Canada health and social transfer. It is the block transfer long sought by the provinces, which will enable them to be innovative to suit their priorities. We instituted this block transfer long demanded by the provinces and the members of the Bloc. Why do they oppose it now?

The new Canada social transfer combines three separate transfers into a single transfer, thus reducing administrative problems for the provinces. It ensures maximum flexibility in the design of provincial programs that suit their needs. At the same time, we increased system flexibility by reducing the conditions governing these programs to a minimum. As the Minister of Finance indicated in his speech this morning, he will be proposing amendments to Bill C-76 to the parliamentary committee.

Accordingly, clause 13(1)(b) will read as follows: “(b) In order to apply the conditions and criteria provided in the Canada Health Act with respect to public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility and the provisions on extra billing and user charges”.

In matters of health, it is very clear that the principles of the Canada Health Act valued by Canadians from coast to coast will have to be honoured. We often refer to these five principles, but what exactly are we talking about? Public administration means that the program must be not-for-profit and managed by a public authority; comprehensiveness means that the program must cover all essential health care services provided by hospitals and physicians; universality means that services must be available to the whole population; portability means that the program must cover all health care services provided to residents temporarily outside of the province, territory or country; accessibility means that services must be offered on an equal

basis to all residents, under the same conditions, without a fee or any other constraint that might unduly limit access.

[*English*]

Within these principles provinces have the flexibility to tailor services to their population, allowing innovations such as community health centres, les CLSC, in Quebec. With flexibility, innovation and commitment costs can be kept at reasonable levels while ensuring our health care system continues to provide the level of care of which we can be proud.

[*Translation*]

The bill will be further amended to read as follows under section 13(1)(c) and 13(1)(d):

“(c) To enforce the national standard outlined in section 19 providing that no minimum residency requirements can be demanded or allowed with regards to social assistance; and

“(d) To promote common principles and objectives developed in accordance with subsection 3, concerning social programs other than the program mentioned in paragraph (b)”.

(1610)

In the area of social assistance, the only thing the federal government demands of the provinces has to do with residency. For example, a Quebecer cannot be refused social assistance in Ontario, or in any other province, because he does not meet the minimum residency requirement. Certain opposition members may be dreaming of depriving Quebecers of this freedom of movement.

The new Canada health and social transfer gives the provinces more freedom to pursue innovation and improve social programs so that they better meet the needs of their people. Because of cost-sharing and its restrictive requirements, the present Canada assistance plan prevented such innovation.

The Quebec government is a leader in the area of innovative social programs such as APPORT—Parental Wage Assistance. However, APPORT and many other innovative programs could not be funded under CAP because of the cost-sharing conditions it sets.

For example, APPORT was deemed ineligible for CAP funding because it was not means tested. Many other Quebec programs, which were not eligible to cost-sharing under CAP, could now be funded by the Canada transfer.

Let us mention, for example, the work income supplement, the Quebec sales tax rebate and the social services provided in schools, including probation services for young offenders. The Canada social transfer will now allow the provinces to test innovative ways to provide social services and assistance.

Post-secondary education, which the opposition talked about, is an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. You may, however, be surprised to learn that the federal government contributes 50 per cent of funding for this sector so that Canadians across the country can receive a good education. There are essentially

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no conditions attached to post-secondary education, especially in Quebec, which in the past 30 years has been free to do what it wants in this sector with the money from the Canadian government.

All these proposals are aimed at enhancing our social programs. They will be discussed with the provinces and must be approved by mutual agreement before being implemented.

The Minister of Finance will therefore amend clause 13(3) to read as follows: "The Minister of Human Resources Development calls on all provincial officials to consult with one another and work together to come up with a set of common principles and objectives regarding the other social programs referred to in paragraph (1)(d), which could apply to the transfer".

We hope that the provinces and the members of the Bloc Québécois will recognize and share the Liberals' concerns with regard to leadership and compassion and their desire to increase equity and efficiency. This new, more flexible formula allows for much more efficient provision of services to Canadians, without compromising quality.

That is why the introduction of this transfer in 1996-97 will be accompanied by a \$2.5 billion cut in the total amount. This represents a reduction of only 1.5 per cent in Quebec's budget. In comparison, federal spending will be cut by 7.3 per cent in other sectors and 18.9 per cent in the sectors included in the program review.

(1615)

So it is obvious that we treat social transfers to the provinces more favourably than our own expenditures.

In closing, allow me to state that the budget clearly points to a reduction in the conditions attached to social programs. If principles are established, it will be by mutual agreement. I deeply regret the fact that the opposition is giving people in Quebec such misleading information on important issues.

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ):** Madam Speaker, for the past 18 months, the federal government has been trying to explain to the House what a flexible federal government is. It has also been trying to explain what the status quo is. I think that status quo means continuing with the same thing. Also, in trying to explain what a flexible government or what the status quo is, the federal government is doing exactly what it preaches in the cuts.

During the sessions of the regional commissions, federal and provincial Liberal members did not even have the courage to come to Quebec to explain what the status quo and a flexible government were. Had they done so, they would have told us

that they were getting ready to make cuts in health, education and professional training programs.

Instead of making cuts in each province, the federal government decided to become a centralizing government and to cut provincial transfers. Because of these transfer cuts, the provinces are obliged to cut and transfer some responsibilities to municipal governments and also to bear the brunt of these cuts.

I would like to remind the minister who just spoke that the Quebec government pays \$28 billion in taxes to Ottawa and sends \$2 billion in GST, for a total of \$30 billion. Including cuts, privatizations and closures, can the minister tell us how much money Quebec receives on the \$30 billion that it sends to the federal government?

**Mr. Massé:** Madam Speaker, first I would like to make a few comments about the regional commissions. They have now finished their work and what they have done clearly proves that we had good reason to refuse to take part in those commissions. They were, as we say in Quebec, packed with people who had already made up their mind about sovereignty and unfortunately those commissions only reflected a foregone conclusion. They were absolutely not representative of public opinion in the province and, as all the polls showed, they reached conclusions that were contradicted by the opinion of a majority of the population.

Therefore, regional commissions have clearly been a waste of money for Quebecers and that 100 per cent of Quebecers, including yours truly, have paid for commissions which reflected only forty per cent of the public opinion. This is a waste of money and the wrong way to use provincial taxpayers' money. While poverty continues to increase in Quebec, the Parti Québécois government, supported by its brother the Bloc Québécois, continues to waste taxpayers' money.

With regard to the second issue, transfers to provinces, I think it was clearly demonstrated in the last budget that total federal expenses will be reduced from \$120 billion in 1994-95 to \$114 billion in 1995-96 and \$107 billion in 1996-97. The federal government is reducing its spending twice as much as it is reducing transfers to provinces.

(1620)

The government obviously had to be downsized and the same thing should happen in Quebec. We have faced up to our responsibilities and 69 per cent of the population approved our budget. I would also like the government of Quebec to face up to its responsibilities and start answering the real needs of Quebecers.

**Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for sharing his time with me.

Today, I realize something that, in fact, I had already realized a long time ago, that there is a policy guideline to be followed. At the beginning of this Parliament, I thought that perhaps the

official opposition would be constructive in its attitude. Unfortunately, as many other speakers said before, members of the official opposition are unable to go beyond pure political partisanship. The motion tabled today by the Leader of the Opposition is an obvious and eloquent demonstration of this fact.

Today, they are trying to speak against the Canada social transfer. I must say I am astounded. I am certainly not the least of Quebec nationalists. I worked tirelessly for decentralization, for more flexibility in the management of programs by provinces. I am proud to state in this House that the Canada social transfer is a remarkable example of decentralization.

This social transfer, basically grouping together the Canada assistance plan, post-secondary education and health, is very easy to manage. It eliminates a lot of jointly managed areas. It is a fiscally responsible system and also a system allowing provinces to gain more independence in the administration and management of their own social programs, since it gives them the means to meet the needs of their citizens.

Members speak of national standards, claiming that any national standard would penalize a province, whether it is Quebec, Ontario or any other.

I represented the Minister of Human Resources Development when we dealt with the reform. I want to tell the House that, of all those who spoke to me, no one was against the idea of a national standard. The reason is simple—people want national standards if they are established in a concerted way, in co-operation. That is what the Canada social transfer is letting us do. We establish standards together, as a team. When one believes in Canada and in a place for Quebec inside this federation, it is possible to reach a consensus as to guidelines uniting the provinces from coast to coast.

They are trying to have people believe that a national standard is a terrible monster that would be in everybody's way. In other countries and other regions, people are speaking of globalization, union, unification, whereas here we would like to confine ourselves to a certain area and to refrain from adopting standards that would allow for some liberalization, some interprovincial exchanges. We did so in matters of trade, last year.

(1625)

That is what we are doing at the social level. We are just being open-minded, we are just showing some form of progressiveness, showing that we believe deeply in Canada and Quebec.

You know, this debate is about the Canada social transfer but we could also talk at length about the human resources investment fund created by the same budget. This fund, which meets the expectations of the provinces in every respect, will ensure that the management of training programs is decentralized to the local community level and that community-based organizations

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are empowered to administer training funds according to the needs of the community or the locality.

That is what federalism means to our government. That is the way of the future in terms of federalism. That is progressive federalism. Still, to achieve this form of federalism, you have to be a good player and want to be on the team.

I could go on about what our government has done to improve and decentralize the federal system. The problem is that, talk as we may about a federal system that works, we come up against a government in Quebec and, in this place, an official opposition which do not want to listen. They do not want to listen because they know that our government is a very open one. They know that, if they participate in our renewal process through administrative agreements, program changes, approaches like rethinking the role of the state, it is going to work and, if it works, ultimately, this will mean the end of their old dream of separation.

For my part, I will tell them this: Rise above strictly partisan interests and strive to look after the interests of Quebec and fight for the people of Quebec. Strive to renew the Canadian federal process. This is what we are doing.

Earlier, my colleague referred to the national commissions. It is pretty easy to figure out what Quebecers want. They want us to look after their interests by restructuring the economy, by creating jobs and, particularly, by putting an end to these constitutional debates. They want to see the economy improve and they want us to move forward.

