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Thursday, May 11, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 11, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy 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 31 petitions.

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[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 123, I have the pleasure and honour to table the third report of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations.

Your committee recommends that a House order be issued to repeal certain provisions of the National Capital Commission Traffic and Property Regulations.

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this morning I have a few petitions to present from constituents around British Columbia.

The first petition requests that Parliament revise the prohibited weapons order to exclude item (t), namely the Swiss target

rifle. Some are used for competition and the petitioners would like to see them excluded.

The second petition is on behalf of British Columbians. They request that Parliament reject Bill C-68 on firearms.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition requests that Parliament protect the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada by not allowing assisted suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition requests that Parliament protect the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the last petition requests that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the charter of rights and freedoms to include the phrase sexual orientation.

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have six petitions respecting the issue of gun control.

The petitioners pray that Parliament not enact any new firearm registration fees, costs or any further restrictions on the ownership, sale, use, transportation or storage of firearms.

BILL C-41

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also have four petitions containing 322 signatures requesting Parliament to delete entirely section 718.2 from the Criminal Code of Canada pursuant to Bill C-41.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Roseanne Skoke (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also have two petitions with respect to the issue of amending human rights legislation to include the words sexual orientation. This petition contains 155 signatures.

Routine Proceedings

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present three petitions on behalf of the constituents of my riding of Selkirk—Red River, Manitoba.

In the first petition, my constituents pray that Parliament extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition my constituents pray that Parliament continue to reject euthanasia and assisted suicides in Canada.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the third petition my constituents pray that Parliament not amend the human rights code using the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 161 and 169.

[Text]

Question No. 161—**Mr. Scott (Skeena):**

With respect to the Young Offenders act, (a) what are the objectives of the Act, (b) by what criteria is the attainment of these objectives measured, (c) what efforts has the Department of Justice made to evaluate the success of the act in terms of these criteria, and (d) to what extent have the objectives of the act been met?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): One of the primary objectives of the Young Offenders Act is to fashion dispositions which provide adequate public protection while maximizing the opportunities for the rehabilitation of young offenders. While Canadians may have different views on how this objective can be met, it seems clear that our fundamental goal is to ensure that as many youth as possible become fully participating and contributing members of our society as adults, in accordance with the values of our society.

The changes which the government has introduced to the act in Bill C-37, which is currently before the Senate, attempt to clarify the distinction between appropriate responses for non-violent versus violent offences. The bill further states that young persons who are not convicted of crimes involving serious offences can be held accountable for their actions through non-custodial dispositions. There is an opportunity,

in our view, for greater use of more constructive dispositions such as compensation, restitution, and community service in situations where public safety is not at issue.

With regard to offences of violence, Bill C-37 is clear that public protection must be given priority in assessing the nature and length of dispositions appropriate for these offences. The maximum sentences for youth charged with murder who remain within the youth justice system have been lengthened to ensure that public confidence in the system is not undermined by responses which seem disproportionate to the gravity of the crime. Bill C-37 provides that 16 and 17-year old offenders charged with very serious offences, such as murder, manslaughter and aggravated sexual assault, will be presumed to be dealt with in adult court unless they can satisfy the court that the competing interests of public protection and their rehabilitation can be reconciled within the youth justice system.

A review of actual sentencing practices and the rate of recidivism is one criterion by which attainment of the objectives of the act can be measured. Are offenders charged with serious crimes of violence receiving sentences which provide adequate protection to the public while affording them opportunities for rehabilitation? We know that only 19 per cent of crime committed by young persons involves violence, Youth Court Statistics 1993-94, in *Juristat*, January 1995, Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 7. Some suggest, in fact, that young offenders are more likely to receive dispositions which are more onerous than adults.

Another criterion for assessing whether the objectives of the act have been realized is the degree of public confidence in the youth justice system. In part, this is also a public information issue as there appears to be some misconceptions about the nature and length of sentences given in respect of crimes involving youth. There are statistics which indicate that there appears to be a gradual increase in the use of custody in respect of young offender dispositions and that much of this custody is used in respect of property offenders. Not many Canadians appear to know how the youth system actually operates and how successful it has been. Public legal education is an important initiative with which the Department of Justice is involved in conjunction with other government departments.

In terms of the efforts the Department of Justice has made to evaluate the success of the act, this work is already under way. The Department of Justice, in collaboration with the provinces, set up a Federal-Provincial-Territorial Youth Justice Task Force to prepare a report by the fall for ministers and deputy ministers respecting various pertinent issues relevant to youth justice. Some of the issues being canvassed are appropriate mechanisms to deal with serious offenders, a determination of the interrelationship between the justice system and other services, such as health and child welfare, and the role of diversion in responding to criminal behaviour.

Informing all of this work is recognition of the need to formulate a scheme which is responsive to public concerns about the youth justice system, while at the same time maximizing opportunities for constructive responses to youth crime. That process will give us a very comprehensive assessment about the ability of the Young Offenders Act to meet its objectives.

The Department of Justice is also in constant contact with legal experts and practitioners in the youth justice system during the formulation of policy which affects young offenders. These inter-actions provide the department with ongoing feedback about the effectiveness of the Young Offenders Act.

Current public discussion about the Young Offenders Act has also alerted law makers to the limitations of legislation. We are quite convinced that legislation alone will not eliminate youth crime. Poverty, unemployment, family violence, racism, illiteracy, alcoholism and drug abuse and many other factors may contribute to criminal acts by young people and adults alike. In this regard, Bill C-37 expressly recognizes that crime prevention is essential to the long term protection of society and requires addressing the underlying causes of crime by young persons. In turn, this mandates the need to develop multi-disciplinary approaches to identifying and effectively responding to children and young persons at risk of committing offending behaviour in the future.

Question No. 169—Mr. Pomerleau:

Concerning old age pensions to how many recipients are benefits paid outside Canada and how do we ascertain that these recipients are still living?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): In 1994 old age security, OAS, pensions were paid to 66,531 individuals outside Canada.

Notification of the death of a recipient may come from a variety of sources, such as: family members, a trustee, a local authority, a returned benefit cheque, or an application for a Canada pension plan death or survivor benefit. As well, controls program unit within income security programs conducts verification checks on an ongoing basis.

There are currently no specific procedures which apply to pensioners outside Canada as compared to pensioners inside Canada. However, the February 1995 budget stated: "Effective July 1, 1996 OAS recipients who are no longer resident in Canada will have to file a statement of their worldwide income in order to continue to receive OAS benefits." This requirement effectively provides a specific verification process.

Speaker's Ruling

[Translation]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS MADE BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: My colleagues, I would like to make a brief statement about the point of order raised on Monday, May 8, 1995, by the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm.

(1010)

The member stated that the Minister of Transport had challenged his integrity during Question Period on May 5. Specifically, the member objected to the minister's remarks that he had betrayed a confidence of the House by revealing information learned in a lock-up.

Lock-ups are information sessions which operate independently from the House. Disagreements about lock-ups therefore are political matters best dealt with at the political level. Further, the member indicated that he had in fact obtained the information in question from press reports.

When the matter was brought to my attention in the House on Monday, I stated that the interpretation of what was said was a matter for debate, but nonetheless promised to take it under advisement, I am still of the view that the words used were not unparliamentary.

That said, let me turn to a related matter which is of great concern to me. When opinions are strongly held, the cut and thrust of debate can go beyond the realm of what may be considered acceptable. It is true that the Speaker must look at the context in which a word is uttered, and the tone used when a word is said, when considering whether a particular word or remark is unparliamentary. As I noted on Monday, members have every right to request that language, when ruled to be unparliamentary by the Chair, be withdrawn.

Standing Order 18 requires members to refrain from using offensive words.

There exist certain words, which, regardless of the tone used or the intention of the user, have, by their very connotation, a tendency to elicit negative reactions from other members. We saw an example of this yesterday when the word "traître" was used in the House. Objections are raised each time this or similar words are uttered. These serve no constructive purpose and, more often than not, deflect the

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House's attention away from the serious matters before it. I strongly urge all members to ponder the potential impact of such words before using them.

I hope that members will seriously consider what I have said today and I thank all members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.)
moved:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to keep its red book promise to make the government more open and permitting members of Parliament to be more accountable to their constituents.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 43(2), I and following Reform speakers will be splitting our time.

I am pleased to rise today to debate the Reform motion that condemns the government for its failure to keep its red book promise to make the government more open and permitting MPs to be more accountable to their constituents.

I thumbed through the red book the other day for the first time in a long while. I read the chapter on parliamentary reform and integrity in government. The rhetoric was wonderful. However looking at the history of this Parliament to date, the promises have not been kept and the government needs to be held accountable for that breach of trust with the Canadian public.

The government has failed so miserably in the area of open and honest government that it is starting to make Brian Mulroney's Tories look like saints. Believe me, the Tories certainly are not saints.

The government has been secretive, hierarchical and top down. It has hidden behind every excuse to avoid changing the structure and practices of this place and to avoid divulging information that the public has a right to know.

(1015)

My reform colleagues and I will demonstrate through debate in the House today that the government has failed the Canadian people through not delivering on the following promises. They failed on their commitment to not use time allocation and closure. They failed on the issue of an independent ethics counsellor. They punish their own backbenchers for putting their constituents first.

The process of sending bills to committee prior to second reading is becoming a sham and the government has reneged on its commitment for more free votes in the House. This government has overused the order in council mechanism to slide through its own agenda. Its members have continued the proud Tory tradition of patronage, both in appointments and in the rewarding of party friends with government contracts without open tender. And the committee structure has made a mockery of democracy because of the overly zealous whipping of Liberal members.

The government has gone out of its way to block and refuse requests for access to information. Interestingly enough, in yesterday's *Financial Post* there was an article on the gag law, Bill C-114—"the infamous law that would send Canadians to jail for up to five years if they individually or as a group spend more than \$1,000 to support or oppose political parties or candidates during a federal election". The Liberals are supporting this. The article indicates that they may even appeal to the Supreme Court to continue to gag Canadians. They are breaking their promise of not being an open, responsible, and accountable government.

This government has made a number of promises in the red book about openness, democracy, parliamentary reform, and the freedom of members of Parliament to represent their constituents. I along with my Reform colleagues will go page by page through the red book and show how their promises were broken.

We are starting to rip pages out of the red book because they are irrelevant. All we will have left pretty soon is the cover, a hollow shell of what was a grandiose scheme that they presented to the electorate in the last election campaign.

We would all agree that the House of Commons is supposed to be a place of free and open debate, a place where every member should have the opportunity to give the pros and cons to each piece of legislation, particularly to explain to other members how any bill or motion will affect their own constituents. There is a procedural device that puts all that at risk, and the procedure is time allocation, used so many times by this government. Time allocation, or closure, is the most undemocratic of parliamentary procedures. Its only purpose is to stifle debate, robbing members of an opportunity to speak so that the government can ram through its agenda without scrutiny by all members of this House and without every member having an opportunity to place their position on the record if they so choose.

When the Liberals were in opposition they agreed that time allocation was undemocratic and unfair. They howled at the Conservative government whenever time allocation was used. They cried foul, they whined to the media, and they vowed never to use such an evil procedure if they ever got into government.

The previous member for Ottawa—Vanier, now undemocratically ushered into the Senate, said that closure was far from democratic. The member for Winnipeg St. James called it draconian. The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, an

experienced parliamentarian who is also the chair of the justice committee, said that it was a hijacking of democracy. The member for Kingston and the Islands, whose opinion I respect, said it was morally wicked. Those are strong words.

The Conservative government used closure fifteen times during the last Parliament—fifteen times in five years. It sounds pretty bad, and it is. The government has already used closure and time allocation ten times in only two years. This is despite a promise by the Liberal government House leader to use this blunt instrument far less than the Tories did. At this rate, they will pass their old record of 25 uses of time allocation set by the Liberal government in 1980 to 1984.

Despite all the damage the Liberals did to Canada during the 1970s and 1980s, they are in government again today and they are making frequent use of the time allocation measure. They have used time allocation ten times in this Parliament, so they have already made it into double digits, ten times in the short time we have been here since the election. The most undemocratic of parliamentary procedures has never been used so much and so shamelessly.

They brought in time allocation on Bill C-18, an act to interrupt the redistribution of electoral boundaries, at second reading. They brought it in on Bill C-32, the Excise Tax Act, at third reading. They time allocated third reading of Bill C-35, the Department of Citizenship Act. It sounds like a real national crisis.

(1020)

This was done at both report stage and third reading of Bill C-33 and C-34, dealing with self-government in Yukon. On Bill C-68, currently being debated in committee, they implemented time allocation at second reading. The government time allocated the second reading debate on Bill C-76, the Budget Implementation Act.

Only in one case was the use of time allocation justified. That was in the case of a national emergency, an act to end the national rail strike. In this justifiable case, Reformers cooperated fully with the government.

It is well worth looking at the nature of the bills the government pushed through the House without full debate. The Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act is itself an undemocratic measure and was rushed through. Obviously the government was showing little shame in what it was doing. It was trying to limit the amount of public discussion on the bill. Other bills show a similar pattern: the Excise Act, self-government acts, gun control acts, budget implementation, all bills that try to pull a fast one on the taxpayers or on Canadian citizens.

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It is clear the Liberals feel that if they do not like the nature of a debate, if they get uncomfortable over on the other side about the attention the opposition is focusing on some of their initiatives, they simply want to cut off the debate; they will not talk about it. This is unacceptable. This is undemocratic, and the government went out of its way to profess it would never do such a thing.

The Liberals have gone back on their word ten times already on this issue of closure alone. When they break their word so often and so easily, how can they expect anyone to believe them at all? It is no wonder the Canadian public is beginning to tire of the unethical and politics as usual actions of the government.

Another great promise of the government was that it was to open up the legislative process and allow more MPs the opportunity to have input into the creation of bills. The government announced it would allow certain bills to go to committee before second reading so members could have some input before the bill was written in stone. We have seen with Bill C-45, an inadequate correction of the Parole Act, and with Bill C-64, an act dealing with employment equity regarding the public service, which is currently before committee, that the government has kept and is keeping a short leash on its members in committee to ensure that no significant changes will be made to these bills while they are in committee.

It is a done deal. The government knew these bills were out of touch with common sense Canadians, so it was vigilant not to let public opinion or reasoned debate from the opposition sway their members. All the talk and bluster from the government benches has been a sham. There has never been any intent to accept any advice or input from their own backbenchers, let alone someone from the opposition side.