It is shocking to see that the report tabled, which cost millions of dollars to produce, does not insist on what people said. On the contrary, it concentrates on the ultimate objective, which is Quebec's separation.

In conclusion, what we want is to go on. We want to help workers, not only in Quebec, but all across Canada. We want to continue to improve the economy. We are getting there: last year, we created 433,000 new jobs. We want to ensure tomorrow's prosperity by providing our workers with tools.

The human resources investment fund is one measure which will ensure that our workers have the necessary tools, that they get adequate training and that they are able to face tomorrow's challenges, including foreign competition on international markets. Proud Quebecers and proud Canadians think big, and this is why we made that commitment.

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Madam Speaker, since my hon. colleague is talking about workers, on behalf of 250 women of my riding, I will read a few sentences for his information: "We live in a rural area where the situation keeps getting worse, especially for the last year and a half. Our villages are having problems: young people leaving, a deficient and deficit ridden economic structure, a saturated job market,



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high unemployment, reduced public services and an aging population". Forty-one per cent of the families in the area are poor or very poor, whereas the poverty rate is 28 per cent for Quebec as a whole.

(1630)

What this government lacks is a vision for society. There is absolutely nothing. There was the infrastructure program to create jobs, but we do not hear about it any more. It is coming to an end. This morning, a deputy minister came to present a forestry plan: budget cuts of 57 per cent over a three period for the Canadian Forestry Service; downsizing of 410 positions, one third of the workforce; closure of 11 regional offices. And then they pass on the bill: because there is no work, they cut unemployment benefits and the provinces are left to do the dirty work.

Those women and those men are deeply disappointed. They are disgusted. At this point, they say that we lie to them. We are told: "You sovereignists are blocking things". Quite the contrary, we are part of the federation. Here is my question: Is there any way in this country to create jobs instead of forcing people onto social welfare, onto unemployment insurance, especially in rural areas where things are surely more difficult?

**Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. First of all, he mentioned in his question that this government does not have any social vision. I will not tell you that the current government has a clear policy and an objective that we set and maintain, contrary to the official opposition, but I attended the official opposition's convention. One had to witness what happened in their workshop on separation to realize to what extent members of the official opposition are still looking, after 25 years, for some kind of social vision. Therefore we have no lesson to take from the official opposition in this matter, quite the opposite.

As to the regions, we take to heart the regional problem in Quebec and Canada. That is why our efforts have been focused on economic and job creation policies. The Minister of Industry and Trade presented a strategic plan to ease the conversion of our economy. Let us make no mistake about it. Canada's economy is restructuring just like that of the rest of the world. Tomorrow's markets will be quite different, and the emphasis will be on technology. This restructuring of the economy is now under way, and we sincerely hope it will be in the best interests of all Canadians, including Canadians who live in the outlying regions.

At the same time, the Minister of Human Resources Development is busy planning programs to help workers prepare for the challenge of high technology. We are designing programs that

will be tailored to the needs of outlying regions, because Canadians have asked us to do so.

I would add, in conclusion, that we will also review the unemployment insurance program in order to meet the dire needs of Canadian workers. But there is a problem: I would ask the official opposition to move ahead, to stop talking of things that citizens are not interested in and start working with us to help and better serve the population.

(1635)

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would be delighted to respond to the invitation extended by the hon. member for Outremont, but I prefer to keep my comments relevant to this debate, because today we are discussing a motion tabled by the official opposition. I think it would be very useful to recall what the motion says.

That this House denounce the will of the federal government to restrict the provinces to the role of mere consultant by imposing on them new national standards for all social programs through the introduction of the Canada Social Transfer, which will enable the federal government to interfere even more in such areas as health, post-secondary education and social assistance, all of which come under exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

We are talking about national standards in areas under provincial jurisdiction. The Minister of Finance keeps repeating that he wants this program to be more flexible, to provide greater flexibility than before, but the fact remains that the same national standards prevail.

To illustrate my point, I will quote from Bill C-76 which implements certain provisions in the budget. In section 13, Part V, we read the following:

—a Canada Health and Social Transfer may be provided to a province for a fiscal year for the purposes of— (b) maintaining the national criteria and conditions in the Canada Health Act, including those respecting public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, accessibility, extra-billing and user charges; and (c) maintaining national standards, where appropriate, in the operation of other social programs.

I would also like to recall what was said by the Minister of Finance in his budget speech, when he explained that by combining all three programs into a single consolidated block transfer referred to as the Canada social transfer, beginning in 1996-97, the provinces, and I quote: "—will now be able to design more innovative social programs, programs that respond to the needs of people today rather than to inflexible rules. However"—and this is particularly important—"flexibility does not mean a free-for-all. There are national goals and principles we believe must still apply, and which the vast majority of Canadian support".

I was on the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development which travelled across Canada last fall and was one of the members who visited every province. I listened to the testimony of all the groups that appeared before the committee,

a total of 1,200. It is not true that everyone across Canada wants national standards for education and social programs.

In Quebec, there was a general consensus against this principle. For instance, for the second time this year, I think it was on February 2, a unanimous resolution was passed by the National Assembly. Not just the Parti Québécois but the Liberal Party as well supported it. The resolution was moved by the leader of l'Action démocratique, who asked the federal government to withdraw from manpower training. This has been said time and time again, and the government is still trying to give the impression that it intends to be more flexible.

I may recall that Bill C-76 does not contain all the measures that are to be implemented. Other legislation was passed previously. Bill C-28, for instance, which was about financial assistance for students and was passed on June 23, 1994. What did this bill provide? It was supposed to provide for two things, basically. First of all, for appointing the appropriate authority that may designate institutions of learning that may receive financial assistance from the government. What did it do? Instead of leaving this authority with the provinces, with the Lieutenant Governor in Council as before, it decided that the Minister of Human Resources Development would determine the appropriate authority. First point.

(1640)

Second point. There were new conditions regarding the right to withdraw with full financial compensation. In the past it was automatic. However, the bill which precedes this one, but which remains in effect with the government's national standard, provided that Quebec, or any other province wishing to take advantage of this right to withdraw, had to propose a program exactly the same as the federal program on all counts, or receive no funding. Earlier, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs cited a series of cases in which the Canada assistance plan did not fund programs, among others, the current PWA program in Quebec.

He listed seven or eight others and talked of the current situation, saying it would likely change with the amendments not yet officially tabled and whose legal scope was still unknown. What we are saying is that the federal government said very clearly in its budget, and in this bill, as well, that it wants to pay less and that it wants to transfer part of its deficit to the provinces, but that it wants to continue to impose conditions. This is rare. It would be normal to expect that certain conditions would be dropped. This, however, seems out of the question.

At first glance, when we reduce the expenses in the Canada social transfer and combine the three programs, if we take things literally and dropped at least 11 clauses from the bill, which contains other provisions, national standards, what would this

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mean for the reduction provided for in the budget? It means letting three sectors fight for the same money. This is not really acceptable. At least set guidelines and let provinces do their own thing.

Earlier, I felt like putting this to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who seemed almost to be talking about heaven. In talking about the current situation and federal flexibility, he almost seemed to be talking about heaven. Everything was fine. What is the real situation, however? For a year now, no Minister of Education in Quebec or in the other provinces has wanted to support the federal program of the Minister of Human Resources Development. No Minister of Health has participated in the forum on health. No provincial minister responsible for social assistance has wanted to take part, because they find the federal program unacceptable.

Is this flexible federalism? Is this the flexible federalism that is so fine, so positive, that none of the provincial authorities want to even take part in it? No, this is simply window dressing. As long as we have these national standards and we do not see the amendments that the Minister of Finance alluded to this morning, as long as the federal government does not withdraw entirely from areas of strictly provincial jurisdiction in health, education and social assistance and does not give the provinces the tax points that would allow them to manage their own programs, we will not be able to talk about flexible federalism.

Having another minute to go, I will talk about another situation. We talk about flexible federalism, but in actual fact there were enormous cuts which mean that 5,000 to 6,000 households more per month are currently requesting social assistance. Why? Because last year, in Quebec, on April 17 precisely, \$2.5 billion were cut from unemployment insurance. The period of entitlement to benefits was reduced and that has meant 40 per cent more welfare cases in Quebec.

(1645)

Is that going to give Canadians and Quebecers greater confidence in the flexibility of the federal government? No. I repeat, what the federal government wants is to pay less and to require more through its national standards.

**Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ):** Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak. As the hon. member for Lévis pointed out earlier, the federal government has cut transfers to the provinces while claiming this would give the provinces more flexibility to manage their own affairs.

I myself have never seen a government cut funding to the provinces while claiming that such a reduction would give them more flexibility to manage the departments in question. As the hon. member for Lévis explained, the federal government gradually increased its interference by setting national standards, which it has finally realized are excessively costly to

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implement. As has been demonstrated, the federal government's accumulated debt now amounts to \$600 billion.

Now that the federal government has realized that the standards it has put in place in the last 20 years cost too much, it says it will now transfer responsibility to the provinces by reducing funding. Let me give you an example. When the Quebec government decided to establish its own health care system, the federal government was not very happy about it given its strong desire to impose national standards. The federal government tried to use that opportunity to impose national standards. Quebec and another province were then adamantly opposed to federal interference in health care. However, the federal government insisted and the provinces backed down, provided that it return 50 per cent of health care expenditures.

The federal government is now contributing around 30 per cent, while the provinces must make up the remaining 70 per cent. The federal government is still aying that federal standards must be maintained. This puts the provinces, especially Quebec, in a tight spot as far as health care spending is concerned. They cannot manage health care as they see fit, because they must comply with national standards while the federal government slashes health care funding in Quebec.

That is all I wanted to tell my fellow citizens in Longueuil and throughout Quebec. I wanted to inform them that the federal government is preventing us from managing health care properly. I ask the hon. member for Lévis whether he agrees with everything I just said.