I wonder how my friends on the government back benches feel about the amount of input they do not have in the legislative process. On Bill C-68 and Bill C-41 we have heard that the members on the other side are very concerned about these measures. These and the budget are all good examples of how the cabinet views the opinions of rank and file Liberal members. They are told to toe the line; they must be team players and back the party on this one. The trouble is that every single vote comes up as another "this one". Get in line, folks.

I want to bring up the issue of the position of the Speaker. This is a very interesting promise made by the Liberals while they were in opposition. They produced a document entitled "Reviewing Parliamentary Democracy". It sounds really good. They always pick such nice words. It sounds really nice. What are the actions involved?

I quote from that document from the section dealing with the Chair:

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In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the Government party, two of the junior Chair Officers should be from the opposition, so that the four presiding officer positions are shared equally by Government and Opposition.

That was Liberal policy. That is what they took into the election. They broke that promise. It is just one of many promises they have blatantly broken, with no intention to keep them whatsoever. That is wrong. Canadians need to know about it. Whenever we start talking about these issues we are cut off in debate. That is brutally unfair and brutally undemocratic.

The document was authorized by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader, the member for Kingston and the Islands. It was authored by the current government whip, by the Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs, who I see sitting in his seat across the way, and the minister of public works. These people signed their names to this promise and they did not keep it.

I wonder why it was not done. Is the government trying to set a record for the number of promises it can break, for the number of times it can go back on its word in one Parliament? What a sad case this is.

(1025)

The government has failed completely on the issue of ethics, accountability to constituents, parliamentary reform, commitment to fairness, and equality of all members of the House.

I appreciate the chance to explain to the House why we are so concerned about our rights and freedoms as members of Parliament to function in an atmosphere where we can be effective, truly represent our constituents, and truly add to the dignity of this place in a manner Canadians deserve.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today is a very important debate for Canadian people because it goes right to the root of our democratic rights. It is very important in this country that we recognize that democracy is something that has to be looked after. It has to be protected. We have to be vigilant in the protection of our democratic rights.

Democracy means rule by the people. It is not an exaggeration to say that in this country we have far from rule by the people. We have rule by the party. That is an abuse of democracy, which must be fought vigorously. Every single citizen is responsible to make sure that our country remains a democracy. The people whose money is being spent, whose future is being decided, and whose country is at stake must take a responsibility to be vigilant in this area.

We have 295 members of Parliament who represent the people. The people have put us in this place on their behalf to

examine the laws that are being proposed, to look after their money that is being spent, to make sure that their long term interests are protected in advance.

What do we have? The government has never lost a single vote on a government bill. Why? Because the government has the most members in the Chamber. Is it really the wishes of all the government members that carry the day in this place? The answer is clearly no. If government members dare to listen to their constituents who have concerns about the effect of certain legislation they are punished as severely as possible. If they are punished publicly, can you imagine what goes on behind closed doors, the threats? They are told to get into line or they will be sorry. That is a sad way to run a country, and it must be attacked. It must be corrected.

I read the document my hon. friend referred to that was put out by the Liberals before the last election, and I thought this is good, this is what I have been thinking should be done: more freedom for bills in committees, more free votes, more independence for the Speaker of the House. All those things that were talked about are so badly needed in Parliament. Yet as soon as they were elected the Liberals turned their backs on their own document, on their own promises.

This cannot be tolerated by the Canadian people. They have a right to expect that when people put their name to a document, when they stand and campaign on promises that real reforms and real democracy will come into the House, there will be a real commitment to follow through, not a cynical abrogation of those promises as quickly as possible.

We have to look facts in the face in this country. The people who really call the shots are the Prime Minister, his advisers, and some members of the cabinet. The country is run by a very small group of people. That cannot be tolerated.

Our own mother government of Britain, which our Canadian Parliament is modelled after, has had free votes where members are free to vote the wishes of their constituents and the members are not whipped into line by their parties. They have had that for over 20 years in Great Britain. Yet in this country we tolerate a small group of people who force their will, their agenda, their viewpoint on a whole country without proper and open debate.

(1030)

In a year and a half on critical bills, on bills that have long term consequences for the country, we have had debate stifled and cut off 10 times with many more to come. Why do we stand still as citizens for this sort of thing? Why do we not send a message to the Liberals who are governing the country that we simply will not tolerate this any more, that we will have open debate, that our elected representatives will have a chance to address the issues and get them out before the

public and will be free to then vote the way they know their constituents' interests are best fulfilled, best responded to and best served?

It is absolutely critical we get serious about this whole area of how our democracy works. We all know the saying, and sometimes these sayings are so profound they have simply become trivial and commonplace to us, the price of freedom is constant vigilance.

It is absolutely critical that in the rules of the House, the way we conduct ourselves and interact as parliamentarians upholds those high standards of democracy and representation are so much at the heart of what we hold dear.

It is very important that Canadians listen to the debate today, recognize what we are trying to say, need to move toward more democratic measures. Many of my colleagues will be outlining exactly how these democratic measures will work in practice and in reality.

Other stable mature democracies have many of the measures we have proposed for several years. Those democracies give so much more scope and respect to the real wishes of the people being served. It is important to recognize we do not want to be governed by a small group of people. We do not want to be governed by people who then force, coerce and impose their will on the rest of the country. Their viewpoint is often not anywhere close to what common sense people in the real world think and feel about issues.

The foundations of the values and ethics that underlie much of what we have done in the country are being questioned, attacked and changed in ways we have to look at and debate.

In Bill C-68 individual liberties we have held dear in the country for decades, since the founding of our country, are being abrogated. In debate this does not come out. This is not something we should take lightly.

There are many things in the bills that come before Parliament that Canadians have a right to have brought out by the parliamentarians they have elected to represent their interests. They have a right to have those views endorsed in the votes in the House.

When Canadians see a party or a government telling its members to vote the way they are told to by the top people in the organization or they will be sorry, punished and deprived of their right to have input into the proceedings of the House, it is time for Canadians to stand up and say: "I don't think so. We will not have our country run that way. We will not vote for a party that will do these things. We will not support this way of running our affairs".

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I appeal to Canadians today to watch this debate, listen to this debate, to do what has to be done to put their will forward so our country is run in a fair, open and democratic way, a way that serves our best interests both now and in the long term.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems members at this end of the Chamber have very short memories.

I have been very impressed with the concept of private members' bills. I have noticed even one of our members has been able to proceed with a private member's bill from its inception all the way through to legislation. I do not think that has happened for a long time in the House.

(1035)

Once again, our memory is a little short. The member for Mission—Coquitlan recently had her own private members' bill referred to a committee.

I have spoken to some of our legislative counsel and I have discovered that in Britain, the model of our Parliament, this system is very much undemocratic. The members do not have a lottery system like we have in the House. The individual member is picked and then formulates a bill.

In that country the government uses its members to introduce government legislation rather than reaffirming the rights and independence of individual members.

I would like the member to comment on the relationship of introducing their own private members' bills and referring them to committee as part of our democratic and legislative process which is very real in the House.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, the country is not run on private members' bills. It is run by governments by their own legislation, by their own programs. Private members' bills have a minuscule impact on what happens in the country. It is good that we have the freedom to bring forward private members' bills. It is also to the credit of the House that sometimes common sense, workable proposals get through the House.

Nobody ever said the system had no good things to it. Clearly it has many good things. However, it is important to remember there are critical areas in which this place is very undemocratic.

I know the Liberals will point to the small things they see as being workable in the House, and well they should. What we really need to address are the big, gaping holes in the democratic workings which have to be fixed. I urge the member to look at what can be fixed, made better and what could be more democratic, rather than clinging to the very small pieces of wood in the ocean.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. The member for Calgary North serves on the human resources development committee. It travelled extensively across Canada to look at reforms to

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Canada's social programs and safety nets. This was with the support of the Minister of Human Resources Development.

My understanding is that while there may have been some flaws in the process, the committee worked very hard travelling across Canada. Its work was totally ignored by the government.

I would like to find out whether whether the member for Calgary North could confirm my suspicions.

Mrs. Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, the process of consulting with Canadians whose interests are being served in these exercises is very important. Not only were ordinary Canadians virtually closed out of the consultation process, but even the recommendations from parliamentarians on the committee have yet to do anything but occupy a dusty shelf somewhere.

It is a disgrace to pretend we are really seeking the best solutions when even recommendations from the government side and our own dissenting opinion on that report simply went nowhere.

There is a long way to go before committees of the House really act like committees and deal with substantive issues and the recommendations are vigorously respected and put into place.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to participate in this debate, since our government's achievements in the last 18 months in terms of parliamentary reform, integrity, openness and fulfilment of our election promises are unprecedented in Canadian history.

I think that the motion put forward by the Reform Party is rather contradictory with regard to our red book commitments to Canadians, which the Reform Party has been doing its utmost to oppose and derail without success day after day.

(1040)

In fact, there is nothing surprising about this, as the Reform Party is not afraid of contradictions. It has even become a kind of expert in this area. In the next few minutes, I will be pleased to list some of our achievements that have been instrumental in restoring Canadians' confidence in their national government.

Since the motion refers to our red book, you will not be surprised, Mr. Speaker, to hear me refer to it throughout my speech in order to evaluate our government's performance. What did the red book say about parliamentary reform? Allow me to quote from page 92 of the red book: "In the House of Commons, a Liberal government will give MPs a greater role in drafting legislation, through House of Commons committees. These committees will also be given greater influence over government expenditures. More free votes will be allowed in the

House of Commons, and individual members of Parliament will be involved in an effective pre-budget consultation process".

What did we do in this regard? We introduced two new processes in addition to the one already in place allowing MPs to consider bills, so that members can become directly involved in drafting legislation and enjoy greater autonomy in amending government bills through the committee system.

The first process consists in the government tabling a bill at first reading and then, after a maximum three hour debate followed by a vote if necessary, referring it to a committee before second reading instead of after, and before agreement in principle. This allows the committees to hold extensive hearings and to amend bills without being restricted by the need for an agreement in principle following debate at second reading.

As a result, the committees can propose major amendments to the bills. Our government used this new process four times, including for the lobbyists registration bill. The second process consists in allowing a minister or a member of Parliament to table a motion directing a committee to draft a bill on an issue concerning private members' business. That process was used in the case of Bill C-69, the legislation dealing with the readjustment of electoral boundaries.

The government, through the Standing Committee on Finance, also conducted the largest prebudget consultation ever held in Canada, something which will be done before every budget. Thanks to this consultation exercise, the government was able to not only involve MPs, but all Canadians in the federal budgetary process. Members of Parliament, through the standing committees, now review, on a yearly basis, the government's future spending priorities, in addition to examining the main estimates for the current year.

A number of debates also take place in the House of Commons, during which MPs can freely express their views on major issues, before the government makes a final decision. For example, I can mention the debates on Canada's peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia, sustainable development, the social program reform, small and medium size businesses, fiscal policy, violence against women, and many other upcoming topics.

Through our committees, we also reviewed the major reforms to Canada's foreign and defence policies, immigration and social programs.

(1045)

What was the Reform Party's position regarding these parliamentary reforms? The hon. member for Lethbridge actually thanked the government, on behalf of his party, for providing such a wide scale program.

He went even farther. Indeed, he added that the Reform Party was also pleased that the proposals to be submitted to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will

deal with a large number of issues which his party feels are important to ensure a reform of the parliamentary process. These comments are not from me; they were made by the Reform member for Lethbridge.

To fully understand the position adopted by the Reform Party during the debate on parliamentary reform, let us take a look at what the leader of that party, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest had to say about our proposals. He said that, generally speaking, these changes seek to allow MPs to play a major role in the development of private members' public bills and the government's fiscal policy, adding that this was a definite improvement. Again, these comments were made by the Reform Party leader.

Members of the Liberal caucus vote freely as regards private members' business. For example, last night, a private member's bill was referred to a committee, after going through second reading in the House.

As for government business, the Reform Party would like to see more free votes. Yet, as the NDP member for Winnipeg Transcona said, in the final analysis, there is not one single member in this House who cannot vote freely and differently than his or her party or leader, any time he or she chooses to do so.

It is therefore surprising to hear the Reform Party—
[English]

Mr. Hermanson: If they do not want to lose their positions in committee.

Mr. Gagliano: The Reform Party came to this place to restore decorum and when its members do not like what they hear they heckle. That is the decorum they bring.

Mr. Hermanson: You had better read that to the three members you kicked off the committee.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I am listening to the House leader of the Reform Party. He does not seem to want to listen to my speech. That is what he calls decorum.

[Translation]

It is astonishing that the Reform Party, where block voting by members is the rule in most votes in the House, should demand more free votes and at the same time, as we see in the motion before the House today, demand that we honour our commitments to the electorate as set out in the red book.

If Reform Party members were consistent, they would support our proposals to reform the pension plan for members of Parliament, since they go much further than what we promised in the red book.

What was promised in the red book? We promised to set a minimum age at which pensions will begin to be paid, and I will quote what it says in the red book: "A Liberal government will

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reform the pension plan of members of Parliament to end "double dipping". That is what it says in the red book.

So what did we do? The President of the Treasury Board tabled a bill in the House that would not only set the minimum eligible age at 55 but would also stop double dipping and, on top of that, cut the government's contribution by 33 per cent, which means a saving of \$3.3 million.

We went well beyond our commitments, so what was the Reform Party's contribution? Yesterday, it used the very same strategy it condemned this morning, and did so every five minutes. Every five minutes, Reform Party members asked for a quorum. They stayed behind the curtains before prayers to prevent the House from sitting, since there were not enough members to start the debate. Is that what they want to talk about? In any case, that is their strategy.

They have repeatedly wasted the time of the House by moving an adjournment motion that was unnecessary. If they want to speak, if they want to have a debate, let them use the time of the House by speaking to the subject at hand instead of moving dilatory motions.

(1050)

That is the new decorum Reform Party members have brought to the House of Commons. They criticized and are still criticizing our position on pension reform for parliamentarians. And what did the whip suggest? Or should I say caucus coordinator, as we used to call them. A 130 per cent increase in members' salaries. This is embarrassing, and it certainly takes a lot of nerve. Trust the Reform Party to make that kind of proposal! Now that is poor judgment, although not surprising, coming from a party that speaks for organizations like the National Citizens' Coalition.