**Mr. Dubé:** Madam Speaker, I think that the last part of his comment reflects the extensive parliamentary experience of the hon. member for Longueuil. And I will draw from this experience to raise the following because, after all, the numerous attempts of the Conservative government should be mentioned. The member for Longueuil, now in his third term, is aware of all the Conservatives' efforts in this respect, including at the time of the Meech Lake accord. The previous Conservative government may be criticized for many things, but certainly not for not having tried to reach an agreement. The same thing in Charlottetown.

(1650)

Quebecers are aware of the fact that, over the past 30 years, numerous attempts were made to reform the federal system. It never worked, to the point that, weary of federal inaction, a number of members of Parliament—and the hon. member for Longueuil is one of them—resigned and, with the current Leader of the Opposition, they formed a new federal party, a party focusing on the only way to change anything to anything in the coming months or year: the Quebec referendum.

In this referendum debate, faced with all these failed attempts, empty promises and window dressing about possible administrative arrangements that never materialize—or when they do materialize, it is because the federal government acted arbitrarily and unilaterally as usual—the people of Quebec will realize that they have no choice but to vote “yes” in the upcoming referendum on Quebec sovereignty.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is important to discuss Bill C-76, because this legislation is very instructive. Indeed, it will enable those Quebecers who might still be undecided to understand the message conveyed by the current federal government.

Several attempts were made to reform federalism. Recently, some members of the Quebec Liberal Party still entertained such hopes in a document referring to a quiet adjustment. The document said that the Canadian federation must be extensively decentralized, that it must fully respect provincial jurisdiction, and that federal interference must end, particularly in Quebec.

We now have the federal government's answer to these Quebec federalists who, in spite of multiple but vain attempts, may have thought, in good faith, that they could reform the federal system. The federal government's answer, Bill C-76, seeks to allow systematic federal interference in many areas which come under provincial jurisdiction.

We had national standards in the health sector. Now, we will have similar standards for post-secondary education. Quebecers fully understand the implications of such a measure. A student loan and scholarship program was developed over a period of 25 or 30 years in Quebec. Although not perfect, that program helped several generations of students, while reflecting the vision of fairness which prevails in Quebec regarding the need to invest in education.

Meanwhile, the federal government wants to impose national standards in that sector. Last summer, social program reform gave us an idea of what this means. It means that provincial governments will have to quickly adjust to a national program which will significantly increase the indebtedness of students. In fact, the only way to avoid that will be to increase the tax burden of Quebecers if the province refuses to endorse the federal government's vision.

If I were a young Quebecer today, I would see Bill C-76 as a clear indication of things to come under the federal system. The federal government's vision is “one Canada, one nation”, along with national standards and ways of doing things which will standardize the way Quebecers will be treated, students in this particular case.

Assuming they listened to the Minister of Finance this morning, when he referred to some vague proposals, how can Quebecers and Canadians from other provinces believe for one

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moment that this reform is being proposed in a spirit of co-operation with the provinces?

Let me give you concrete examples. I am not going back 10, 15 or 20 years. Take the national forum on health. The federal government decided, without first ascertaining the provinces' participation, to adopt a rather disjointed approach regarding the major issue of medicare. Even this afternoon, the Standing Committee on Finance heard officials representing the National Federation of Nurses' Unions, who said that the forum does not at all meet the needs identified, nor does it solve the problems related to Canada's health care system.

(1655)

The bottom line is that, if a business in the private sector managed the health issue, for example, like the federal government does, it would have gone bankrupt ages ago, because the government has increasingly been asking the people out there on the front, those who have to deal with the problems, workers in the health care sector, nurses, auxiliary workers, doctors and employees of community service centres to make a personal effort and to find creative ways to do more with less. But the federal government did not think it was necessary in this case to secure the co-operation of the provinces or of the people who run the daily operations. A business that worked that way in the private sector would not last a year because that approach is totally unrealistic and incapable of meeting the needs of the industry, and it would find itself in the same situation as the government now finds itself.

How has the federal government managed to keep things running this way for so many years? It has succeeded because it has borrowed from future generations. Using slightly artificial means, it financed a health care system because that was what the people wanted. But the federal government also taxed, and Claude Castonguay, who can be called the father of the current health care system in Quebec, made this point well in an article for *La Presse*. He said in that article that the federal government exerted an irresistible pressure on provincial governments to commit themselves to the principles of universality and accessibility, by offering to pay for half of the provinces' costs. But, now that the system is bankrupt, Ottawa does not propose the solution put forth by Mr. Castonguay, which is to co-operate to resolve the problem. Instead, Ottawa decided to retain only its role as referee, whereby, paradoxically, even though it has significantly reduced funding, it will still be able to impose national standards.

It will be able to treat people like the owner of an apartment building who has had a good relationship with a tenant for several years and has offered that tenant certain services, for free, which he or she could not afford, mostly because the owner had extra money sitting around. Suddenly, the owner, this endless source of funds, says: For next year, effective tomorrow morning, I am reducing my heating subsidy by 15 per cent. I am

certain that you, as tenants, will all be able to find a way to continue to live comfortably under these conditions and that we will continue to get along just fine.

Faced with such a situation, the tenants, or the provinces, may well try for several years to make the necessary adjustments. But, in the mid term, it is inevitable that the federal government's choice will lead to a balkanization of our social programs. It will have exactly the opposite effect. That is because the federal government is no longer capable of providing the financial support for which it took responsibility, in an artificial manner, in the past. Today, it has offloaded the bill for its social programs, without handing over the responsibility for those programs as well. That is quite an achievement. It has decided that the provinces can make up their own minds how they want to finance these programs but at the same time, they will have to meet certain requirements that do not necessarily reflect their needs.

Briefly, Bill C-76 has killed any hope for renewed federalism. The federal government is stretched to the limit. It tried to finance these programs by borrowing money which, in turn, added to our cumulative debt, but today, it is no longer in control. It is at the mercy of international lenders, and we now find it is unable to provide adequate services. How did we get into this mess?

(1700)

How come our system no longer makes sense? The trouble is that unlike many other countries, we did not have a chance to adjust our constitutional responsibilities to the market situation and to what is going on in the real world. This has led to the absurd situation we have today, where the federal government tables a bill that drastically changes the rules of the game without making the constitutional changes that should accompany this kind of decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Before proceeding to questions and comments, pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kamloops—health; the hon. member for Fraser Valley West—infrastructure; the hon. member for Mercier—unemployment insurance; the hon. member for Mackenzie—transport.

**Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Thank you for recognizing me, Madam Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the remarks made by my colleague, who quite aptly demonstrated that the federal government's action in areas of provincial jurisdiction is inappropriate. Earlier, the hon. member for Outremont rose in this House, offended at the thought that Bloc members could question his nationalistic sentiment. From his place, he stated loudly that he was not the least nationalistic of Liberal members, thereby suggesting that he was certainly the most nationalistic one of them.

*Supply*

If that is so, if the hon. member for Outremont is the most nationalistic of Liberal members, I understand why the people of Quebec voted for the Bloc Québécois. If, by any chance, we did not attain sovereignty in Quebec, I am convinced that we would keep being reelected over and over forever, with our members whose nationalistic sentiments are as strong as his.

I would like to come back on one aspect of the speeches we have heard, which my colleague has raised. All day long, Liberal members have been telling us that the national standards that their government is about to impose on us with its Canada social transfer would deal with principles. “We will give the provinces every latitude”, they said. “They will be free to do administer as they please programs which fall under their jurisdiction anyway”.

If that is the case, I would like to know why we can read the following—and there was no mention of this in the discussion on principles today—at clause 37 of Bill C-76:

In order that a province may qualify for a full cash contribution—

This must be the money.

—referred to in section 5, the government of the province—

Among other conditions, the one listed in (b) reads:

shall give recognition to the Canada Health and Social Transfer in any public documents, or in any advertising or promotional material, relating to insured health services and extended health care services in the province.

To conclude, because I want to give my colleague the time to comment, what does this mean? Does it mean that the federal government—as I said this morning, this is the “flag on the hood” syndrome—absolutely wants every document and every thing distributed to taxpayers by the provinces to bear the Canadian flag? Does it mean that every hospital bedpan will have to be marked to show federal contribution? Is this the kind of publicity they seek?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I will recognize very briefly the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

**Mr. Crête:** Madam Speaker, I am fairly happy with the example raised, because, in the end, history is being rewritten. For a number of years there was a placard war between the federal and the provincial governments. This is one of the main causes of the current deficit.

To continue with the placard example, let us look at day care. In Quebec, we developed a model for day care services. With national standards, Canada-wide standards, the efficiency of the Quebec system will continually be blocked. And you want justification.

(1705)

I think Quebecers are fed up. They want full control over their future. This is what is going to happen, and this is how Bill C-76 is so rewarding for all Quebecers.

[English]

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the motion before us which accuses the government of using the proposed Canada health and social transfer to damage the interests and autonomy of the provinces.

This motion and the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in support of it are completely unfounded. Moreover, it is a gross misrepresentation of what we in the government have said and intend to do.

Had the Leader of the Opposition taken the time to read the budget, he could have easily ascertained our true intent by reading the budget plan released in February in which the Minister of Finance announced the new transfer program which the hon. member finds so troubling. In that document the Minister of Finance states that transfers to the provinces under health, CAP and PSE will be structured differently to create a system that is both fiscally sustainable, more flexible and better suited to the needs of Canadians.

This will be achieved by consolidating the three transfers into a single new block transfer called the Canada health and social transfer. Rather than using it to intrude into areas of provincial responsibility or to reduce the role of the provinces to that of mere consultants as the opposition alleges in its motion, the budget declares the exact opposite.

The budget states: “The new transfer will end the intrusiveness of cost sharing under CAP and will reduce the federal-provincial entanglement that has been a source of irritation with current cost shared transfer arrangements”.

This is because federal expenditures would no longer be driven by provincial decisions as to how and to whom social assistance and social services will be provided. Provinces will no longer be subject to rules stipulating that certain expenditures are eligible for cost sharing while others are not. As a result, the provinces will be free to pursue innovative approaches to social security reform without having to worry about whether such approaches meet requirements for cost sharing. The expense to both federal and provincial governments of administering cost sharing will be eliminated.

Thus, it is clear the Canada health and social transfer will not damage the role of provinces as the hon. Leader of the Opposition suggests in his motion. There will be national standards for

the new Canada health and social transfer and the February budget sets them out quite clearly.

No change will be made to the Canada Health Act. Its principles will continue to be enforced by withholding funds if necessary. In addition, provinces will be required, as they are under the rules of the Canada assistance plan, to provide social assistance without any minimum residency requirement.

The Minister of Human Resources Development will invite all provincial governments to work together on developing through mutual consent a set of shared principles and objectives that could underline the new transfer. In this way all governments could reaffirm their commitment to the well-being of Canadians. The Minister of Health will continue to work with provincial and territorial health ministers to renew Canada's health system.

The Canada health and social transfer represents an important step forward for the provinces since it will give them the flexibility they need to develop innovative social programs that can better address the needs of their citizens. After all, it must be admitted that the current Canada assistance plan with its restrictive cost sharing requirements too often inhibited such innovation. Nowhere have the negative impacts of this legislative straitjacket been more obvious than in the hon. member's own province.

It is a sad fact that many exciting and innovative programs in Quebec have been denied funding because of the restrictive requirements contained in the rules governing the current transfer programs. For instance, APPORT is an income supplement program for low income families with children which seeks to help such parents make the transition from social assistance to the workforce. Since 1988 this program has been ineligible for cost sharing because its assessment of need does not conform to that of the transfer program.

(1710)

Then again, many programs in the 1970s aimed at disadvantaged children in Quebec were ruled ineligible because they did not correspond to the definition of welfare services contained within the act which excludes services related to education. Similarly, probation services for young offenders are ineligible since the same definition of welfare services also excludes correctional services. The list goes on and on.

However, I should add that these problems are not restricted to Quebec. Virtually every province has at one time or other seen worthwhile projects turned down. These have included programs in such diverse areas as self-managed care, community based services, nutrition programs for children and adaptive transportation services for the disabled.

### *Supply*

The introduction of the Canada health and social transfer will make it possible for provinces to proceed with these kinds of programs which have been excluded in the past.

As well, let me state categorically that the government has not and will not use transfer programs as a way to interfere in areas of provincial responsibility as this motion suggests. Rather the federal government seeks to involve the provinces as full partners in the very important work of developing a set of shared principles and objectives which might underlie this new transfer system.

This is why the Minister of Human Resources Development will be inviting his provincial colleagues to sit down with him to discuss ways in which we can work together in partnership to develop a common framework of objectives and approaches for the Canada health and social transfer.

Canadians of all regions are very proud of our system of social programs and they are right to be. These programs flow from the shared values of all Canadians and are the result of decades of hard work, sacrifice and dedication. This investment of time, effort and commitment has resulted in a quality of life which is regarded with envy and admiration by the rest of the world.

Let me ask this very fundamental question of those who intend to support the motion. Would this country have been better off if the federal government had not been active in transferring funds to the provinces? Think of the achievements that these transfers have helped provinces to build in the past 30 years. Look at the issue of medicare, the envy of the world; post-secondary education and colleges, one of the highest enrolment rates; the safety net, protection for the most vulnerable. These are proud records of achievement.

While funding arrangements have served Canadians well in the past, federalism is changing. Therefore our transfer programs must also change to remain relevant. There is a need for a greater flexibility in the way we provide funds to the provinces. In hindsight it is clear that some features of our current system reflect a paternalistic and prescriptive approach which is out of place in the 1990s.

Too often restrictions contained within the current system have stifled innovation by the provinces and derailed worthwhile projects before they even got started.

The new Canada health and social transfer will actually result in less intrusion by the federal government in the affairs of the provinces and not more, as the hon. member suggests. It will also result in greater flexibility.

We are taking the proper step toward building co-operative federalism. It speaks to the type of positive direction in which the government is taking the country.

## Supply

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 81(16), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

**Is the House ready for the question?**

**Some hon. members:** Question.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those opposed to the amendment will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 202)

## YEAS

## Members

Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Bridgman
Cummins	Duncan
Epp	Forseth
Frazer	Gilmour
Gouk	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Hanger
Hanrahan	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Jennings	Johnston
Manning	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Penson	Ramsay
Ringma	Scott (Skeena)
Silye	Solberg
Speaker	Stinson
Strahl	Thompson
Wayne	White (Fraser Valley West)
Williams—41	

## NAYS

## Members

Adams	Allmand
Althouse	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Assadourian	Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bachand	Beaumier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bergeron	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bertrand	Bethel
Bevilacqua	Blaikie
Blondin—Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Bouchard
Boudria	Brien
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Bélair
Bélander	Bélisle
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Canuel
Caron	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clancy
Collenette	Collins
Comuzzi	Copps
Cowling	Crête
Culbert	Dalphond—Guiral
Daviault	Debien
de Jong	de Savoye
Deshaies	DeVillers
Dingwall	Discepola
Dromisky	Dubé
Duceppe	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Fewchuk
Fillion	Finlay
Fis	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Québec)	Galloway
Gauthier (Roberval)	Gerrard
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harvard	Hickey
Hopkins	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Jacob
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Lastewka	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Lincoln
Loubier	MacDonald
MacLaren	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McLaughlin	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McTeague	Mercier
Mifflin	Milliken
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Paré	Patry
Payne	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Pomerleau	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Riis

Ringuette-Maltais  
Rocheleau  
Sauvageau  
Serré  
Sheridan  
Speller  
St. Denis  
Stewart (Brant)  
Taylor  
Terrana  
Torsney  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Walker  
Wells  
Young

Robichaud  
Rompkey  
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)  
Shepherd  
Solomon  
St-Laurent  
Steckle  
Szabo  
Telegdi  
Thalheimer  
Tremblay (Rosemont)  
Valeri  
Venne  
Wappel  
Whelan  
Zed—192

#### PAIRED MEMBERS

Bernier (Gaspé)  
Laurin  
MacAulay  
Ménard  
Rock

Hubbard  
Lefebvre  
Marleau  
Robillard  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

(1745)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the amendment lost.

**Mr. Volpe:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Despite my Herculean effort I was unable to be here on time. Had I been here I would have added my voice to the government side.

**Mr. Rideout:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I had the same problem. I will not repeat what was just said, but had I been here I would have voted with my party.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

[Translation]

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the vote we have just taken on the amendment to the motion now before the House, that is to say Liberal members will vote nay, including the hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence and the hon. member for Moncton, who missed the first vote.

#### Supply

**Mr. Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, Bloc members will vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

**Mr. Silye:** Madam Speaker, Reform Party members vote nay except for those members who wish to vote otherwise.

**Mr. Solomon:** Madam Speaker, as whip of the NDP caucus I rise to say that New Democratic Party members present in the House today vote nay.

**Mrs. Wayne:** Madam Speaker, as a member of the PC party and the whip or whatever I will be voting nay.

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

(Division No. 203)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Asselin  
Bellehumeur  
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)  
Brien  
Canuel  
Chrétien (Frontenac)  
Dalphon—Guiral  
Debien  
Deshaies  
Duceppe  
Fillion  
Gauthier (Roberval)  
Guay  
Jacob  
Landry  
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)  
Leblanc (Longueuil)  
Leroux (Shefford)  
Marchand  
Nunez  
Picard (Drummond)  
Rocheleau  
St-Laurent  
Venne—47

Bachand  
Bergeron  
Bouchard  
Bélisle  
Caron  
Crête  
Davault  
de Savoye  
Dubé  
Dumas  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Godin  
Guimond  
Lalonde  
Langlois  
Lebel  
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)  
Loubier  
Mercier  
Paré  
Pomerleau  
Sauvageau  
Tremblay (Rosemont)

#### NAYS

##### Members

Adams  
Althouse  
Arseneault  
Assadourian  
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Bellemare  
Bethel  
Blaikie  
Bodnar  
Boudria  
Bridgman  
Brushett  
Bélair  
Calder  
Cannis  
Cauchoy  
Chan  
Clancy  
Collins

Allmand  
Anderson  
Assad  
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)  
Beaumier  
Bertrand  
Bevilacqua  
Blondin—Andrew  
Bonin  
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)  
Brown (Oakville—Milton)  
Bryden  
Bélanger  
Campbell  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Chrétien (Saint—Maurice)  
Collenette  
Comuzzi



*Supply*

Copps	Cowling
Culbert	Cummins
de Jong	DeVillers
Dingwall	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Duncan	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
English	Epp
Fewchuk	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Forseth	Frazer
Fry	Gagliano
Galloway	Gerrard
Gilmour	Godfrey
Goodale	Gouk
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)	Grose
Grubel	Guarnieri
Hanger	Hanrahan
Harb	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Harris	Harvard
Hayes	Hermanson
Hickey	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Hopkins	Ianno
Iftody	Irwin
Jackson	Jennings
Johnston	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	MacDonald
MacLaren	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Manning
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Massé
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
McCormick	McGuire
McLaughlin	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McTeague	Meredith
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Mitchell	Morrison
Murphy	Murray
Nault	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Penson
Peters	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud	Ramsay
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Riis	Ringma
Ringuette—Maltais	Robichaud
Rompkey	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Scott (Skeena)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Silye	Solberg
Solomon	Speaker
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Taylor
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Thompson
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Wayne
Wells	Whelan
White (Fraser Valley West)	Williams
Young	Zed—188

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Bernier (Gaspé)	Hubbard
Laurin	Lefebvre
MacAulay	Marleau
Ménard	Robillard
Rock	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

(1750)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion negatived.

\* \* \*

[English]

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The House resumed from May 1 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment of Mr. Bélisle.

[Translation]

The question is on the amendment.

[English]

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent for the members who voted on the previous motion to be recorded as having voted on the amendment now before the House, with Liberal MPs voting nay.

[Translation]

**Mr. Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, Bloc members support this motion.

**Mr. Silye:** Madam Speaker, Reform members will vote yea except for those who wish to vote otherwise.

[English]

**Mr. Solomon:** Madam Speaker, all members of the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons vote nay on the amendment.