Since we are on the subject of cutting costs, I may recall, through you, Mr. Speaker, that in the red book we promised, and I quote; "A Liberal government will reduce the size and budgets of ministers' offices and the Prime Minister's office by at least \$10 million a year". This was done, and it was the first thing the Prime Minister did when he was elected.

We went even further. We proposed cuts in spending by members. In the process, we saved another \$6 million annually. This was not even in the red book. Everyone remembers the plan to cut members' expense allowances and benefits. We tightened up the way parliamentary associations operate and the rules for domestic travel by parliamentarians. We also have a plan for reducing the deficit of parliamentary restaurant services, and there are several more examples of cost cutting.

In the red book, we also discussed integrity and openness in government. That is why last June, the Prime Minister proceeded with the appointment of an ethics counsellor. This was accompanied by further clarification and stricter imple-

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mentation of the conflict of interest code for public office holders, which for the first time will extend to activities by family members.

We tabled a bill to reinforce the Lobbyists Registration Act, which would include the authority to order disclosure of fees paid to lobbyists to obtain government contracts and banning the inclusion of conditional fees in contracts with the government.

Last week, my colleague, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, moved to create a joint committee to work on establishing a code of conduct. After one day of debate, this motion could have been adopted and, today, the committee could already be at work examining the issue. But what prevented his motion from being adopted after that debate? Once again, the Reform Party, and, this morning, it is they who are trying to preach to us about public ethics.

What did the red book say on this issue? I quote: "To enshrine these principles and commitments, we will develop a Code of Conduct for Public Officials to guide Cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, senators, political staff, and public servants in their dealings with lobbyists. We will also take measures to better regulate the activities of lobbyists, particularly in the awarding of government contracts". Once again, to the detriment of the Reformers, we kept our promise.

These days, the Reformers are raising a ruckus regarding two bills: the bill on gun control and Bill C-41, regarding sentencing, especially for hate crimes.

Since the Reformers demand that we meet our red book commitments, why are they against these two bills? This is what their logic boils down to: They accuse us of not meeting our commitments, yet, when we draft bills in order to meet them, they oppose them. Furthermore, they use all of the parliamentary antics in the book to obstruct their passage. These are red book promises.

(1055)

On page 84 of the red book, it says: "To strengthen gun control, a Liberal government will, among other measures, counter the illegal importation of banned and restricted firearms into Canada and prohibit anyone convicted of an indictable drug-related offence, a stalking offence, or any violent offence from owning or possessing a gun". Once again, we, ourselves, have respected our commitments.

What about what is said in the red book, and I quote: "Every person has a right to personal security, and a Liberal government will move to protect that right. Particular attention must be paid to those who today, by virtue of gender, race, religion, age, or sexual orientation, are more likely to be targets of violent crime". Yet again, they are opposed.

Of course, I could go on for hours listing all the commitments we have already fulfilled after only 18 months in

government, but I think we have hit at the heart of the matter right now. Why have Canadians regained confidence in themselves, in the country and in their government? It is very simple. We got down to work, we honoured our commitments and we showed Canadians how things were, without trying to hide the truth for short term political gains.

Unlike the Reform Party, we believe in democratic institutions and in the devotion of members elected to serve their constituents and their country. Although we feel that our institutions must change and improve at some point, we have faith in our democratic institutions, unlike the Reform Party, which never stops denigrating and mocking the work of members.

Furthermore, when the members of the Reform Party arrived in Ottawa, they thought all they had to do was sweet talk Canadians, who would simply allow themselves to be lulled to sleep. Who can forget the dramatic moment staged by the leader of the Reform Party, with great pomp, when he called a news conference in front of the doors of Parliament and handed the car keys to the driver telling him to return them to wherever he got them, as he himself had no need for them. The cynicism, does not stop here, however, because, following this public demonstration of disdain, we discover that the leader of the Reform Party has a car and a driver paid for by the Reform Party through a funding campaign, which, with tax reductions, is still paid for by taxpayers' money, once again by the back door.

I will never forget that the word, during the election campaign, was that practices here had to be changed. The hon. members were going to come and show us how to do things. They were coming here to establish order. Yet, the first thing the leader of the Reform Party did when they got here was complain about the size of his office, he wanted an office bigger than the one allotted to the leader of a third party. He felt that members got a lot for nothing. Suddenly they discovered that the sandwiches in the parliamentary cafeteria cost more than in their ridings. That was the bottom line. Those who want to lecture us today have got it all backwards—it is total hypocrisy.

I could go on, but I see, Mr. Speaker, that my time is running out. In closing, what can I say about the motion by the hon. member of the Reform Party for Kindersley—Lloydminster today?

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, the minister's time is up. The hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm, on questions or comments.

I beg your pardon. I must now give the floor to a member of the Reform Party.

[*English*]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there were several errors in the member's speech. In fact most of it was a total inaccuracy.

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I will very quickly respond to the fact that the leader of the Reform Party refused the car and the chauffeur and still refuses them. His party allowance is not paid by taxpayers. It is the same allowance he received prior to the election. Nothing has changed. It was much more responsible than the fat allowances the Prime Minister receives from his party outside of caucus funds.

(1100)

The member has been around here a long time and should be more responsible than to make such foolish, ridiculous statements in the House. Some of the comments he made with regard to our leader are degrading to this House.

The hon. member commented on the dilatory motions made yesterday. Yesterday we were debating our own compensation package in the way of MPs pensions. On many occasions there were only two Liberals sitting in the Chamber while Reformers were debating the issue on legislation the Liberals had put forward. I believe it is beneath the dignity of members of Parliament to come to this House to debate and challenge the government on its own legislation and the Liberals do not even have their people here to respond to the debate. They do not care. I think they were embarrassed about the legislation. They were not here to defend it.

We thought it was beneath the dignity of this House to speak to an empty Chamber. We called quorum to try get the members from the government side to come in and hear what we were saying. They continually refused. Eventually we asked that the debate be adjourned on the government orders of the day because they simply were not interested in defending their blatant fat MP pension plan.

I wonder if the minister would deal directly with the facts on this issue rather than these meaningless platitudes that have no relation to what is actually happening in the House.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, it shows that the truth hurts when it is brought forth.

Let me address the question about yesterday. I am surprised. The member is the Reform House leader. He should know exactly where the members are when they are not in the Chamber. There are a number of committees.

Mr. Hermanson: They were hiding back there.

Mr. Gagliano: He is heckling. That is the new decorum. That is what they came here for. They came here for the decorum. Again, the member impugns that I am not telling the truth. That is the new decorum they have brought to the House.

Members who are not in the House are in committee and doing other work. The House leader for Reform should say that when that motion was moved to adjourn the debate yesterday Reform

had no more speakers. It was just half an hour before the time allocated for government orders of the day would have ended.

Instead of allowing the normal process for passage of legislation, Reform moved a dilatory motion which took a 30-minute bell. When the vote was finished we moved to other business. It was not to pass the bill. It was to send the bill to committee. They did not want witnesses to come before the committee and express their views. That is how they see parliamentary democracy.

There is something that I did not have time to say in my speech and this gives me the opportunity. It concerns time allocation. Reformers forget that the last time the government moved time allocation it was during the labour strike and it was supported by the Reform Party. They cannot have it both ways. They want to have their cake and eat it too.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the issue that was raised is a very serious one, but I will expand on it later on. However, the Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs mentioned a number of things the government is supposed to have done.

I think you really have to be as bold as brass to make certain statements. I will not consider each and everyone because I would not have enough time, but I must say I was struck by a reference to the so-called new procedure for expanding the role played by members in this House and in committee, and my comments will be based on my own experience.

You referred to Bill C-43, to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act. I was a diligent representative of the Bloc on this committee, so I think I can speak from experience.

It is all very well to introduce new procedures in the House, give the impression that the government is more open and refer the bill, after first reading, to committee so that it can be amended on the basis of information obtained by members in committee, but in practice it does not work out that way. In practice, the minister responsible for this question or the bill comes and tell the committee what to do. In this committee on Bill C-43, the opposition presented 20 amendments to provide more transparency. All 20 were rejected. So what is the difference? The difference is that the minister told us what to do before the hearings began.

(1105)

Is that the new procedure? Is that what the Liberals are bragging about? I think it takes a lot of nerve to come and say that this morning, and what is worse, say it with a straight face.

I think that if the hon. member bothered to look at what is really happening he would realize that basically nothing has changed. And that is why people are so upset. He said

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something very significant to the Reform Party. He said that you cannot change people's impressions with window dressing. And as member of the Bloc Québécois, I am certainly not the one to tell the hon. member for Saint-Léonard and Secretary of State how to do this. They are past masters at the art of giving the impression they are doing something.

That was only about this particular question, but I could repeat all the examples he gave and prove that he was not talking about the real situation. I wish that in other cases he would reconcile what was done with what they promised in the red book, which said that as part of parliamentary reform, they would expand the role of members in developing legislation, through—

Yes, that is what they did, that is what they gave the impression of doing, but basically, nothing has changed. The minister controls government members in committee, although the membership keeps changing, but in any case, this is an insult to the public's intelligence. I would appreciate the hon. member's comments.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I will let this pass because I realize that in the past few weeks the Bloc and its head office in Quebec City have changed course so abruptly that people say they are suffering from whiplash, but enough.

My comments will only concern Bill C-43, and I want to thank the hon. member for bringing it up. Obviously, he could not present 20 amendments and expect the government to accept every single opposition amendment. If the hon. member would listen, he would get an answer to his question. We approved two opposition amendments in this bill, the first time this ever happened in the 11 years I have been here. And he tells me it is just window dressing, Mr. Speaker.

As for the rest of what it says in the red book, if he listened carefully to my speech, I explained exactly how we improved and changed the members' role and gave it particular significance since the 1983 election. And I think that as for changing one's position and being able to say something with a straight face, we have a lot to learn from the Bloc because they do it every day.

[*English*]

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Considering the Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs is the only member of the cabinet here, could we extend the time for questions and comments for another five minutes?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. House leader will know that he is not to make comments about the presence or absence of members. All members are bound by that rule.

Is there unanimous consent to permit this period of questions and comments to continue for five minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The whip should know that whenever it is possible, the Chair will recognize members from other parties in questions or comments.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment simply on this debate. I am very much in agreement with what my colleague for Berthier—Montcalm had to say about the role of members.

(1110)

When we are told that members have been given more responsibilities on committees, we must not lose sight of the fact that committees are led by the majority and are simply advisory. On the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, of which I am a member, we made motions at one point for the very purpose of transparency. We simply proposed that, in the future, the provinces be consulted about appointments to the board. The motion was defeated by government members.

There was talk earlier of free votes. However, recently again, during the debate on gun control at second reading, the two or three Liberals who dared to vote against were expelled from their committee. So, I would like to know what will happen to these members if they vote against their government again, at third reading?

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, as regards the hon. member's first question, his complaint that the committee comprises a majority of government members, he should know, after 18 months, that the committees reflect the make-up of the House. Accordingly, since the government has a majority of seats in the House, it has a majority on the committees.

The member said that committees have an advisory role. On the contrary, committees almost always have amendments to the bills the House sends them. After consideration, these bills return to the House with a number of amendments. I have just answered his colleague on the particular matter of a bill he spoke to me about, and which we even accepted. Not only did we agree to amendments by government members, but we agreed to amendments by opposition members.

Therefore, I think that parliamentary reform is not only on paper, but in the day to day work we do. There are members' bills that have received royal assent and become law. So I think we are clearly making an effort. We have been in government for only 18 months and we have implemented many of our parliamentary reforms. Other reforms are required and a committee of the House is looking into procedure and House affairs.

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All of the parties are represented on it, and if the hon. member has some suggestions to make, let him make them instead of simply criticizing.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I we are supposed to be debating the government's promise to be more open, to have more open government, and to allow MPs to be more accountable to their constituents. Is it not sad that we have to use the word allow?

What we have from the hon. minister are simply diversionary tactics. We have a real attempt to divert attention from the real issue which Canadians are concerned about. The biggest diversionary tactic is to attack the messenger, to say things about the Reform Party which dared to bring the subject up. They are the most pejorative and outright fabrications to distort our position on a number of issues and suggest that we have no reason to even bring up the issue in the House.

I appeal to the minister to at least stick to the facts when he is talking about these kinds of issues. Some of the things which he said about our party and about our positions are just not true. Canadians are going to find out one of these days that this is a tactic of this government and it will lose its credibility altogether.

We heard from the minister a highly edited version of the Liberal record. We disagreed with a lot of the promises which the Liberals made. If we agreed with them we would not be here, we would all be on the other side. During the election these people took certain positions and promised to do certain things. They have totally reversed themselves. They are totally untrustworthy in a whole number of areas.

(1115)

I want to ask the member about the document he authored and signed reviving parliamentary democracy. This document was so good, it would put in so many measures that would have been to the benefit of Canadians, to the democratic system that we are trying to operate under.

The member holds a senior position in the government. He is one of the decision makers. He said that in order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship when the speakers are from the government party, two of the junior chair officers should be from the opposition so that the four presiding officer positions are shared equally by government and opposition. I would like to ask the minister to explain why he has not implemented his own recommendation in that regard.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised with the member's statement.

Reform Party members come to the House and accuse the government of not keeping its promises, of turning face and everything.

When we try to respond and if they do not like the response, it is a question of debate. Naturally as members of the Reform or any other members in the House, they can point to the government for what they do not like. We also we have a right as government members to point out what they said during the election.

In case there are any specific things that I said that are not true, that the Reform Party did not do, whatever I said is on the public record. Those she can point out to me in specific terms.

Concerning the document that I co-authored with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and two other members, if she had listened to my speech, she would have heard me say that most of the reforms we made came from that document.

In only 18 months, 90 per cent of the commitments in that document have been kept. A term of government is four or five years. Maybe the member should place some hope in this institution. Maybe she could wait and in due time see the other 10 per cent of that document.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am certain that my colleagues opposite are very happy to see me rise to speak on this motion. But, to understand the turn of events today, I think that we have to clearly define what we mean by all this, so I am going to refer to the motion of the third party in this House.

The motion is the following:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to keep its Red Book promise to make the government more open and permitting Members of Parliament to be more accountable to their constituents.

So, there are two parts to this motion. The second is to permit Members of Parliament to be more accountable to their constituents. I will now say a few words on the subject.

Accountability depends on each Member of Parliament. We have enough means these days to write to our constituents, to let them know the government's positions and to transmit information. We all have the necessary tools. I think that, as the representatives of a riding, we could do a better job of informing our electorate of the work we are doing.