**Mrs. Wayne:** Madam Speaker, I think I am the deputy leader. I do not know what I am, but I vote nay.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 204)

## YEAS

## Members

Asselin	Bachand
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bouchard
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Bridgman
Brien	Bélisle
Canuel	Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Cummins	Dalphond—Guiral
Daviault	Debien
de Savoye	Deshaies

Dubé  
Dumas  
Epp  
Forseth  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Gilmour  
Gouk  
Grubel  
Guimond  
Hanrahan  
Harris  
Hermanson  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Jacob  
Johnston  
Landry  
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)  
Leblanc (Longueuil)  
Leroux (Shefford)  
Manning  
Mayfield  
Mercier  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Nunez  
Penson  
Pomerleau  
Ringma  
Sauvageau  
Silye  
Speaker  
Stinson  
Thompson  
Venne  
Williams—87

Duceppe  
Duncan  
Fillion  
Frazier  
Gauthier (Roberval)  
Godin  
Grey (Beaver River)  
Guay  
Hanger  
Harper (Simcoe Centre)  
Hayes  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hoepfner  
Jennings  
Lalonde  
Langlois  
Lebel  
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)  
Loubier  
Marchand  
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)  
Meredith  
Morrison  
Paré  
Picard (Drummond)  
Ramsay  
Rocheleau  
Scott (Skeena)  
Solberg  
St-Laurent  
Strahl  
Tremblay (Rosemont)  
White (Fraser Valley West)

MacLaren  
Malhi  
Manley  
Massé  
McGuire  
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)  
Mifflin  
Minna  
Murphy  
Nault  
O'Reilly  
Pagtakhan  
Parrish  
Payne  
Peterson  
Pickard (Essex—Kent)  
Reed  
Richardson  
Riis  
Robichaud  
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)  
Shepherd  
Solomon  
St. Denis  
Stewart (Brant)  
Taylor  
Terrana  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Volpe  
Wappel  
Wells  
Young

MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)  
Maloney  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
McCormick  
McLaughlin  
McTeague  
Milliken  
Mitchell  
Murray  
O'Brien  
Ouellet  
Paradis  
Patri  
Peters  
Phinney  
Proud  
Regan  
Rideout  
Ringuette—Maltais  
Rompkey  
Serré  
Sheridan  
Speller  
Steckle  
Szabo  
Telegdi  
Thalheimer  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Walker  
Wayne  
Whelan  
Zed—148

*Private Members' Business*

**NAYS**

Members

Adams  
Althouse  
Arseneault  
Assadourian  
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Bellemare  
Bethel  
Blaikie  
Bodnar  
Boudria  
Brushett  
Bélair  
Calder  
Cannis  
Cauchon  
Chan  
Clancy  
Collins  
Copp  
Culbert  
DeVillers  
Discepola  
Duhamel  
Easter  
English  
Finlay  
Fontana  
Gagliano  
Gerrard  
Goodale  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Guarnieri  
Harvard  
Hopkins  
Iftody  
Jackson  
Keyes  
Knutson  
Lastewka  
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)  
Lincoln

Allmand  
Anderson  
Assad  
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)  
Beaumier  
Bertrand  
Bevilacqua  
Blondin—Andrew  
Bonin  
Brown (Oakville—Milton)  
Bryden  
Bélanger  
Campbell  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)  
Collenette  
Comuzzi  
Cowling  
de Jong  
Dingwall  
Dromisky  
Dupuy  
Eggleton  
Fewchuk  
Flis  
Fry  
Galloway  
Godfrey  
Graham  
Grose  
Harb  
Hickey  
Ianno  
Irwin  
Karygiannis  
Kirkby  
Kraft Sloan  
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)  
Lee  
MacDonald

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Bernier (Gaspé)  
Laurin  
MacAulay  
Ménard  
Rock

Hubbard  
Lefebvre  
Marleau  
Robillard  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the amendment negated.

It being 5.55 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**GRANDPARENT YEAR ACT**

**Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-291, an act respecting a national year of the grandparent, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, the next hour is an opportunity for the House to set aside partisan differences, to show our appreciation and to demonstrate the value of grandparents in the family unit.

*Private Members' Business*

Most of us have had the honour of knowing one living grandparent at one time or another. Most of us who have a family will have had the pleasure and the reassurance of having grandparents for our children.

As a very young boy and until I became an adult I had a grandfather who was a pillar of my existence. My own children had the privilege of having three living grandparents and one great-grandfather. The value they brought to our family was the same value brought to all families by grandparents.

By virtue of their more senior years, grandparents have many abilities that young parents do not have and contribute many things to the strength of the family. They show the way to young children more by example than by the things they say. They have an accumulated wisdom they pass on, which young parents do not have. Whether we call it osmosis or however it is passed on to younger people, it is done by example.

Grandparents have experience. Young people can ask them questions and they give answers based on experience, very often based on more experience than that of their parents. Naturally grandparents bring love into the family, the great common denominator that binds us together.

Grandparents express by example tolerance and teach us tolerance as children. That is particularly fitting at a time in history when the family unit seems to be virtually under attack from every corner. When grandparents are not available to provide strength and to provide enrichment, we know the results.

The grandparents of my children were of tremendous help to my wife and I as young parents with a young family. Perhaps we utilized their services more than we should have from time to time. However, I do believe that they accepted the challenges of looking after our family with grace and dignity when we needed them. It was always a pleasure and an adventure for our children to spend time with their grandparents. They helped a great deal to enrich our family and they contributed a great deal to family strength.

(1800)

I know there is a cliché that has been in vogue for a few years, which is the phrase family values. Often family values and what they really mean get hackneyed very badly. But if ever there was an expression of family values and what that means, and certainly what that means to me, it is expressed very much through grandparents and what they mean to the family. They enrich our lives in so many ways, and we pay them honour here today.

I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the person who prompted me to bring this bill before the House. Her name is Bubbie Schwarz. Bubbie, as you might know, Madam Speaker, is the Jewish term of endearment for grandmother. Bubbie Schwarz is a television personality in the Toronto area who has a

program for senior citizens. It was at her urging that this bill be brought before the House to declare 1995 as the year of the grandparent.

My grandparents are gone now. My grandfather passed away in 1963. But the influence he had on my life was as strong as the influence of my own father and mother. As I spent time with him, in the summers particularly, when school was out, and lived with him I was exposed to his code of conduct, his code of performance, the way he lived his life. A great deal of it rubbed off on me—at least the good parts of it did, I hope; the negative parts I created myself.

Our children had the benefit of a great-grandfather who actually lived with us for a number of years before at the age of 96 he decided he would go to western Canada and spend the rest of his years with his son. Our daughter grew up on his knee for the first eight years of her life.

We look back on our grandparents and on my children's grandparents with great fondness, with great respect, and a straight sense of the value they brought to our family. I feel badly for people who did not have that experience. Many people did not have a living grandparent in their lives and have had to be without that special kind of support they provide.

It is also fair to put on the record today the fact that because of the splitting of families and because of the divorce rate and so on, many grandparents are finding it increasingly difficult to access their own grandchildren. This is a serious mistake, because it denies the grandchildren that opportunity to receive the strength by the example they set.

(1805)

I hope that by debating this today, as the issue of grandparents and access to their grandchildren becomes more of an issue, which it is at the present time, we will remember what our grandparents meant to us, what they mean to us, and what they should mean to their grandchildren, especially those who are involved in the break-up of a marriage where custody is given to one parent. In Canada there is no joint custody capability, and sometimes rancour, division, and bitterness cloud the break-up. Grandparents can really make a difference and add strength.

I ask the House to consider that. I realize that to speak on a subject like this probably arouses emotions in all of us, which we are not used to experiencing in a place like this. But they are important emotions. It is very important to get the message across that we support the completeness of the family and the bringing together of all the generations and making sure that they are all together. With the stresses we have on family life today, I can think of very few more important things to do in strengthening the family than to make sure that grandparents and great-grandparents and maybe some of the extended family, like great-uncles and aunts, are very much revered, honoured, and accepted as a part of the family unit. We must be aware that

*Private Members' Business*

when we make laws in this House those laws must reflect that respect and desire to keep the family strong and together.

It is a great honour for me to say these few words today on behalf of grandparents. I thank the House for arranging the time for this debate. It is not the most usual issue to be raised in this place, but I do consider it very important. I hope this will underline our view of the family and our view of the senior people in the family, who have done so much and continue to do so much for all of us.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise in this House to address Bill C-291, which seeks to declare, throughout Canada, 1995 as the Year of the Grandparent.

As the official opposition critic on issues concerning seniors, I am very interested in this bill which would grant grandparents the status which they deserve. Grandparents develop a special bond with their grandchildren, for whom they may represent stability in a sometime fragile environment.

Many modern families are the result of break-ups. The blended family is made up of members who do not all have the same biological links between them. There is no model for this new family; every member must adjust, so as to ensure his or her integration in the new family unit.

Grandparents play a major role during the early years, as well as during the teenage years of their grandchildren.

(1810)

They can provide emotional security and stability to their grandchildren, particularly when the parents divorce or separate. Grandparents can identify problems, but they must not take part in the debate, since such an intrusion can sometimes exacerbate the situation.

Bill C-291 finally gives recognition to older people, who are often perceived as a burden in our communities. This, in turn, often leads to social isolation, feelings of uselessness, isolation, loneliness, as well as low self-esteem.

Older people play a vital role in their grandchildren's lives. To that end, grandparents need minimum economic well-being. Financial security is essential for the elderly to maintain their independence.

Seniors represent an increasingly larger part of the overall population. It is estimated that, over the next 15 years, the number of elderly will increase by 40 per cent. The government must respect our seniors and recognize their contribution. Bill C-291 seeks to recognize that contribution. It is important that

grandparents have the necessary tools to provide them with a quality of life, so that they can adequately assume their role.

Let me give you a brief outlook on how Canadian seniors use their spare time. According to a document published in 1993 by the National Advisory Council of Aging, seniors participate in the following activities. In 1986, 66 per cent of seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 went to a theatre or a restaurant once a month, while this figure was 50 per cent in the case of seniors who were 75 and over. From 40 per cent to 66 per cent of seniors purchased sports equipment and related services—for playing golf, skiing, camping, home exercising—and equipment for leisure activities, including computers, compared with 83 per cent of other Canadians.