I can say, for my part anyway, that I write to my constituents regularly to keep them up to date on the decisions made by the Bloc Quebecois or to comment on, among other things, decisions made by the government. We already have the means to do this. There is no need, regarding this point, to heap more blame on the government.

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However, regarding the first point, which condemns the government for not having kept its famous red book promise to make the administration more transparent, we would like to say the following: The Liberals are crafty. They saw, during their nine years in opposition, that integrity struck a chord with the public. Therefore, they brought certain campaign promises contained in the red book to the public's attention. Fortunately they are written down, because words fade away but written statements endure—we can still read them today.

(1120)

Indeed, the famous red book did contain a nice, little chapter, entitled "Governing with Integrity". I would like to say that I am fortunate to be speaking after the secretary of state. I can see what he thinks was done to restore integrity in government, because, otherwise, I would not have known what to say on that topic in my speech. What the government just said is incomplete, almost exaggerated. They did not tell the whole truth.

As I was saying, they greatly stressed integrity during the election campaign. I think that they put their finger on the problem, they saw that people want their parliamentarians to be more accountable, that they want Parliament to be more transparent, so that they can know what is going on here.

After 19 months—because they have already been in office that long—I would like to summarize their administration's actions. And you will see that there is a clear difference between what they think they have achieved and what we think they have achieved. It is funny how outlooks change, depending on whether one is seated to the left or the right of the Chair. That is the truth, sad, but true.

The secretary of state for parliamentary affairs stressed one point because, it would seem that it is a revelation of the government, the discovery of the century: the famous ethics counsellor. That is just peachy. How much more open can you get? An ethics counsellor appointed by the Prime Minister, an ethics counsellor who will investigate matters involving ministers behind closed doors, which directly contradicts what the red book said about ensuring openness. An ethics counsellor who will only comment on the conclusions of his investigation. This is openness? This is how this government plans to restore confidence and ensure openness? What a crock!

They also wanted people to think more highly of the role of MPs. As I commented on this earlier, I will not spend any more time on this but the fact remains that it is an utter failure. Nothing has changed. The minister is still the boss, telling Liberal committee chairs what to do. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

They also say that there will eventually be a code of conduct for MPs, ministers, senior officials, etc. If one can tell the future by looking at the past, we can expect more of the same. We will

continue to hear nice promises, wishful thinking and rose-coloured rhetoric. In the end, the objective of openness will not be achieved.

Another even more subtle approach of this government is to table bills in which the powers are increasingly centralized at the minister's level. More and more, the minister must be the absolute master in his department. More and more—but quietly so that the public is kept in the dark—, they are changing the rules of the game through complicated laws and regulations, but it is the minister who will have the final say. It is the minister who will make the appointments and allocate the funds. What openness! In my opinion, this opens the door to patronage, to political appointments.

Speaking of political appointments, what has this Liberal government done in the last 18 months to change the situation that existed under the Tories? Absolutely nothing.

I remember that, in 1984, the Tories defeated the Liberals because of a rash of appointments. During the famous leaders' debate, John Turner looked rather foolish indeed. Yet, the Tories did exactly the same thing for nine years. Today, after the 1993 election, what are the Liberals doing? Exactly the same thing as the Tories did and the Liberals had done before them. The more things change, the more they stay the same. "Partisan appointments, partisan appointments, partisan appointments" has replaced "jobs, jobs, jobs". This contradicts the red book but do the Liberals care?

(1125)

As we have seen, the news is full of similar situations in which members of the Liberal "family" have received preferential treatment. That is Liberal openness for you. Let me give you a few examples of political appointments. I am not saying that none of these people is qualified, but when we see that everyone appointed by this openness-seeking government is a Liberal, we may well ask ourselves if only Liberals are considered as qualified. Perhaps according to the hon. members across the way, but I do not think so.

Here are a few examples: Jean-Robert Gauthier, a former Liberal MP, was appointed to the Senate; John Bryden was also appointed to the Senate, and what did this gentleman use to do? He was one of Mr. Chrétien's campaign organizers in the leadership race, another good Liberal. Robert Nixon, Liberal Party president also on the Chrétien campaign team. He was appointed to a department. Here is another one: Michel Robert, past president of the Liberal Party of Canada. We know he was acting president of the SIRC, dealing with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. As we all know, as a sideline he was involved in negotiations with aboriginal people. He has apparently billed the government approximately \$300,000 for his services so far and, today, we learn that he was appointed appellate judge. He is no doubt qualified, but

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he has one quality in common with the others: he is a Liberal. Another well-known Liberal according to the press, Pierre Dalphond, was also appointed judge.

There is a whole list of individuals who ran in the 1993 campaign who were appointed to various positions. Is that the way to ensure transparency? Is that it, when, every time we dig somewhere, we find party ties? When a government claims to seek openness and to enhance politicians' credibility, should its ultimate goal be to appoint "chums"?

Just in case we do not get reelected, we better treat our friends now, while we are riding the gravy train. Is that the way to restore the confidence of Canadian and Quebec taxpayers? I think not. We are aware of very recent cases. Liberals, Conservatives, it is all the same damn thing. Oops, my apologies, that word is unparliamentary. It is all one and the same. The Liberals are doing the exact same thing as the Conservatives did.

Take the Pearson deal. I can understand that the Liberals who are listening would be embarrassed. In the Pearson deal, as we found out, there were as many Liberal lobbyists as Conservative lobbyists. No wonder that the Liberals do not want to raise too much dust around this issue. Then there was the Dupuy matter. It had several stages, but I will focus on the first two. The first one was the minister's interference in CRTC business, and the second, his little trip on the sly to Los Angeles. Upon looking into it more closely, one realizes that this may be a family thing, that the Prime Minister's son-in-law may be involved, that subsidiaries were involved, and so on.

In the Power Direct TV deal, direct ties can be made to the Liberal clique. One could even say the Liberal "famiglia" in this case, where an order was made specifically to benefit a company run by the Prime Minister's son-in-law. It takes some doing. Billions of dollars are involved. Is that what this government means by openness?

Here is another example: the bovine somatotropin issue. The Minister of Health is implicated in this and she never knows what is going on in her own department. Mr. Ritter, an official of this department took a leave of absence to lobby his colleagues and have the BST approved.

This does not strike the minister as odd. She sees nothing wrong with this. This must be what Liberals call openness. She must be right, so there is no problem. No problem.

(1130)

We can never get the facts about the tainted blood scandal. We have been asking questions for months regarding this issue. Canadians and Quebecers are dying because blood supplies were not properly handled. These are very important issues. We ask questions, but we do not get answers. We are told: "Do not worry; a commissioner will make a decision and then we will take action". In the meantime, people are dying. Is this what we call transparency, Mr. Speaker? Is that what this government had to offer to Canadians and Quebecers? I do not think so.

Earlier, the secretary of state alluded to the CN strike. We spent a whole weekend saying that the minister was using strong-arm tactics on workers to eventually be able to privatize CN. We were told: "No, no. You are wrong. The government is not trying to break the union". Fine. But then, what do we learn a few weeks later? We learn that the government wants to privatize CN. We learn that it wants to sell part of Canada's heritage, because CN is truly a part of our heritage. Yet, we were told that we were mistaken. This is probably what the government calls transparency.

I will give one last example, but there are many more. The Charles R. Bronfman Foundation. We just learned, thanks to the Access to Information Act, that this great foundation, which extols the virtues of Canada by promoting Canadian heritage in its "heritage minutes" on TV, and which received a \$200,000 government subsidy for the year 1992-93, will get \$2 million this year. If you look a little more closely, you discover that one party involved is a person by the name of Tom Axworthy. That person must be a good lobbyist to get a tenfold, or 1,000 per cent, increase in the government subsidy. This is either a good lobbyist, or else the brother of the Minister of Human Resources Development. We checked and discovered that it is the latter.

When people look at all this, they realize that things have not changed. This is why we want transparency. We want to improve the credibility of MPs and their work. All the parties should set aside their political differences and work together to come up with a good bill. This is what the Bloc tried to do on several occasions. However, the amendments we proposed were always rejected by the government. Are we always in the wrong? I think not. We too hear from our constituents. Then, why is that happening? Simply because this government is no better than the previous one. It is only somewhat more discreet. It uses a thicker smoke screen than the Conservatives did. However, if you dig a little, you see exactly the same things.

I will close by saying that I think the Liberal Party should take a hard look at the transparency of its administration. It should really reread its elections promises and its famous red book and look at what it has actually done. I think it will draw useful conclusions that will enable it to take better aim, because it needs to take better aim.

In conclusion, therefore, if I had to decide or vote on this motion, I would be for the first part and against the second.

Finally, with a message for government perhaps as well—I almost forgot this point—I wanted to say that we in the Bloc Quebecois, the official opposition, wanted to introduce a bill here to increase transparency with regard to the funding of political parties, and it would have been given the same unanimous support across Canada it is now being given in Quebec. I think Parliament must acquire such a tool to provide for transparency in its administration. You know, each year, when we look at the list of individuals contributing to one or other political party, we realize that there are

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individuals and companies—at the federal level, companies may make contributions—making contributions of \$15,000 or \$25,000. Immediately, the question comes to mind: “What do they want in return?”

(1135)

I think that, if we had legislation governing party funding, a law on the public funding of parties, we would avoid governments having their hands and feet tied once they are elected. We would thus limit contributions, as in Quebec, to \$5,000 and we would limit contributions only to voters, constituents. We would avoid having companies taking power and control, as is the case currently with the Liberal Party, whose head office is Power Corporation. We just have to look at the legislation being passed here to see that everything is done in terms of this company. This would really prevent the kind of business currently going on.

This is what we introduced. The government often tells us that the opposition is always criticizing, but never comes up with anything. We presented a bill from the Bloc Québécois, from the member for Richelieu. What did the Liberals do? They voted against it—go figure—even though it was directly related to a very large part of the red book on the subject of integrity. We were giving them the opportunity to achieve something they were not achieving, something they were sidestepping. But, no, they voted against it.

All this is to say that nothing has changed since the Conservatives left. The same thing is going on. I think the secretary of state is deceiving us when he says that voters' confidence has increased. Quite sincerely, I think that the Liberal Party and each of its members here in this House have broken a large number of their election promises. Quite sincerely, I think that these Liberals have betrayed the confidence of this House in this regard and I find it most regrettable.

[English]

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with strong interest to the debate of the official opposition and the third party. A number of good points were brought forward by them. A lot of them were idealistic in nature.

I will deal first with the last speaker. Certainly the party that wins on a platform and presents to the public a platform which is general in nature sets a direction. Like everything else in the world directions are not always achieved. Some are beyond the capability of government. Some reassess and set other priorities in their place. The world is always changing; that is the only constant we know.

It is disappointing when some things are not done which we want to see done. Governments of all types are not perfect. At the same time there is an intrinsic nature on the part of the government to try to do the best it can for the country. It is difficult. I have wrestled with it myself as a member. When do we represent our constituents and when do we really know that we are representing our constituents?

I held six town hall meetings every six months in my riding. I get turnouts of 70 to 500 people. However I do not get a consistent message at each one of the meetings. I believe the only time we would ever get some reality is if we had a little buzzer in every home to vote for or against. Then we would truly know how the constituents felt.

We can understand at some stage the reality of the situation. We can understand at some stage the reality that there are large lobby groups and there are small lobby groups. This is the reality we face. Those of us who are new come in with a tabula rasa. We feel we can make great changes. It is like trying to turn the *Queen Mary* with a 10-horsepower motor boat. It is very difficult to change the inertia because the country is so complex and the machinery of government is so massive.

(1140)

We try to bring back what we hear through our caucuses. The reality is we are not always hearing the same thing in every riding across Canada. It disturbs me to hear the senior member of the Bloc Québécois lecture the government on appointments. We have just seen perhaps the most wholesale changing, kicking out, firing and replacement of people in the history of government in Quebec when the Parti Québécois took over.

We can speak with credibility if we have an example, but if we do not have an example we have to apologize in some cases for errors made in government. There will be many errors in years to come, but we cannot stop trying to make it better. We cannot stop trying to pick up on the good ideas presented in the House and putting them into action.

I believe sincerely that we should try our best. Adjustments are always made to a platform. There has never been a government elected that could live by every nail in its platform. Sometimes some of the planks have to be taken out of the platform and be reprioritized.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, first off, I would like to say to my colleague that we are members of the Bloc Québécois, not the Parti Québécois as he incorrectly said. There is a difference. Second, just because other parties make mistakes does not mean that the government should repeat

them. I think that goes without saying. We must improve the situation, and sometimes that requires drawing up a balance sheet.

I do not want to compare one government to another. I am a member of the Bloc Québécois, a federal party, and my role is to criticize what the federal government, the Liberal government does. I can understand, however, certain points made by the Liberal member. It is true that promises can be made in the heat of an election campaign which a government will realize, once it gets into office, that it cannot fulfil because certain things have changed in the meanwhile.

Therefore, why not simply say, in all honesty: "We are sorry, we cannot attain the goal we set regarding parliamentary reform, for x number of reasons"? And not do what the Liberals are currently doing: Clinging desperately to the goal they set in the red book, inventing a story to give people the impression that they have done something. This lacks integrity and perpetuates the lack of transparency in this House.

As I was saying earlier, the Liberals reign supreme in the art of making it look like they are doing something, while, in reality, they are doing absolutely nothing. I have said it once and will say it again, there is room for improvement in the area of transparency and also in the area of listening to the opposition, because we are right on several issues.

[English]

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to delete Standing Order 78 from the Standing Orders.

The Deputy Speaker: I am only hesitating because I am not sure we can do that. I am told we can do anything by unanimous consent but let me consult.

The member is correct that by unanimous consent the House can do anything. The House can delete a standing order. Is there unanimous consent to delete the standing order mentioned by the hon. member for Red Deer?

An hon. member: No.

(1145)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the point has been made regarding this issue. We are hearing today the involvement in the House, the frustration of being in this place and trying to present an honest point of view from constituents; the total frustration I am sure the backbench on the government side and the opposition side have with representing what people stand for and what they tell us when no one is listening. That is what the electorate feels as well.

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[Translation]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, virtue is undeniably a great thing. I agree with my hon. colleague to some extent. I agree that the government should listen more carefully to the representations made by members of this House on major issues, such as the ones the secretary of state listed as part of the so-called positive record of the government for the first 18 or 19 months of its mandate.