Seniors would prefer to spend money on spectator activities like the movies, concerts and sport events, as opposed to recreational equipment for the home. However, seniors spend less than all other groups on recreational activities.

Statistics also showed that 12 per cent of seniors spent money on organized holidays, while 11 per cent of younger Canadians spent money in this way. Furthermore, 58 per cent of seniors travelled outside their community in a given month. Men 60 and over watched an average 33 hours of television per week, while women in the same age group watched an average of 36 hours.

These statistics prove that seniors are not passive and can share different types of recreation with their grandchildren. However, the Bloc Québécois has always made it clear that the federal government is trying to reduce the deficit at the expense of the most vulnerable in our society.

According to a report by the National Advisory Council on Aging, the disposable income of seniors is broken down as follows. In 1989, the average income of single persons aged 65 or over was \$16,316, while the average income of single persons under the age of 65 was \$23,080. A single person is someone who lives alone or in a household where he or she is not related to the other members of that household.

In 1992, the average income of single seniors was \$18,434, while that of other single persons was \$25,039. Nearly 21 per cent of all seniors, in other words, 625,000, live on what are considered to be low incomes. The percentage of seniors living on low incomes is always higher than in the general population.

(1815)

On March 9, 1994, I addressed the following question in this House to the Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, and I quote: "By making alarming statements on the old age security system, is the minister preparing to hit seniors with a considerable cut in their old age security pensions?"

*Private Members' Business*

The Minister of Human Resources Development responded simply that he wanted to provide a stable, effective, fair and honest system for seniors, one that Canada could afford.

Bill C-291 should be seen as recognizing the role of seniors. However, I would like to point out that I find the choice of year, that is 1995, unfortunate, since the United Nations has declared 1995 a year of tolerance. Accordingly, the Bloc Québécois obviously supports the bill, but feels that 1996 would be a more appropriate year. Furthermore, a number of months have elapsed, significantly reducing the impact of Bill C-291.

I would also like to mention that grandparents are not all seniors. Statistics also show an upswing in the birth rate among adolescents, resulting in younger and younger grandparents. In closing, I would congratulate my colleague for Halton—Peel on Bill C-291, because it recognizes the importance of grandparents throughout Canada and pays tribute to them.

[English]

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House today to speak on Bill C-291, introduced by the hon. member for Halton—Peel.

During this past year I have spoken with many Canadian grandparents, as over a year ago now, March 25, 1994, I presented for first reading in the House my Bill C-232 relating to amending the Divorce Act to provide grandparents an automatic right to standing in the court so they could speak on behalf of their grandchildren and thereby protect the right of access of the child to his or her family.

As my bill is votable, we had many grandparents sitting in the gallery for each of the first two hours of debate to see how their members of Parliament dealt with this very serious issue. I expect that during the last hour of debate scheduled for this Thursday, May 4 we will once again see many of our seniors in the gallery.

Are grandparents still an important section of our society? Do Canadians recognize grandparents as a valuable resource, one which we as legislators should encourage and work with, respecting their years of training, skill, knowledge, experience, patience, love, understanding and their willingness to serve, help, teach and spend time with our many young Canadians, many of these children who just need someone to listen to them and care about them?

Most of us realize in our present society we have many grandparents already raising their grandchildren, not because after raising their own family they are anxious to raise another

generation. Usually it is simply because they are needed and their help is asked for.

Joan Brooks, a grandmother from Toronto and a member of a grandparents' group, said: "Let the parents parent; we do not want to do their job". It is much easier for grandparents to enjoy being grandparents, visiting their families, sharing stories, guidance and love with their grandchildren.

However, life is not perfect and due to the rising divorce rate, split families, substance abuse and financial difficulties, more and more of our young children need an extra someone in their lives. It is only natural that wherever possible that person or persons should be grandparents.

In the United States there are over three million grandparents raising their grandchildren. We know this because the Americans already have protected national legislation to secure a child's right to his or her family. Consequently we were able to see some real statistics of the true state of society's needs.

Some of our Canadian citizens place a very high value on a grandparent's role in the family. One grandparent, Abnash Gill of Coquitlam, writes:

If the tree does not have solid roots it will not provide us with healthy fruit. It does not matter how much you spray the top part, if the roots are weak they will catch disease.

Our roots are grandparents. That is where we begin. It is important for children to have grandparents. It is important for parents to get along with both sides of the family.

Grandparents will tell stories of their lives to their grandchildren. Children will learn much from their grandparents' life stories. There is no school teacher who could teach children that.

The history strengthens the children's roots. They keep these sweet memories with them. They will remember them, and they will use them in their lives. That will be their history.

(1820)

Ray Ali, marriage and family therapist from Winnipeg, states:

I was having coffee with a colleague of mine and in the course of our conversation we began talking about grandparents. As he talked about his loving relationship with them, I envied him that he had grandparents who loved him. It was the same type of envy that I experienced as a child when my friends would tell me about visiting their grandparents during the weekend. Remember the Dick and Jane books when they visited their grandparents at the farm? Oh, how I envied them.

Perhaps growing up without grandparents made me realize, even at a very early age, that they play an important role in our lives. I did not have anyone telling me stories about my parents nor stories about how life used to be. So I live my life secretly, envying people like my friend. He had something very special—something I never had.

Fortunately the situation is different for my children because they have a special relationship with their grandparents. My children are lucky because they have both sets of grandparents. If this isn't enough they've adopted another elderly couple who are also given the special title of grandparents. My children are fortunate but they are far from being unique.

*Private Members' Business*

According to recent statistics 90 per cent of all children have at least one living grandparent. If this fact is reliable then it is indeed unfortunate that many children in this 90 per cent are refused access to see their grandparents, often by the custodial parent.

Statistics Canada recently published some poignant statistics on grandparenting. They report that even though the frequencies of visits decrease as children grow older, 40 per cent of adolescents over 15 see their grandparents at least once a month.

Secondly, the image that grandparents are old, fragile and a huge financial burden to society is clearly flawed. A significant number of grandparents are still working and/or volunteering their time. Approximately 40 per cent of seniors provide unpaid help to their families in the form of child care, transportation and financial support. When called upon they are often there to help. Clearly we often overlook the contributions that seniors themselves make to others.

Without question, grandparenting is as important now as in any other time period. Maybe even more so. Unlike 50 years ago, today's grandparent-grandchildren relationships often last more than 20 years. It is quite conceivable that we will spend more time in our lives being grandparents than parents thus contrary to common perceptions, grandparents can have potentially greater influence on our children than they did in years past.

Grandparents want to feel useful but we as a society have done a very poor job of tapping into this tremendous natural resource.

A recent letter writing competition in Winnipeg, 'My Grandparents are Special', gave me cause to select two letters written by two grade six students.

Rebecca Spuszak writes:

My grandparents are special because they have been married for over 50 years and showed me that love is one of the most important things we have in life. My grandparents are always there for me, willing to listen and to give me the most welcomed hug. My grandpa loves to tell his jokes over and over but they always have that loving touch. My grandma has a beautiful smile each and every day. Their home always makes me feel so warm and cosy inside. If I had just one wish it would be that everyone could have special grandparents like me. So when they need help I hope they know I'm there for them just like they are for me. I really feel blessed.

Kera Johnson writes:

My grandma is special because she understands. She helps me and so much more. My grandma loves me, she gives me love even when I shouldn't get it. She is helpful, she is understanding and most of all she is loving. Every day my grandmother spends at least seven hours of her day helping physically and mentally challenged children. That's how special my grandma is. I think that my grandma is as good as a person can get.

I would like to share part of a poem with the House today written by Chief Dan George. It gives words of advice and counsel to his grandchild. This is from a special course I used to teach on native studies.

Perhaps there will be a day  
You will want to sit by my side asking for counsel  
I hope I will be there  
But you see, I am growing old.  
There is no promise that life  
Will live up to our hopes  
Especially to the hopes of the aged.  
So I will write of what I know  
And some day our hearts will meet in these words.  
If you let it happen.  
You come from a shy race

Ours are the silent ways  
We have always done all things  
In a gentle manner  
So much as the brook that avoids the solid rock  
In its search for the sea and meets the deer in passing  
You too must follow the path of your own race  
It is steady and deep, reliable and lasting  
It is you.  
If you let it happen.

(1825)

Today I have spoken on the wonder of grandparents and their positive influence and their needed assistance in Canada's future.

Bill C-291 tries to recognize grandparents. In a grandparents year we could have the ceremonies and activities to recognize them. That would be good. We should definitely also have a grandparents day so we could recognize them every year. They are the unsung heroes of Canada's society. They give everything and ask for very little in return.

Perhaps Margaret Mead said it best: "In the presence of grandparents and grandchildren the past and the future merge in the present".

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am delighted to speak today to Bill C-291, an act respecting a national year of the grandparent. I take the opportunity to speak on behalf of the government's commitment to Canada's grandparents.

I have not yet had the fortune of becoming a grandparent. I guess my sons have control over that and so I may never become a grandparent. I have grandparents. All of us have grandparents.

My grandmother was my mentor, a woman who was a feminist long before the word feminist was popular. She was strong, feisty and she told me that if I did not like how things were I should go in there and change them and not complain. She lived that. She was always fighting for causes. Like a battleship at full steam, she was always there making things happen, changing things. She always had courage. She was an outspoken and strong woman.

My grandmother set for me an example that I have followed. If she were alive today I think she would be very pleased and proud that I am standing here talking about her role in my life and about grandparents as a whole.

Grandparents play a vital role in the lives of families and in the lives of all Canadians. Whether you have grandchildren or not, you can be a grandparent. In British Columbia there the Volunteer Grandparents Association. It meets and looks after children. As we all know, in society today families can live so far away from each other and many families do not have an extended family or a grandparent close by. These grandparents whose children are not around become grandparents to children whose grandparents are not around and they bridge the gap.