We agreed in principle with certain bills introduced by the Liberals. It is just that we wanted to improve them. It is most unfortunate that the government did not listen more closely to the representations and remarks made by the hon. member.

[English]

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a former member of the House of Commons, Dr. Lorne Greenaway, had great respect in his constituency of Cariboo—Chilcotin. He ran into some difficulties with his party and out of conscience resigned his seat.

Subsequently he was appointed to the B.C. treaty commission. With his understanding of aboriginal issues and his concern for just settlements for all, he performed outstanding service in that capacity as one of the original commissioners of the B.C. treaty commission.

I am sorry to say Dr. Greenaway was fired. This is the darker side of patronage appointments. Dr. Greenaway was fired so there would be room for someone else. I make no comment about the person who took his place. However, a valuable member who had great respect in the community has been set aside so patronage appointments can be made in his place.

I regret this has happened. This is an indication to me and to many of my constituents and the people of British Columbia of the tone of government the Liberals are setting. We are deeply dismayed by this.

I ask the hon. member if he can recall incidents such as this, the darker side of patronage, from his experience in Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, I think that this was more a comment than a question. The hon. member stated facts of which I had no knowledge. I am therefore unable to reply to his comment.

[English]

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak on our Reform motion.

Today we are speaking about the failure of the government to keep its red book promises. When we were elected in October 1993 the much touted red book was supposed to be a

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new tone for the people of the country, a new tone for the people in Parliament to work with. It was supposed to be a tone full of honesty that would engender public trust, that would bring more effectiveness to the House. What we have seen is a book not of hope, not of promises kept, but a book of promises that have been broken.

That is an insult to the House. It is an insult to democratic principles. Most of all it is an insult to the people of the country.

I will give some examples and then move on to constructive solutions. When I and many of my colleagues in the House were elected a year and a half ago there was great hope. With 205 new members there was great hope there would be a different mindset of doing things in the House. As individuals we would be more effective in representing the wishes of our constituents and bringing our expertise to the House, more effective in presenting our ideas and more effective in bringing members of the public who have expertise to the House to present the most constructive solutions for Canada.

(1150)

Unfortunately we have fallen back into the same quagmire of business as usual—what a shame.

In the House there is great hope and potential. Many members of the House possess great skills, particularly the backbenchers. In the backbenches of the Liberal caucus there are great skills which are not being tapped deliberately because of business as usual.

When we came to the House the Prime Minister said he would give greater power to the members of the House to better represent the people of the country. Again, we see business as usual.

Instead of committees acting independently and having more power, in many cases they are merely an arm of the government, an arm of the insidious movement of order in council.

We in the House know but the people may not recognize the power structures in the country are extremely pyramidal, with power centred in the hands of perhaps a dozen individuals in the House while the rest, by and large, are under the control of the government.

We in opposition try to act in a different way to bring forth constructive solutions. However, time and again we are merely shut down, not on the basis of merit, but on the basis of politics. This does a great deal of disservice to members of the House.

I will raise one specific example which is close to my heart and one which I feel is a great shame. It is the example of the health committee, which deals with one of the most important aspects in the country, the health and welfare of Canadians. There are good people from all parties on the committee. Unfortunately the committee is merely a functioning arm under the policies of the government, rather than dealing with the big problems that affect the health of Canadians or being able to

have the power to function and manoeuvre to address the problems in a construction fashion.

All one needs to do is look at the nature of what the committee is studying to find out it is not addressing the big problems. That not only applies to the health committee but to other committees also.

I implore the government to give members of the committee the power to use their expertise, to mine the talents in the country and use them to bring forth the most constructive solutions and address the biggest problems of the country today. Unfortunately that is not happening because we are dealing with politics and not with problems.

Another example is order in council decisions by very few. People are advanced to positions not on the basis of merit but on the basis of who they know in many cases; not in all cases, but in many cases. This does a great disservice to the people of the country who could do great things.

I go back to one aspect of the function of the government. When there is a problem in the House, what do we do? We do not deal with the problem. We deal with what I call studyitis, a disease pervasive not only in Parliament but also in other parliaments and governments of the world. It is an infectious disease that has infected most members of Parliament. That is very sad.

When there is a big problem affecting us, do we bring forth the most relevant studies and the most relevant and effective solutions to the problem to show a real life example? No, of course not. We study it. Why do we study it? It creates the illusion we as elected members of Parliament are working on it. We give the illusion we are actually trying to address a problem. In effect, we are telling the Canadian people we are trying to offset the problem and decision making processes.

As a qualifier, I am not saying we do not have to study things. Please, when things have been studied eight, nine and ten times, and when we literally have rooms full of studies on the same subject, why are we studying it again?

(1155)

This was most graphically illustrated in the health committee when an individual from the Inuit Tapirisat society came before us when we were deciding whether to study aboriginal health. She was a very eloquent lady who was representing Inuit people. She came before us with a handful of documents, put them on the table and said: "If you want to study aboriginal health and you want to come and see us, don't bother. Go home. This is but a small example of studies that have been done on us. We don't want studies. We want action".

That brought to mind something we do over and over again not only in health care but in so many other committees. What a waste of the taxpayers' money and what a disservice to the health problems that affect Canadians and that Canadians want action on, not two years from now, but now. The

solutions are out there. Let us enact them, work toward them and see how they work. If they do not work properly we should modify them to ensure they do work properly.

Trying to represent our constituents' wishes is something we were supposed to do as a democratic society and something the Prime Minister said he would enable us to do to a greater extent.

On Bill C-68 three courageous individuals from the government stood by what their constituents said. Their constituents overwhelmingly told them to oppose the bill, which we as party oppose for very good reasons. Those individuals stood up and opposed it on second reading and within 24 hours were removed from their committees. Why? It was a penalty for not kowtowing to what the party wanted to do. Is that democracy? Is that representing our constituents? I think not.

Another aspect that affects my riding in particular is the west coast fisheries disaster. The government was supposed to do something for fisheries all over the country, from the east coast to the west coast. Unfortunately the west coast fishery is being ignored.

As a precautionary measure I take this opportunity to tell the minister of fisheries that the poachers who poached last year, the poachers who almost caused the collapse of the west coast fishery, we came within 12 hours of collapse, are already to go ahead and do the same thing again. I know from the people in the trenches the west coast fishery poachers are getting prepared now to trash our west coast fishery. Please pay heed to that and deal with it now. The DFO office in Sooke, which represents a huge area, is being closed. The hatchery that releases 750,000 fry and is staffed with one person and numerous volunteers is also being closed.

DFO officers with west coast expertise in undercover operations are being moved to the middle of British Columbia. Why? I warn the government to pay heed to this because this is not very professional.

Another aspect is the ethics counsellor. This is an excellent idea but we cannot have an ethics counsellor appointed by the Prime Minister, answerable to an MP from the government and again answerable to the Prime Minister. The ethics counsellor must have the ability to operate independently, answer to an independent group and also have independent powers to enact what their mandate is supposed to be.

Closure is another aspect which defies democracy. We should not have that in the House whatsoever.

We cannot continue what we are doing in Parliament. We must ensure Canadians have confidence in Parliament. We must allow members of Parliament to do what they were meant to, to represent their constituents' wishes in an effective fashion. I ask

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the Prime Minister to allow us to do this. He must stop the top down control and bring the expertise of his party to bear down on the huge problems that affect society and the Canadian people so we can have effective, fiscally sustainable, sound and responsible policies for the people of the country which they so dearly need.

(1200)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, opposition days such as this give us an opportunity to list some of the promises that have been broken from the now dead book.

The foundation of this book was set up because Canadians demanded a change. They demanded that the status quo must change. Therefore the principles of parliamentary reform, open government and accountability of MPs were something that all of us knew about prior to the election.

As a platform for a political party, all of these principles seemed extremely noble and certainly worthy of public support. As a result, a great many Canadians voted for the Liberals in the last election. As much as anything, it was a revolt against the PC party. Canadians thought they were to get a fresh new government built on the principles stated in this dead book.

A year and a half later, they are discovering that the many fine words are not being carried out. Instead they hear old line rhetoric, controlled by spin doctors and pumped out to react to everything.

How does the House work? A lot of people ask that as we tour around our constituencies. Unfortunately I have to tell them it does not work very democratically. Decisions are made primarily by cabinet and that cabinet has a whole set of criteria that it uses. For the most part cabinet members do not listen to the people.

I am often asked what backbenchers do. I tell them that backbenchers are kept in line by the party whip. They are also kept in line by travel, by perks, by keeping busy on committees, by doing reports which no one looks at.

What about the opposition? What does the opposition do? The opposition speaks in the House. Its members try to put forward the concerns of Canadians. However a lot of frustration is associated with that because no one is here to listen. The government is not concerned. Therefore I question the very democracy of this place.

Canadians demand a change. They demand free votes. They demand that members be here and listen, respond and carry their wishes to the government. They are sick and tired of spin doctors, of party hacks that control everything that happens in this place.

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The Liberal red book has been exposed for what it really is. The hypocrisy of its broken promises are becoming clearer and clearer to all Canadians. As just one example, whatever happened to the GST?

Nothing happened to the GST, a clear broken promise from the red book. Even worse, the Deputy Prime Minister put her own good word on the line and said that she would resign if the GST was not gone by 1995. It never happened. Why did it not happen? Because the Deputy Prime Minister was unwilling to live up to her word and her stated principles, a perfect example of the Liberal dead book.

Let us move on to some other broken promises. How about the one that a Liberal government would not be like the Mulroney Tories? We know what Canadians thought of the PCs. Canadians were promised that invoking closure on bills and enforcing strict discipline on their MPs were the characteristics of the hated Mulroney regime but now the truth is clear.

The Liberal Party is not really opposed to these tactics. Its members were only playing the game. They have embraced these tactics and use them with random abuse, with no consideration at all for the Canadian public.

(1205)

Even though a large number of its backbenchers could not agree with Bill C-68, the Liberal Party used closure to force it through second reading. It mercilessly imposed party discipline on those members of the Liberal caucus who dared to vote the will of their constituents. They listened to their constituents and were handled just the way the PCs would have handled it. The truth is out. The promises in the red book can be looked on as a fraud. I will present to the House even more evidence of that.

I had a private member's motion on which I worked very hard. It was to allow Parliament to be scrutinized by the Access to Information Act. When I first began my efforts I was convinced that I could get all party support for it. After all, greater open government was the official policy of all parties. The red book boldly stated that a Liberal government would take a series of initiatives to restore confidence in the institutions of government. Open government would be the watchword of the Liberal program.

My Motion No. 304 was the perfect opportunity for Liberals to put their money where their mouths were. If they did not vote for the motion to extend the Access to Information Act to Parliament then all Canadians would know that the Liberal commitment to open and transparent government was a sham.

To allay any concerns which Liberal members might have, I sent each and every one of them a notice that addressed the specific objections they raised during the hours of debate. The

information commissioner, Mr. John Grace, was perfectly willing to reassure any member of Parliament who wondered about the impact of the motion.

In the days leading up to the vote I spoke to many Liberals who indicated they supported my motion. They said it was just what Parliament needed. However, on the day of the vote not one single solitary Liberal, clinging by his or her fingernails to the shattered promises of the red book, voted in favour of open government. The order had come down from on high: "You can talk about open government all you want, but you will never vote for it. You will be in big trouble if you do". It was a sad betrayal of the Canadian people. Everyone should remember that it happened. They will at the next election.

What happened the day the Liberal majority voted down M-304 prevented more open government. It is an example of how this place does not work and how it is not democratic. What speaks volumes is the voting record of that day. The motion was supported by all Reform members and by all BQ members. The BQ members were being harassed by government members to try to change their minds. The NDP and the Tories voted for it. Even the one Liberal independent member voted for it. However, absolutely no one on the government side voted for open government.

What is happening back home? Back home a lot of communication is going on in all 295 of the ridings across the country. Town hall meetings and all kinds of get togethers are being held. All citizens who are concerned about taxes, gun control and all the other problems are getting together.

The reports are filtering back to those members who are listening. The message is as clear as it was before the last election: "You take our message to Ottawa. Don't bring the message from Ottawa back to us and tell us how good it is for us. Don't tell us that the party tells you is good for us. We will tell you what is good for the party". That is the message but it is not getting across in this place.

I have a perfect example in my constituency. Six thousand people got together one day and said: "Do not dare vote for the GST. Do not dare pass that kind of legislation. We are telling that it is bad. You are telling us that the party says it is good, but we are telling you it is bad". I would take the results of the last election as a pretty good example of that message. The message was loud and clear. The message will be loud and clear again if the government fails to listen to the people.

(1210)

We have other examples such as the Charlottetown accord. Members from all parties in the House said: "We support it". But the people said: "No, it is bad for us".

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Consider gun control. Throughout the whole country people are talking to their members of Parliament about gun control but this place has put a finger down, telling them not to represent their constituents.

What about MP pensions, about which 85 per cent of Canadians say: "Get rid of the gold plated pension". What are the people in the House doing? They are saying: "They really don't know what's good for them. We know what's good for them. We know the compensation package must include this gold plated pension".

The people of Canada will speak. They will make it loud and clear. That is what is wrong with the red book. The red book speaks of all of these things but does not mean any of them. It is a total hoax perpetrated on the people of Canada. The message is clear and getting clearer.

It is obvious Canadians are demanding an openness, a transparency, an accountability for government. They are being ignored. The Liberal members of the House have no excuse. They ran on the promises of the red book and those promises are being systematically broken. The red book is truly a dead book.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are a few comments I would like to make, and I would also like to say, as did the hon. member for the Reform Party, that I too was disappointed in the so-called transparency of the Liberals.

Elected in the riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry, when I came to Ottawa I innocently asked to be a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence. Why? Because when the Liberals were the official opposition, the present Prime Minister said, among other things, that defence conversion was the way of the future and that, once he was in power, he would make every effort to provide additional funding for defence conversion.

I asked to be a member of the defence committee, because the committee was responsible for dealing with this matter and exploring new approaches to defence conversion. In my own riding I have Expro, a company that is still waiting for federal assistance for defence conversion, but none is forthcoming.

The first thing that happened is that one morning, we arrived in the House and the government tabled an emergency motion proposing that the defence committee consist not only of members of the House of Commons but also of senators. This took us by surprise. We discussed it in the House, a vote was taken and subsequently, both elected members and senators were appointed to the committee.