*Private Members' Business*

It is interesting to see them at baseball games, to be there at ballet recitals and to watch these adoptive grandparents enjoying all the things their adoptive grandchildren do.

I have to tell members about filling the lives of children. Whether you are a young child, an older child or an adult, grandparents fill your life. My children's grandparents are very far away and they have benefited from volunteer grandparents. I think they always needed to know there was somewhere a safe haven they could go to when their parents did not understand; to go to somebody who had the wisdom and could remind them their parents were children once.

I remember my children telling me I sometimes forgot I was once a child. Grandparents are always there to remind us, to assure us our parents were not as perfect as they pretended to be. They bring that sense of vulnerability and fallibility into parenting, which is good. It gives children something to believe in and something to feel strong about.

The important role grandparents play in the life of a family should never be underestimated. Today where families are fragmented grandparents often take up the life of the family and carry it by themselves; sometimes only temporarily when there is a family crisis or illness and sometimes even permanently because of a divorce.

That is why we clearly need to support grandparents today. We must ensure they remain a stable factor in the lives of their grandchildren, regardless of where the parents are. The reason they do is that grandparents have a sense of continuity. They bridge the past and the present. They bring yesterday into today. Grandparents make us feel as if we have always been here as a people. That continuity is very important to us. Especially when our lives are fragmented and unstable they bring that sense of permanence, that sense of tradition, that sense of stability and reality which is needed in today's world. It is a sense of timelessness, if I may use that word.

(1830)

Grandparents are very important because they are traditionally wise. They are always wise. Grandparents are a source of advice. They are a good source of advice because they have stepped aside from being subjective and can offer the objective wisdom parents are unable to offer because they are too closely linked to their children.

Three out of every four Canadians over 65 are grandparents. What is interesting is that you do not have to be over 65 to be a grandparent. The image of a grandparent as being someone kind with twinkling eyes behind glasses and an ample bosom and a warm laugh may not necessarily be what grandparents are. Grandparents are also now in their forties and fifties. They bring

a sense of vitality to the family that was not there before when grandparents were only supposed to be one age.

Grandparents bring a sense of trust as well. They help us to feel safe because no matter what happens, they are always there. They seem to have a sense of immovability and a sense of complete and total stability. They are an anchor for most of us.

In many cultures grandparents are historians. Many cultures do not have a written history where we can go back and read it, especially in our aboriginal cultures for example. In those many other cultures where there is no written history grandparents bring the stories with them that tell us where we came from and talk about our traditions.

In many aboriginal societies the elders and grandparents are bringing aboriginal people back home, especially today's aboriginal people who have been removed forcibly from their homes at one point in time, have been severed from their past. Today's grandparents are healing in native cultures. They bring the old ways back, the sense of spirituality, the sense of permanence, the sense of bonding.

Health Canada has recognized this and has given grants through the new horizons program to assist grandparents in aboriginal cultures to bring their young people home. They help not just anecdotally but in a real way with issues such as suicide, substance abuse and alcoholism. They have been making a real difference by bringing back the cultures and helping the children. In fact Health Canada's grants send children to camps where grandparents tell stories, teach the native language, teach them basic survival skills, how to sew, and counsel them on issues that are bothering today's young aboriginal people.

It is sad to note that despite their important role in society some derogatory myths exist about grandparents. Those myths continue to be perpetuated.

One myth depicts older grandparents as frail and dependent. Like their young counterparts actually, the majority of older grandparents live active, healthy and productive lives. A 1990 study showed that one out of every two seniors over 65 provided assistance to people outside of their household, such as unpaid transportation or financial support.

Still another myth suggests that families sometimes neglect and even abandon grandparents and many older family members. That is not actually true. Studies have found that seniors obtain 80 per cent of the help they need from their families and that 92 per cent of seniors and grandparents say that they feel emotionally close to their families.

Half of Canada's senior grandparents live within 10 kilometres of at least one child. I did not know that fact until I looked it up recently. They visit regularly, they telephone daily

and they offer very clear and strong emotional support to their families.

I reiterate the fact that the grandparent through all of these ways, regardless of what culture, does play a very clear and strong role. Grandparents are ageless and timeless; they have always been here. They defy socioeconomic barriers. All of us have grandparents. Whether we are rich, middle class or poor, no matter whether we live in a developed world or in a developing world, no matter whether we speak English or any other language, we all have grandparents. They are a common universal treasure.

(1835)

Because of their timelessness, because of their universality, because of their holding the family together, grandparents offer a sense of stability and a sense of permanence that bridge the past and the future.

I support the bill because grandparents make us immortal.

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I speak to Bill C-291, presented by the hon. member for Halton—Peel, an act respecting the national year of the grandparent which calls upon Parliament to designate 1995 the year of the grandparent.

I say this not only because I am a grandparent to my grandson, Spencer Drew, the most handsome, intelligent, talented and clever boy in the whole wide world who will celebrate his first birthday next Sunday, but because I believe that anything which strengthens the family unit will help to better our society.

Through all generations and cultures grandparents have generally played a caring, supportive and nurturing role in the lives of their families and extended families. The time has come for Canada to formally reaffirm the invaluable contribution grandparents have made and will continue to make to society.

Last year the United States Congress adopted House resolution 355 and Senate resolution 198 proclaiming 1995 as the year of the grandparent, encouraging citizens to observe the year with programs, ceremonies and activities.

Having already reached the month of May, it would seem that we in Canada have been slow off the mark to honour the family and grandparents.

Quebec's civil code has enshrined the role of grandparents in article 611 which states:

In no case may the father or mother, without a grave reason, interfere with personal relations between the child and his grandparents.

The intent of Bill C-291 truly goes beyond partisan politics in giving grandparents recognition for their important fundamental contribution to family and society, love given freely with no

### *Private Members' Business*

strings attached. Bill C-291 should receive unanimous consent in the House.

Grandparents bring a tremendous amount of affection, energy and other beneficial things into the lives of children. One thing unchanged through all time is that children still require a loving and secure environment. Most grandparents are ready, willing and able to provide love in abundant quantities and children are quick to realize that when in grandma's or grandpa's care they are safe, secure and adored. They have a home away from home, often with fewer or more lenient rules to follow.

Grandparents provide a link to our past, to our roots and to our heritage. During every day conversation they share the trials and joys experienced during their lives. They pass on knowledge of the ways, whys and wherefores of previous generations and give meaning to the changes that have evolved over time.

Grandparents care deeply for the happiness and well-being of these innocent, young, impressionable lives and do everything within their power to pave the way for a better and more caring tomorrow.

Parents can usually depend on grandparents to care for their grandchildren whenever help is needed. They are there when difficult situations such as illness or problems within the family relationship present themselves. Grandparents are there to provide stability and continuity for their grandchildren.

It is only natural that grandparents should be nurturing and caring. After all, they were parents at one time and are now the beneficiaries of the experience they gained while raising their families.

A strong family structure is the best means by which to nurture children and society as a whole and grandparents are an integral part of the structure. Thus, it is most fitting that 1995 be officially proclaimed the year of the grandparent. As 1994 was declared the international year of the family, it seems to logically follow that 1995 should be chosen to give special recognition to grandparents.

(1840)

Not too long ago, the nuclear family, including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins formed a cohesive, interdependent unit which helped to provide the basic necessities of life. Small communities were self-sustaining and so were families.

Today, the economy and times have changed. People have moved away from the hometown and have found employment in places often far removed from the traditional nuclear family. Our society is fast paced, often demanding that people not only change jobs, but pick up roots and change careers several times over their working years.

There is increasing displacement and stress on the family in today's environment, with the result that in many cases, the reassuring support traditionally given by the family unit is not



*Adjournment Debate*

readily accessible nor available to provide immediate support when it is needed.

More and more homes see both parents working. This evolution has impacted on the role of the grandparents by restricting their access to their grandchildren. Often it is not easy for them to maintain close contact with their grandchildren but despite these obstacles, families do remain united, tied by their common roots. Grandparents have and always will be an integral part of the family because love transcends all obstacles and survives the onslaught of modern society.

Families are the anchors of a caring society. It is vital to do everything possible to preserve the nuclear family unit.

Governments should recognize that the family is best equipped to provide and inculcate those things which make a society strong and caring. Interference or attempts to replace positive family influence with questionable or intrusive government programs simply erode the strength the family can provide to society.

Often, grandparents step in to accept the role of primary caregiver. In cases of family breakdown, they are usually willing to do what comes naturally by simply being available to be part of the solution, an option lawyers and courts often fail to consider.

To have access and be able to provide a continuing, dignified, stable, supportive presence in the lives of children caught in the middle of an emotional and bitter family dispute is a service grandparents are often well suited to assume. Present laws do not foster this option.

In a time when government is looking for ways to restructure social and welfare programs, it should recognize that millions of dollars could be saved and a better solution arrived at by including grandparents in custody and access hearings. This is not only in the best interests of the grandparents but also in the best interests of children often caught in the crossfire.

The courts should recognize there are other options at least in the interim, a neutral third party willing to accept the role of caregiver. Most grandparents, if able, are willing to take on this responsibility and be part of the solution in what is often a highly emotional, indeed devastating time for all parties involved. Again, they are needed but often not considered as an option or part of the solution.

With 1995 designated as the year of the grandparent, it would be logical for government to take the steps necessary to amend current legislation to allow grandparents to be grandparents by providing the care, love and support they are so willing to give.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated as a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is

dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

Is there unanimous consent to proceed with the adjournment motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### HEALTH

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP):** Madam Speaker, to add my comments to the previous speaker's on setting aside 1995 as the year of the grandparent, it is a first class idea. I would have liked to have seen that followed through.

However, my few moments are to talk about a question I raised on April 5 regarding the funding of health care. It is fair to say that one of the major factors that distinguishes Canada from the United States is our support of medicare. It is an identifying feature of being a Canadian and sets us apart from the United States.

(1845 )

We see now the possibility of the health care system and medicare system being seriously eroded as a result of the last budget, but also the two budgets leading up to it. An integral part of medicare is the universality provision. Whether one is a baker or a banker one ought to have the same access to health care wherever one happens to live in Canada.