During the first few committee sessions with elected members and senators, I realized that the senators wanted to be on

this committee because they wanted to travel. During the first few days the committee was in session, each senator suggested we go to Oslo because this year the NATO conference would be held in Oslo. Canada being a member of NATO, they felt they should attend this conference in Oslo.

Someone else said we had to go to Brussels. Why Brussels? Because NATO headquarters is in Brussels. Canada being a member of NATO, we had to go and visit NATO headquarters in Brussels. Someone else said we had to go to New York because the UN headquarters is in New York and Canada is a member of the UN. Someone else claimed we had to go to Zagreb in Yugoslavia, because Canada has peacekeepers in Yugoslavia.

I was flabbergasted to see every single senator rise with suggestions for a trip. I wondered what I was doing there with my plans to talk about defence conversion for Expro in Beauharnois—Salaberry.

(1215)

I realized that basically, these people wanted to travel. The budget for all these trips would be more than one million dollars. There was a complaint in committee that this was truly excessive. Finally, they agreed to a budget for \$800,000. They left, these worthy senators, accompanied by physicians, nurses and secretaries to take notes for the marvellous report they would make on these trips, a report that was probably shelved as soon as they got back. Now that is transparency—I think the public should know—that is today's Liberal government.

They tell us they work on these committees but, basically, they go off on some lovely trips at taxpayers expense. I refused to go on any of these trips because I thought it was outrageous. That is part of what today's motion is all about. When we talk about transparency, I think the public ought to know that. I am very much disappointed because of all this.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I have to agree totally with the member's comments. He brought out two key points. The key points are that when these joint committees are set up that is a major problem. We did exactly the same thing in foreign affairs. We put forward a motion to keep people from that other place out. It was supported by the Bloc and of course it was defeated by the Liberals.

We must remember, as the member pointed out, that the biggest carrot in this place to keep the backbenchers of the Liberal Party happy is travel. That is the biggest carrot there is. They would rise up against that dictatorial control if in fact they could not be given something. Often that travel is given as a reward.

I agree totally with the member. He is right on the money. The Canadian people should realize that.

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Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this opposition day motion on ethics in government.

One has to wonder about the timing of this motion. This motion on ethics comes from a party that yesterday spent the whole time of the House with delaying tactics in a most unethical manner. Surely something must be said about that.

How about the political party that ran out of speakers and then proposed the adjournment of the debate in order to cause a half-hour bell in order not to have a vote? Could it be that those ethical people were afraid of not winning that vote at that particular time and they did not want to proceed with the vote? What about the ethics of that?

We are speaking of ethics. Earlier today we had an hon. member state in this House that the government had fired Dr. Lorne Greenaway of Williams Lake, British Columbia, who was sitting on the British Columbia Treaty Commission. I tried to obtain from the hon. member more details about this particular person. When I did not get more details I sent for a copy of the order in council appointments. I found out that Dr. Lorne Greenaway's appointment—a former Conservative MP, and a fine gentleman, by the way—expired on April 13. He was not fired. It expired. I have it on page 131.01 of the order in council book, which I have in my hand.

What about the ethics of members making statements like that, which are diametrically opposed to the facts? Can I put it kindly? What kinds of ethics are those? That is playing fast and loose with things that should be true.

This is on a day on which we are supposed to be debating ethics. Are we going to get an apology later for having made that kind of a statement in the House? Fat chance. Fat chance from those ethical people across the way.

Those are the same ethical people who were elected pretending to the people of Canada that MPs were overpaid and they were going to come here to Ottawa and straighten it out. They were going to eat in the cafeteria because they did not want to eat in the parliamentary restaurant. Then of course it became obvious to most of us that the cafeteria lost more money than the restaurant, which kind of destroyed that argument for the hon. members in question.

(1220)

Then they said that they wanted to get rid of the limousine. They spent government time, taxpayers' dollars, having their limousine prepared. It was all made shiny, brought here in the front, and a driver was hired to do it. They came here, and do you know what they did? They put a little sign in the window pretending they wanted the thing sold. They spent hundreds if not thousands of taxpayers' dollars for a cheap publicity stunt.

Mr. Milliken: Then what did they do?

Mr. Boudria: Then they had someone drive in the back laneway with another limousine, this time subsidized by the taxpayers of Canada by way of electoral contribution to the Reform Party. Shameful behaviour.

What about political reform à la Reform? Let us look at what they had to say about that. During the election campaign they produced a cheap imitation of the Liberal red book. It was a cheap imitation, because we all know how popular the Liberal red book was. I am sure members remember it well.

We of course are delivering on many of the promises in the red book. We will deliver on all of them, of course, during our mandate.

Anyway, let us get to the Reform book of promises now. Here is what they said. It is called "Better Representation in Parliament". This is a reading from the blue book of the Reform Party. At that time, the Reform members said: "Until parliamentary reform is enacted, the Reform Party pledges that having had a full opportunity to express their views and vote freely in caucus, such caucus votes always will be made public".

Mr. Milliken: I remember that promise.

Mr. Boudria: I remember that promise well. I ask the hon. members across, will they table those votes that they have made in caucus? Why have they not made them public?

I think it is a silly idea to start with, but of course I am not the one who promised it. They did. We had much more meaningful promises in the red book.

Anyway, those are their promises. Those are the things they saw as being important. Why are they not delivering on those promises to the people of Canada? What stopped them from tabling the minutes from their caucus meeting? They said that they would do it. It is a pretty corny thing to do, but it does not matter. I mean, they are the ones who said they would do it. Why are they not doing it?

Listen to this as I read on, because it gets better. Pay attention, because we are going to read more. It says: "Reform MPs shall vote with the Reform Party majority in the House unless a member is instructed to abstain or vote otherwise by his or her constituents. The Reform Party of Canada shall provide criteria for proper processes to elicit the will of the constituency". Let us stop at that point.

Let us talk about gun control in all of this. We know that the vast majority of Canadians are in favour of gun control. How many Reform MPs are going to vote in favour of gun control? We think two Reform MPs will vote in favour of gun control. Only one did last time around.

Supply

Let us talk about the province of Ontario. Insight Canada did an extensive poll in the province of Ontario. There is not one constituency in Ontario where people who are against gun control would have a majority, not one. We did an extensive poll, and that is proven.

I ask the hon. members across, what about the Reform Party MP from Ontario? Did he not, according to this test that the Reform members have for themselves, fail the test? Did he fail to deliver on the little blue book of the Reform Party? Is that not somewhat unethical?

Mr. Milliken: What about Alberta?

Mr. Boudria: What about Alberta, as the hon. parliamentary secretary said so eloquently. He is quite right again, as he usually is. Again the Reform members have missed the boat.

An hon. member: What did the justice minister say?

Mr. Boudria: I do not know. It is so unusual here that the Reform Party members are buttressing their own argument by quoting Tories. They are the ones who said that Tories were these bad dudes when they came here to Parliament. Now that they are here, I see a little coalition developing. They are quoting Tories.

(1225)

They are hanging around with those Tories too much. Yes, yes, yes. They are way too close to those Tories. We can see them being way too close to each other. It is rubbing off. We can tell that it is only a question of time before we have the great coalition of Reformers and Tories. We know it. Those are really friends of Brian Mulroney across the way. We can recognize those kinds of people when we see them.

Mr. Milliken: You are right. The similarities are very apparent.

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Your nose is growing.

Mr. Boudria: The member for Kingston and the Islands agrees with me. My colleague has just indicated that the similarities are very apparent.

Let us talk about parliamentary reform. We Liberals have promised parliamentary reform, and we have delivered. Yes, we have delivered to the people of Canada. We suggested greater influence of MPs on committees, and we delivered on that.

Mr. Hermanson: No way.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Boudria: I hear some people disagreeing across the way. Perhaps they were not paying close enough attention to what goes on in committee.

Let us see what we have done here. The government has agreed that bills could be sent to committee before second reading. Well, we have done that in the case of the lobbyists

bill. As a matter of fact, we accepted amendments from the opposition side. They were Reform Party amendments. They are in the bill. When was the last time someone else did that? Did the Tories do this when they were in government? Surely not. Those are Liberal examples of opening up the process, and we have done that. Perhaps the members across disagree with the amendments proposed by their colleagues at the committee. If so, I am almost tempted to ask why they voted for them.

The bill on lobbyists is an excellent example. It was produced in the House, sent to committee, the committee improved upon it, and then at report stage we improved upon it more with the contribution of hon. members across.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that this government is totally open to giving parliamentarians a greater role.

Let us take a closer look at this. A bill was drafted from A to Z by a parliamentary committee during this Parliament and was even passed by this House. I am referring to Bill C-69, and this committee was chaired by a very clever chairman, in the person of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

[*English*]

We promised more free votes and we delivered.

Mr. Hermanson: You have not.

Mr. Abbott: When?

Mr. Boudria: I will give a few examples. For the first time in the history of Parliament, a bill involving government spending and royal recommendation was proposed by a private member, the first time since 1867.

Mr. Abbott: Government business.

Mr. Boudria: The hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur proposed that bill.

What about the bill with regard to parole proposed by the hon. member for York South—Weston? The bill received support of members from all sides of the House. There were Liberal MPs who were for the bill and some Liberal MPs against. Liberal MPs had a truly free vote on that. One cabinet minister voted for the bill and other cabinet ministers voted against. Even though the majority of cabinet voted against the bill, as the whip I voted for it. What is a better example of a free vote than that?

An hon. member: I cannot imagine one.

Mr. Boudria: There is no better example than that. Did the Reform Party have people voting for or against any of those measures? No.

We have had some 170 division bells in this Parliament. Does anyone know how many times we had Reform Party MPs dissenting from one another? Twice. They voted unanimously 168 times. And they are preaching parliamentary reform to us?

*Supply**[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, this is a disgrace. The members opposite should be—I cannot understand why they would even want to stay in this House. They should go and hide after saying the things they said earlier.

(1230)

Another free vote promised by the government is on the euthanasia issue; it has not been held yet. We had debates, we consulted the House on the role of our troops serving abroad in Bosnia. We had parliamentary debates to provide advice and guidance to the government on the cruise missiles issue. We have this kind of debate in this House, totally open debates for all parliamentarians.

[English]

We promised effective prebudget consultation. We delivered on that as well. Never before has this country had that kind of prebudget debate.

The members across the way who voted altogether 168 times out of 170 are preaching parliamentary reform? I say to the members across the way, Reform, reform thyself. They sure need it badly. I think it comes from sitting too close to the Tories. I come back to my original point. That is what is.

[Translation]

We, in our party, made promises to the Canadian people during the last election campaign. Those promises are in the red book. We presented the Canadian people with a comprehensive programme, a manifesto, describing what we intended to do for our country. Having made these promises, we now intend to keep them.

The red book, and I happen to have a copy of it right here, is full of great ideas. Those are the proposals we have put to the people of Canada. The people elected us to deliver and that is what we intend to do.

[English]

Now let me give a couple of examples. Primarily we promised two things in the area of ethics. First was to have a lobbyist bill. Members across the way tried their best to delay it. Second, we promised to have a joint parliamentary committee to change the rules regarding the code of conduct for MPs and senators. And who is trying to stop that process? The Reform Party. The strange thing is that Reformers are trying to delete the senators from that process. They do not want members of the other place to have conflict of interest rules.

Today a member of the Reform Party stood in the House and asked to delete by unanimous consent a section of the rule book that applies to MPs. I wonder if my colleague from Kingston and the Islands knows that. Reformers wanted the rule book to be

thrown out. What does that tell you about Reformers? I do not think they like rules. I think they like a state of unruliness a lot better.

We introduced a bill to reduce MPs pensions. What did the Reformers do? They do not want to reduce MPs pensions. As an alternative they propose increasing MPs salaries. They want to increase MPs salaries.

They were elected on the pretence they wanted to have a reduction in salaries. Some of them even took a pay cut. A little while later they noticed there was insufficient appreciation for that kind of nonsense and they withdrew what they were doing and not because it was wrong.

One of them admitted publicly to the press that he had ceased to do it because his constituents were not appreciating it enough. In other words, he was not getting enough publicity out of it so that particular member decided to pull out of the scheme, or should I say, out of the scam that had originally been perpetrated. That is not what I would call parliamentary reform.

[Translation]

So, the hon. members opposite may think they have the monopoly of virtue, but reality is altogether different. We all know, in this House, that this government has every intention of delivering on its program, the red book, for the people of Canada.

(1235)

We know that that is what we intend to do, are doing, will continue to do and will succeed in doing.

[English]

We know on the other hand that some people were elected having made some promises to the people of Canada. They have failed miserably in terms of delivering on those promises.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): They are going to get you.

Mr. Boudria: I see a fresh heckler across the way. No doubt he is getting ready to deliver an impassioned speech about government ethics. I say to him that he should read the material of his own party, that little blue pamphlet which it produced to—

Mr. Milliken: To dupe the electors of Alberta.

Mr. Boudria: I do not think I would say to dupe the electors. In any case, they made promises to the people of Canada and they were in a position to deliver on some of them and they did nothing.

The Reform members across the way who are asking for more free votes voted unanimously 168 times out of 170 votes. Shame on the Reform members. Shame on what they have to say.

Those people across have nothing to say about ethics and it is obvious. If they had something to say they could prove it by their actions, by assisting us in proceeding with the agenda on

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which we were elected, by producing the legislation which we all promised to the people of Canada, instead of delaying and using obstructionist tactics such as we saw yesterday.

Mr. Hermanson: You were not here yesterday.

Mr. Boudria: A member opposite has said that for us to deliver on the promises we made to the people of Canada is a sign of arrogance. That is the view of one member. He has just said it in the House. If doing that which the electorate expects of us is arrogance, I plead guilty.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a joy and a delight to listen to the sophistry of that particular member. He is a piece of work.

I cannot comprehend a person who has come to the House and of all things has spoken specifically against the actions of the former Tory government under Standing Order 78, and then stood to say: "Oh, my, was that not terrible?" If we had said why do we not do away with Standing Order 78 when he was in opposition, he would have stood and applauded and said: "Do away with it". This is really a piece of work.

An hon. member: Hypo-grits.

Mr. Abbott: Hypo-grits is right.

Talking about free votes, every time he spoke about free votes he would talk about free votes in the context of private members' bills. What about government voting?

I noticed when voting on Bill C-68 that there were three members who stood up to be counted. However, there were 45 members in the hon. member's caucus who did not have the intestinal fortitude to come to the House to stand and be counted for their constituents. When those three members stood to be counted, they were turfed from their committees. How in the world as the party whip can he possibly say that he is for free votes when he is prepared to turf these people from their committees?

What about Bill C-41? Is he going to allow free votes on Bill C-41?

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, we have been in office now for some time—

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Are you lost for words?

Mr. Boudria: No. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I am not lost for words. That is not something that happens to me very often.

The hon. member across just asked me a question about Bill C-41.

[*Translation*]

I know that our colleague has now acquired a great deal of experience. He has been sitting in this place for a good while and, of course, this House has matured, it is getting on.

[*English*]

I am sure that the hon. member knows that the whip does not invent discipline. What kind of nonsense is that?

Mr. Abbott: He just enforces it.

Mr. Boudria: That is exactly the point. The whip is an official of the caucus of which he is a member and that is what I am. I am responsible for anything that has to do with administration, discipline and so on.

(1240)

The member is asking me the position of the caucus on that issue or on any other issue and I am not in a position to do that. If and when that issue does come up, it will be discussed in the caucus to which I belong and not with the hon. member.

Furthermore, the member raised the issue of Standing Order 78. The hon. member said that when I was in opposition I would have wanted Standing Order 78 to be revoked. Before the member makes an allegation like that, it might be prudent to check the facts. I have no knowledge not only of myself but of any Liberal MP in the last Parliament nor the Parliament before who has ever asked to revoke Standing Order 78, or whatever the equivalent number was. If he can prove that I have ever asked for that, I will gladly rise in this House and apologize. However, I do not think he will ever find that. If he does not find it, which he will not, I hope he will stand and apologize.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions for the member.

The first question is with regard to pensions. I do not really think we need to debate it. I do not think there is anybody on this side of the House who could accept that gold plated disgrace that is called a pension plan. I believe the Canadian people also agree with that.

Let us get to committees. The member says we will prove him by his actions. Let me tell this House a little story about my first meeting with the hon. member. It was in the case of our foreign affairs standing committee: nine Liberals, three Bloc, three Reform. We were having a democratic election of the chairman and the two deputy chairmen. We had talked and got to know each other. About a week later we were to have this democratic election.

I was fairly certain at that time I would be one of the vice-chairs because I had talked to a number of Liberals about our backgrounds. However, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell came into the room, tapped the Liberals on the

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shoulder and told them how to vote and that is how they voted. That is the democracy of this place. It is a sham that the member stands up and sounds like he is some kind of wonderful democrat.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I will gladly respond to that. Who sits as vice-chair of committees is something that is negotiated between the two opposition parties in the House and not the government.

An hon. member: It should be democratic. It should not be negotiated.

Mr. Boudria: I did not make the constitutional conventions under which we are governed. I have been in Parliament a long time but not quite that long.

We have an interesting proposition here. At the time there were negotiations between the two opposition parties. It is not for me to bring this up but the member has opened up the can of worms so he will have to live with the result. At that time a number of vice-chairs were offered to the third party by the official opposition and they were turned down.

The third party turned down the vice-chair positions that were offered. The then whip, and at that time the hon. member called herself a caucus co-ordinator, did not want the particular vice-chairs that were offered. She wanted better ones. She did not like those particular vice-chairmanships and decided to do that for whatever reason she had in mind, which should have been discussed inside the Reform Party caucus room. It was supposed to have minutes in public later but it never has. However, Reformers can decide that in their caucus room and then make whatever decision they want. Those were decisions made by the two opposition parties.

While we are on that topic, there were also negotiations like that with regard to office space. I remember how they got bogged down too. The leader of a certain political party, not the number one or number two party, not to be too specific, decided he wanted the better part of the whole floor in a building. He wanted sweeter suites, if I can refer to it that way.

(1245)

Members across the way should watch how they speak on some of these issues. They know perfectly well that it was a representative of the hon. member's own caucus who refused to take a number of vice-chairmanships. She decided that she would rather have none than the ones that had been offered by the official opposition.

That is a disagreement between the opposition parties. It has nothing to do with the government.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, every day that goes by in the House I see more and more of the arrogance of the Liberal Party.

I have listened to the Liberal Party whip twice in the last two days. It is becoming clearer and clearer. It is the same arrogance that ousted the Conservatives from office. As it continues it will get worse. Blatantly, in the face of Canadians, we see today patronage appointments across the land of every one of their friends, Liberal Party hacks, failed Liberal candidates, and on and on it goes.

The red book was produced during the last election. The Liberals realized that Canadians wanted to see something about what they were running on.

The member said that the blue book of the Reform Party was a cheap imitation of the Liberal red book. I believe that is a quote. The blue book was produced in 1988. From 1988 to today 52 members of the Reform Party came to the House because they had principles. They documented them. They modified them by their assembly. They do not produce cheap red book documents during an election campaign and then subsequently ignore them.

If we can get away from arrogance for just a moment, I would like to ask the member where and when the red book was developed.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I also think the member across the way is a very fine person.

The Liberal Party red book is a compilation of a number of documents. First there were a number of meetings across the country in 1992. That was followed by a document in January 1993 called "Reviving Parliamentary Democracy".

An hon. member: They were back door Liberal hack meetings.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to answer the hon. member's question. He is interrupting himself.

Then it was followed by another document entitled "The Liberal Blueprint for Defence Conversion" in March 1993; "A Liberal Perspective on Crime and Justice" in April 1993; "Food Security for Canadians and a Fair Return for Canadian Farmers" on May 10, 1993; foreign policy handbook in May 1993; and the Liberal Party program for small business. On August 16, 1993 all these documents were made public. They were combined to produce the red book later that summer which was released during the election campaign. That is a rough scenario.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have a note in my hand to which I would like to respond. There were personal allegations made about me. I would like to respond to them and to the note. I seek unanimous consent of the House to do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House for the member to speak?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Mayfield: Mr. Speaker, I will read the full text of the note. It states:

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Mr. Mayfield, who is this Dr. Greenaway? Is he the former MP? What board did he sit on?

It is signed "Don". The note was delivered to me less than half an hour after the chief government whip made the allegations. I did not have an opportunity to respond to him and he knows it. He took advantage of it.

Dr. Greenaway by his own admission was fired. If he was not fired, why was he not reappointed? Why was this trusted member of the B.C. Treaty Commission not allowed to continue the valuable work he was doing? Why did the government shove him aside to replace him with someone else who did not have the experience, who did not have the same trust, who did not have the ongoing confidence of both sides? I reject the allegations.

(1250)

It is another example of the kinds of tactics the rat pack used. I have no idea why rat pack tactics are necessary in a government that has the majority.

Rat pack tactics continue not only in the House but in the committees. We see them every day. Why is there no courtesy? Why are members not listened to? We do not ask them to agree with everything we propose. We only ask that they listen. Many if not most of our proposals, ideas and suggestions are not even given the courtesy of casual consideration.

The government deserves this lack of confidence.

The Deputy Speaker: Unanimous consent given to the member to speak with regard to some allegations made earlier by the government whip.

We are now out of time for questions or comments but presumably it makes sense to give the whip a chance to reply, if he wishes, to the comments just made. Then I will go briefly to the hon. member for an extended question or comment.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I reiterate what I said. I have page 131.01 of the orders in council which I will gladly table. It was said in the House earlier this morning that Dr. Lorne Greenaway had been fired. I have proof in front of me in this document. Lorne E. Greenaway, commissioner for Canada of the British Columbia Treaty Commission, is from Williams Lake, British Columbia. He was appointed on April 14, 1993. Contrary to what we were told his term expired—he was not fired—on April 13, 1995.

If it is the wish of the House I will gladly table a copy of the page of the book in question. I stand by what I said. It is factually correct. The person was not fired. There was an allegation made by an hon. member that he was fired. That is not true. I sent a note to the member opposite giving him a chance to correct himself.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that all this talk about openness, democratic government and the committees' influence is hilarious. Everyone is a comedian. Earlier, I put a question to the hon. member for Saint-Léonard but I failed to get an answer. Perhaps my preamble on government openness was much too long, so I will ask a very, very simple and very short question.

I repeat my question. At the second reading stage of the gun control bill, two or three Liberal members voted against the bill and were then expelled from their committees. I would like the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell to tell me what will happen to them if they vote against the bill at third reading?

[*English*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite asks how the whip of a particular political party does his or her job. I am sure his whip in the House would not want me to question him in that manner.

As whips we work together for hours in a day administering everything from the Board of Internal Economy to the unanimous consent sought by political parties.

The hon. member opposite surely does not expect me to divulge caucus information. Nor would I expect him to do that. Only one party advocated making public the results of its caucus meetings. That was the Reform Party and even it did not do so.

(1255)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to address the following Reform opposition day motion:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to keep its red book promise to make the government more open and permitting members of Parliament to be more accountable to their constituents.

I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

I will not spend much of my 10 minutes replying or trying to rebut the nonsense we just heard from the hon. government whip. However I should like to reply to a point that was not adequately addressed by him. He called the blue book of the Reform Party a cheap imitation of the red book. Then he stood in his place and said that the first date he could recall the red book being formulated was 1992. The blue book was originally formulated in 1987 and published in 1988 for the election. He should stand to retract the statement as an outright breach of trust.

In my limited time I would like to discuss why I became involved in politics because it has a bearing on the subject of accountability of MPs to their constituents that we are discussing today.

Supply

The majority of western Canadians and the majority of the constituents of the riding of Prince George—Peace River that I am proud and pleased to represent predominantly supported the Progressive Conservative Party for years. I was one of its supporters although I never belonged to the party. I voted for the Conservatives hoping to see an end to the reign of terror thrust on Canada by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The incumbent at that time was Mr. Oberle. He was very well supported. At one time he was known as landslide Oberle. That is the level of support and loyalty the Progressive Conservatives and Mr. Oberle had in the riding of Prince George—Peace River.

Gradually, after the Conservative sweep of 1984, the people of my riding and of much of Canada, certainly western Canada, began to feel a sense of betrayal. The first Mulroney government was plagued by scandal, almost from the time it took the reins of power in 1984 in the most massive mandate a governing party has ever had in the country.

I could go on and on about the scandals but I will just refer to a few: the Oerlikon land flip, the tainted tuna or what was described in the press as Tunagate, the Sinclair Stevens affair, and the infamous CF-18 decision when the reigning Conservatives took the contract for the maintenance of the CF-18 fighter aircraft away from Bristol Aerospace in Winnipeg that should have had the successful bid and awarded it to Canadair in Montreal. That created a sense of betrayal certainly all across western Canada.

That was the flashpoint, the trigger point, when I became so disenchanted and disillusioned with the political system and with the Conservatives that I said something had to be done to change the system.

I became involved in the fledgling Reform Party. When I first heard about it, it was not even a party. It was just a reform association, a group of Canadians from across western Canada who had decided that enough was enough.

I was attracted by its policies on those dreaded double *d* words: the deficit and the debt. It believed in the government living within its means and justice reforms, that criminals should be held responsible for their actions and real punishment was needed to provide deterrents for criminal activities. A cornerstone of the Reform Party was the democratic reforms we advocate. We have advocated them all along as was shown today in our blue book.

Because of the sense of betrayal we realized the fault did not really lie with individual politicians but with the system of government in Canada. We advocated a number of democratic reforms, referenda and citizens initiatives. The Charlottetown accord is a shining example of what can happen when the people become involved in the democratic process.

It is interesting to note that the Liberal Party did not get the message from the Charlottetown accord. The Reform Party was the only federal political party to come out against it.

(1300)

Everyone said we were crazy, we had committed political suicide. We saw that as people became more informed they started to see the flaws in the accord and ultimately the polls reversed themselves and it was defeated in the referendum.

Another reform advocated was recall whereby constituents could actually hold their elected officials accountable. We fixed election dates so the reigning party could not play with the election date according to the polls and the support it was getting.

On a true triple E Senate which we have never given up on and never will give up on, we want to see a true, elected, efficient and equal Senate rather than the patronage heaven it has become under the reigning old parties.

Above all else, what attracted me to the Reform Party was its stand on MP accountability. MPs should truly represent the wishes of the majority of their constituents, not once in a while when it happens to coincide with their party's position or perhaps their own deeply held views, but all the time, where the majority of opinion of constituents is readily evident and can be determined.

I ran in the 1988 election and I never had any desire to become a politician. There are still some days when I debate with myself the decision of becoming a politician. I decided to run for Reform because I realized something had to happen to change the way government operated.

I was attacked back then by the old line parties. At that time the Conservative incumbent in open candidate forums said: "Mr. Hill said he would run government by polling. MPs would simply become polling machines".

It is interesting to note that on Bill C-68 that is exactly what the Liberals are doing after the old line parties have accused us and criticized us for wanting MP accountability. They are ruling by polls.

I contend and I have always maintained those polls are erroneous if the majority of Canadians became better informed about the gun issue and how difficult it already is to own a firearm in Canada.

As some of my colleagues have already said, I cannot believe the arrogance starting to show through with the government. That is one of the big reasons Mulroney was turfed out and why the Conservatives were reduced to only two seats in the House.

One of the worst possible examples—it is seared into my mind, that is how upset I was when I watched it on television one night—was when Mulroney kicked two of his caucus colleagues out of caucus because they dared to vote their constituents' wishes on the GST.

Supply

One of those members currently sitting, interestingly enough, is the Liberal member from Edmonton—Southeast; you, Mr. Speaker. I commend your stand that day and I am sure your constituents do and that is why you were re-elected. You represented the people. That is the type of leadership we want to see in the House from all MPs from all parties.

I will read some red book promises in the short time I have left, from the section “Governing with Integrity”. It says: “The most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of the citizens to whom it is accountable. This erosion of confidence seems to have many causes. Some have to do with the behaviour of certain elected politicians, others with an arrogant style of political leadership. In the House of Commons a Liberal government will give MPs a greater role in drafting legislation through House of Commons committees. More free votes will be allowed in the House of Commons”.

Yet we see on Bill C-68, as has been revealed today already, a total disregard for the right of MPs to currently accurately represent their people when the three Liberal members from Kent, Timiskaming—French River and Huron—Bruce were removed from committees.

Rumours always abound on Parliament Hill. We have heard rumours the Liberal Party and the whip will adopt three strikes and you are out. If a member votes three times against their party, they are out of there.

That is a very real threat for members from old parties. We have seen where the leaders will not sign their nomination papers. The threat is they will lose their job and that is deplorable.