We have held up with pride the universality of medicare as something that distinguishes us from our neighbours to the south. I do not have to remind anyone of the serious differences in the two systems. In Canada we spend a little less than 10 per cent of GDP on health care. In United States, its citizens spend a little less than 14 per cent of their GDP on health care. While their health care system costs much more, the wealthiest of Americans are well served by the system.

The average income earner in the United States who has to pay somewhere between \$5,000 and \$7,000 a year for coverage that is actually less than that in Canada is adequately covered. Somewhere between 30 and 40 million Americans have little or no health coverage.

As a distinguishing factor, what I was pointing out in my question was in recognition of that old adage that "he who pays the piper calls the tune". When one sees the tremendous reductions in funding for social programs including health care it becomes quite alarming.

*Adjournment Debate*

While there is no direct effect on this year's funding for health care, the province of British Columbia alone in its cash entitlement under the Canada social transfer will be \$371 million less in 1996-97 and \$684 million less in 1997-98 than it would have been provided under EPF and CAP funding. These amounts are in addition to the \$180 million negative impact of 1994 federal budget on transfers. The net effect of this is that in 1997-98 the entitlement for British Columbia will be \$801 million less than the province received in 1994-95.

In summary, because of these massive reductions in transfer funding for health care, we have the likelihood of the health care system evolving into a patchwork across the country. We will have 12 different health care systems. No doubt some of the provinces will be able to withstand the offloading more than others.

The premier of the province of Alberta has indicated an interest in extra billing and privatizing a whole number of services based on the American model. It is certainly a direction that Canadians will not want to take.

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the gist of the hon. member's question is concerned about the issue of universality which actually has nothing to do with cost.

Universality means that we are all eligible for health care services regardless of what is our status in terms of employability or whether we have chronic illness, chronic diseases or not. Accessibility is the one that talks about ability to pay.

I understand the hon. member's question which is how can we continue to support the kind of medicare system that we know, based on the five principles of health care, if we do not put enough money into it.

As he so wisely pointed out, the United States spends 14 per cent of its gross national product on health care. Canada spends about 10 per cent and Japan spends about 6 per cent. Japan has the highest outcomes in health care in the world today. Canada ranks third. The United States ranks somewhere between Cuba and Czechoslovakia.

If we talk about money spent on medical services being the only determinant of outcome of health care, we are barking up the wrong tree. Money does not equate to outcomes and good health status. Many other things drive health status, such as poverty, environmental issues and many other issues with which we have to concern ourselves.

We are committed to health care. Studies have shown, especially the recent one from the University of Ottawa, that we can have an affordable, much more efficient health care system with better outcomes if we make some very real changes. We should look at such changes as moving from acute care to community care, looking at care closer to home; looking at providing core services for continuing care for seniors, looking at prevention

and health promotion. Many of these things will give us better outcomes. This study has shown that we can save \$7 billion a year on health care payments as a federal government and still come up with very good results.

(1850)

We are talking about a time for looking at how we renew our system and how we make our system more effective and more efficient. We now know of so many ways to manage our system. That is what we are talking about in the renewal of health care. Those are the changes we want to see.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, what I have to say today reflects upon the inadequate responses I have been getting as far as the Wentworth bypass in Nova Scotia goes and the money that was transferred by the minister of public works to his home riding.

I have asked this question four times in the House now. I am still not satisfied that the minister is going to be held accountable for this. I want to outline for those folks who are interested in this particularly serious problem just exactly what went on.

In 1992-93 there was a program called SHIP, the strategic highways improvement program in Nova Scotia. This joint program was to upgrade the 100 series highways, the Trans-Canada network highways. Under this agreement the federal and provincial governments shared in the improvement program.

What happened on May 11, 1994, according to the Nova Scotia auditor general's report, \$26 million of these funds were diverted from highway 104 to a tourist highway, the Fleur-de-Lis trail, which is not a 100 series highway in the minister's very own riding in Cape Breton.

It happens that the minister and MLA Richie Mann, who I believe was Nova Scotia's minister of highways at the time and may still be, were both involved in this discussion. I have given quotes in the House which substantiate that instance where they were involved. They decided to take \$26 million out of this project and put it toward the Fleur-de-Lis trail.

The difficulty many people in the Wentworth, valley area and indeed throughout Nova Scotia have is that it is considered one of the most dangerous highways in the country. As a person who lives in British Columbia, I can tell you there are a lot of dangerous highways in this country particularly in the mountains. However, this is considered one of the most dangerous highways in the country. There have been 40 deaths in the last number of years which I spoke about in this House.

They diverted the money from this federal-provincial project to a road which is basically a tourist area in the minister's riding. What does that say about the process? I guess it is up to the minister to be held accountable for what he did, but what it says

*Adjournment Debate*

to most folks in the Wentworth Valley and the people who have to travel through this area is that you care a lot less about the lives of the people who travel this highway than about the money in your own riding.

There is going to be a toll on that highway which is likely to be \$7 to \$10. It will take an hour to drive through that area. What have the people ended up with in this whole exercise? It turns out that the minister of public works, not the minister of highways who has been answering my questions, made a deal with a provincial minister who also benefited from it to transfer money. Now the people in Wentworth valley are going to pay the price for it through tolls.

It is inappropriate. I will quote a Liberal member opposite: "This is about principles. It is about money that was misappropriated. If an agreement like this can be broken then I could go in to lobby for something ridiculous somewhere else. It is a matter of trust in cost sharing. Someone has to be held accountable". I ask: Why is the minister of public works not being held accountable?

(1855)

**Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Transport has stated repeatedly and clearly, although maybe not for some, highways are a provincial responsibility. However, the federal government has a longstanding practice of entering into cost sharing agreements to provide some level of service.

Multi-year programs are often developed with a tentative list of projects referenced in the initial agreement. There are myriad reasons why the project lists attached to various highway agreements change over the life of the agreement.

We cannot forecast what may happen as individual projects mature. There may be delays due to design problems, completing the environmental assessment, changes in provincial priorities or cost changes. Virtually all highway agreements administered by the federal government change during the course of a year.

The project list attached to the Nova Scotia agreement was developed in early 1993 as part of an initiative to provide a stimulus to spur economic growth and job creation.

It is worth noting that several provinces are either investigating the option or have implemented public-private partnerships as a means of advancing projects comparable to the highway 104 project.

To answer the question of the member with respect to tolls, the reality is that the province of Nova Scotia requested a change to reallocate some, not all, of the funds to include an allocation for the Fleur-de-lis Trail.

There are actually two Nova Scotia highway programs. Between them approximately \$215 million is allocated to route 104, not an insignificant amount. Route 104 has received a tremendous contribution.

Two minutes does not allow me time to rebut every aspect of the allegations made by the member opposite. It is important to use the time to set forth the basic facts so that the lack of substance to the allegations can be seen for what it is: mere opportunism.

To be perfectly clear, there are always discussions with the provinces on transportation issues and project substitutions do occur. The member must understand that the provinces spend the money and decide on the priority of projects.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we can see that a large number of Quebecers going on welfare every month, generally 40 per cent of the 5,000 individuals or so who join the ranks of welfare recipients, are young people. These numbers have increased since last summer. Why is that?

Since the government passed Bill C-17, to restrict access to unemployment insurance by increasing the qualifying period and reducing benefits as well as the numbers of weeks, people are suffering from this decision and many end up on welfare. I have asked the Minister of Human Resources Development repeatedly if he realized that his cuts to UI had particularly dire consequences for young people who then have to rely on social assistance.

The minister indicated that he wanted to move away from the passive assistance provided through unemployment insurance and toward active assistance. But one should not prevent the other. Nothing prevents us from helping young people who do not have sufficient training or helping them find a job, but when no jobs can be found for those who are already trained—many university graduates came to see me at my constituency office—why refuse them access to unemployment insurance? Why make their first few contacts with the job market more difficult because jobs are too short, because employment is temporary instead of being stable? Why force young people onto welfare?

We believe that the government should amend this clause of Bill C-17. It makes no sense, because the first contacts that young people have with the work force teaches them that they do not belong in it. How are the amounts accumulating in the unemployment insurance fund being used? In the last budget, an accounting trick allowed the government to use these funds to reduce the deficit. To a great extent, it is young people and women are the ones paying for this deficit reduction move.

*Adjournment Debate*

This is not acceptable in a society like ours, and it is above all not acceptable for Quebec, where young people are considered the engine, the vital element, because, among other things, they will have families and will make it possible for the people of Quebec, which is an endangered species in North America, counting for barely more than 2 per cent of the population, to survive.

And now young people are swelling the welfare ranks because we have stripped them of even the glimmer of a hope of ever finding a job.

[*English*]

**Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we would agree with the hon. member that the situation of young people in Canada is an issue that concerns us all. However, we believe it is incorrect to assume that most people who leave UI will go on welfare.

Employment gains in 1994 reduced new UI claims by some 10 per cent from 1993 and helped over 200,000 more people get off UI without exhausting their benefits. Data for March shows that the unemployment rate for Canadian workers 15 to 24 years of age has decreased by 2.4 per cent since the government came into power. While that is still not an acceptable figure, we intend to continue to work on the situation.

We are committed to stimulating the creation of employment opportunities for youth and taking concrete action. Summer employment programs have been redesigned to reinforce programs that provide the best results in job creation. The student summer job action program, a package of six job creation elements that will target the needs of post-secondary and senior high school students, will result in the creation of 44,500 summer jobs. The continuation of the youth internship program funding has been increased to \$118 million from the 1994 funding of \$25 million. We intend to continue Youth Service Canada, with an expected 17,500 participants over three years. The funding has increased to \$28 million from \$25 million. In addition, we are creating new funding of \$15 million for Youth Service Canada. Overall, funds for youth programs and services for 1995-96 have increased by \$43 million.

In Quebec, HRD is opening six Canada Employment Centres for students on Montreal Island. Approximately 50 students will be working in six Canada Employment Centres and approximately 7,000 jobs will be posted.

Jobs are what Canadian youth needs and jobs are what this government is creating for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), a motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.04 p.m.)

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