(1305)

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a little disappointed at times by Reform members because they promised more courtesy and sometimes they do not show that. They also said they would bring to the House much better behaviour and from this corner I do not see it. I am one of those who try to be mindful of others. I also came into politics without really wanting to, but I am here now and I respect everyone but I do not seem to receive respect from everyone.

Democracy is a very strange animal. At times it is extremely uncomfortable and at times it is not very acceptable. However, it is the only system we know. As we know, democracy means the majority rules. Every time we have a discussion among party members it is held in caucus. In caucus at times we argue quite passionately because we do not always agree. There are 177 of us and we all have a different opinion and a different constituency to serve. However, in the end the majority rules. As I said, at times it is not easy.

If we did not have a party behind us I do not know how many of us would have made it. There is only one person in the House elected as an independent. We have to remember that.

When my three colleagues were punished I was not happy with it. I read it in the newspaper and I did not agree with it. However, after I thought about democracy and how the majority rules and how it is important to understand each other, I started to agree with it. I also realized some people in our caucus were hurt by the action of our colleagues.

We owe much more respect to each other and I would also like to see the better behaviour which was offered.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate her comments. They allow me to address something I have been very concerned about all along, as have all of my Reform colleagues.

What she says is quite accurate. When we came here we wanted to institute a new sense of decorum in the House. We tried quite valiantly for a number of months. I explained this to my constituents at home on open line shows and in public meetings. This is the only place in Canada where it is part of an individual's job to sit here and take the nonsense we take every day, all year round when the House is sitting. I have turned out to be one of the worst when it comes to heckling. I am not proud of that but it is a self-defence mechanism. We sit here day after day and we take that from across the way.

When I was raised back home one of two things would happen. If we were insulted the way we have been insulted in the House we would either get up and smack someone or we would get up and leave. Unfortunately as an elected MP trying to represent the people of my riding I have to remain in the House. That is why decorum has deteriorated in the House. I am not proud of it but we are getting down to the same level as her colleagues.

She mentioned how passionately they argue in caucus. That is exactly what the Conservative incumbent used to say to us time after time. The GST is a classic example. Eighty per cent of the people were opposed to it and he would say: “I defend your rights. I passionately defend what the people want me to say in caucus but when it comes to the House I am muzzled and I cannot get up and say the things you want me to say”. The Reform Party will be different. When the people of Prince George—Peace River want me to say something in this House, by golly I will say it.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say it is a pleasure to stand in the House to talk about broken promises but it is not.

(1310)

It is somewhat despairing to address issues to Liberal members of the government in the House. Sometimes we think they are not listening. Look at them all here. If anyone

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thinks they are not listening just turn the cameras. It is almost a national disgrace that we have yet another majority government in place not listening to the people.

It came out with a document called the red book designed explicitly for the election campaign. The government whip stood up a short while ago and said our blue book was a cheap imitation of the Liberal red book. He went on to say the Liberal red book was developed in late 1992 and 1993, and the Reform Party's blue book was developed in 1987 for the 1988 election. I guess those are the principles and the differences.

There is a facade hanging over the government. It tells us one thing but does a little of what it tells us to say it has completed it. I will go through some examples of it. I cannot call that lying in the House but I can call it about the closest thing to a facade as anything I have seen.

When the Conservatives were in government and the Liberals stood on this side of the House, the Liberals sanctimoniously stood up and berated the Conservative government for all its faults. The Liberals get elected and they do the same darn thing. No wonder people are sick and tired of politicians.

Let me talk a bit about a promise made in the red book: "A Liberal government will review the appointment process to ensure that necessary appointments are made on the basis of competence and will move quickly and decisively in several ways to address these concerns about conflict of interest, influence peddling and selling access".

Ms. Ablonczy: They moved fast all right, right toward it.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): A good point. My hon. colleague says they did move fast on it, they moved right toward it.

Let us discuss the Senate. In the face of the majority of Canadians they start taking their members and friends and move them into the Senate, even a currently elected MP. Talk about disrupting the democratic process, this individual was elected and all of a sudden the Prime Minister wants to put one of his buddies in so he says: "I will haul you out, give you a Senate job until age 75 and I will put in one of my buddies and run him in the race". I think that is about as disheartening as we can get.

Let us look at a few patronage appointments. The government stated it would review the appointment process to ensure that necessary appointments are made on the basis of competence. Please tell me if this is a truism after I am finished. A Liberal candidate in Dunvegan, Alberta in 1993 was appointed assistant commissioner to the Canadian Grains Commission. He must have been competent, he was a Liberal candidate, right?

I wonder how many Canadians had the opportunity to get that job. I wonder how many executives out of senior corporations who are now out of jobs had an opportunity to get that job. None. There were no opportunities at all. However, the Liberal Party hacks had opportunities.

Another one started with the Prime Minister as executive assistant at Indian affairs in 1970. He was the Prime Minister's aide in the Quebec Liberal Party in 1992 and now a member of the St. Lawrence seaway authority. There were lots of qualifications there. They say they will clean it up by ensuring necessary appointments are based on competence.

I have another one. A B.C. Liberal Party executive director in 1994 was appointed director of CMHC. We are certainly looking after the affairs of the red book.

Let us take a couple of others. A long time supporter and personal friend of John Savage, worked on his campaign since 1979, was made director of the Halifax Port Corporation.

(1315)

Another one under Pierre Trudeau was Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Minister of Public Works, President of the Treasury Board, appointed chairperson of the Canadian Tourism Commission. What is going on in this country?

These Liberals stood over here when the Conservatives were appointing all of their friends, and now they are doing the same thing, which they promised they would not do.

What do Canadians think about this whole process? They say: "They are just politicians. While we are out here trying to earn a living, we are overtaxed, overburdened with bureaucracy, politicians are appointing their friends, giving themselves great pension plans, appointing senators until age 75."

Here is an interesting one I ran across. A failed Liberal candidate in the 1993 federal election was appointed director of the Canadian Commercial Corporation. Why should I be so dismayed about that? It is just another political appointment. I ran against this guy and defeated him in my riding. I wonder how many other people in my riding who are out of work and who are better qualified than that fellow get an opportunity to get that job. Not one. The ones who get the jobs are Liberal Party friends and hacks.

The list goes on and on, but there is no sense talking to a dead tree over there. It does not work. It has been chopped down. There is a stump there. It does not work.

There was talk about cleaning up crime by the Liberals. Many of them probably do not live in areas where there is crime, because I do not think they understand it all that well. Some of their policies absolutely escape me.

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I have to get this on record today. I was reviewing one of the prisons in my riding. They are so concerned about the criminals. They are getting tougher and tougher on criminals. I must admit that the Liberals are trying to do a job. They instituted "Project Bleach" in my riding. Matsqui Prison is a medium security prison with zero tolerance for drugs, which is commendable. That is the Liberal policy, zero tolerance for drugs. However, "Project Bleach" gives one-ounce bottles of bleach to the criminals so they can sterilize their needles for cocaine drug intake.

This is a tough Liberal government. I think that was one of the tougher promises in the red book. Alcohol is also tolerated in prisons. I wonder when they are going to come out with a policy of putting one-litre bottles of coke on the tables and a little ice in case they sneak it through the cells.

I do not understand what is wrong with this group. I want to talk again a little about the ethics of the government. It is concerned about conflict of interest and influence peddling. Let us talk about conflict of interest for a minute. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services in Cape Breton has an agreement and he gets involved in the SHIP agreement, the strategic highway improvement program in Nova Scotia. This is a federal-provincial agreement, with both funding the projects.

What does he do? First of all, the Minister of Transport is not even involved in this. The minister of public works says to the minister of transportation and highways in Nova Scotia: "Why not upgrade the Fleur-de-Lis trail in our riding"—which is not funded by federal-provincial dollars. "I'll take \$26 million out of one of the most dangerous highways in Canada—Wentworth Bypass and we will move it on down to our riding. We will put some people to work and we will get re-elected." That is ethics? That is the kind of ethics a minister of this government practises.

(1320)

The Liberals promised to move quickly and decisively in several ways to address the concerns about conflict of interest and influence peddling, and they did that. It only took them 18 months to move the darned money from the Wentworth bypass over to their own riding. They are moving quickly.

I will give the Liberals credit for one thing, they sure made a lot of promises. They sure moved fast to break them. No matter how much they tell the Canadian people that they are making it, they are not.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member in his speech made very slighting references to a series of excellent appointments the government has made in the last while to various boards and commissions.

He chose to read very selectively from the list of accomplishments of the men and women who had been appointed to these jobs by reading only their qualifications as members of the Liberal Party, which of course would stand anyone in good stead, anywhere, anytime. However, the hon. member neglected to mention in the course of his very partisan remarks the list of qualifications that each of these persons possessed in addition to their membership in the Liberal Party.

I know that the hon. member and his party are moving a motion today that has to do with broken promises. In light of their constant promise in the blue book to come clean with Canadians and tell the truth, would it not behove the hon. member to get up in his answer to my question and read the very impressive CVs of each of the candidates who were appointed to the positions he has just indicated, indicating to the House and all Canadians the excellent qualifications they possess, which entitled them to be appointed to these positions?

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, it must be a coincidence that notwithstanding all of these appointments they were all involved in the election campaign, raising money for the Liberals. I wonder why in this day and age, with all the good executives and other people across the country looking for jobs, these ones at the trough just happen to be involved with the Liberals.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): It is just coincidence.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Long time supporter and personal friend of John Savage—I mentioned that; married to former Liberal mayor of Vancouver; a former Ontario Liberal legislative assistant; a former member of the Quebec Liberal executive. It has to be a coincidence. It just cannot be that notwithstanding the jobs they did, they were Liberals and they got the job.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I do not see anybody who was not a card carrying member of any party, nor do I see any of the old party from Jurassic Park, none of the separatists in there, no people who just do not get involved in politics. No. The one qualification they all have is they are Liberal Party hacks and friends. Make no doubt about it.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say at the outset that I certainly would never take a view as pessimistic of the role of Parliament and the work of the new Liberal government as my friend opposite has. Perhaps we simply see things from different sides of the House.

I can assure my constituents and other colleagues in the House who would care to listen that my experience in Parliament is much more positive than my friend articulates. Again, by another dimension of measurement, my experience in Parliament is much more satisfying and fulfilling to me, to

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Parliament, and I hope to my constituents than was my experience in the last Parliament.

(1325)

Hopefully we can continue to make things better. To be sure, things are not yet ideal. All of us in the House are working to improve the way the House represents Canadians in debate and in the generation of legislation and in that other area, which often goes unnoticed in the House, the area of delegated legislation; the field of creation of statutory instruments and regulations.

The government has made great strides in fulfilling our red book commitments for a more open and accountable process based on fair play and other principles that they know Canadians will endorse. We have made a commitment in the red book to review the appointment process to ensure that necessary appointments are made on the basis of competence, not political affiliation or other criteria.

My friend opposite has listed a number of appointments and made reference to their relationship and affiliation with the Liberal Party. He failed in almost every instance to make reference to the abilities of those individuals.

As the Prime Minister has said, and I support him wholeheartedly on this, one is never going to be prejudiced from serving in a part time or full time position for the Government of Canada just because the person happens to be a Liberal.

We promised accessibility and transparency. I accept that things do not necessarily happen overnight around here. One does not simply push a button and get exactly what one wants. But the process has been in place for over a year and we have produced some excellent results.

We also undertook to examine the size and relevance of existing boards and commissions to achieve cost savings and to fill the remaining vacancies in relation to some of these agencies, boards, and commissions by way of an improved appointment system. The first step to establish an efficient appointment system was by means of a thorough review of the agencies. More than 350 agencies, boards, and commissions were examined, which involved 500 full time positions and 2,000 part time positions.

As a result of the review, 30 per cent of federal boards, agencies and commissions have been wound up or streamlined. Wound up means gone. We want to eliminate overlap, duplication, and to simplify government. Again, this is easy to say, tougher to do. We are still working on it. We will continue to wind up those agencies that no longer serve a purpose. This agency review has improved the accountability regime for governor in council appointments, and this enables the government to manage these agencies more effectively.

The second part of this process, after streamlining the agencies and reducing the number, was to improve the appointment process. There also the government has done a thorough review of the process. We want to make it more open and accessible.

The role that boards and agencies are expected to play is clear and appropriate. When that is the case it is possible to be more precise in identifying the qualifications needed by appointees. This in turn permits improvements in the recruiting process. In this respect the government has made changes in the process for these appointments, always keeping in mind accessibility, transparency and confidence.

The appointment process has been made more open and transparent through the advertisement of vacancies for full time GIC positions in the *Canada Gazette*. I know a lot of Canadians do not wake up with the *Canada Gazette* on their doorstep, but it is one instrument that publicizes for the public record all these openings and is disseminated across the country, including to all the libraries on the list. All these openings are advertised there. People who have an interest will be able to find out when the vacancies come open.

(1330)

In order to place the advertisements it is necessary to develop job profiles that contain job descriptions and selection criteria. In those notices there are references to job descriptions and selection criteria. All federal agencies are required to provide job profiles and these same selection criteria for full time fixed positions. The selection criteria are then used to find the most competent people to fill these positions.

The advertisement of vacancies in the *Canada Gazette* generates a greater pool of candidates and contributes to better appointments. Interested individuals send their CVs either to the agency or to the minister's office. Some people even send it to the Prime Minister's office. At the end of the day these resumes and CVs end up in one pile. Each CV is then evaluated in accordance with the established selection criteria.

This particular process has been in place for nearly a year. As I say, it was not in place when we first took over government. It may be some time before all of the wrinkles and variations in the process are fully dealt with. The improvements have begun. I can testify to that.

As a Liberal member of Parliament in the last Parliament I sat in opposition and watched the appointment process as it was. While on the opposition benches we noted what we regarded as deficiencies in the process. We did not have much impact on it.

In this Parliament we have made a change in the process. What is remarkable to me is that after nine years on the opposition benches and as a person active in Liberal politics, having ended the nine year mandate of the previous government, I have had more than one Liberal come to me and

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question me as to why it is not possible for Liberals to get appointed to agencies, boards and commissions.

To be sure there are many Liberals being appointed. People I have worked with in the party have taken note of the fact that being a Liberal and just being there is no longer the way one gets appointed to an agency, board or commission. One has to have the competence. I have passed that message on to many. It is a change from what has happened in the past, going back five or 10 years.

The other part of the motion today has to do with parliamentary reform. It is a subject I have always taken a great interest in. I have said to my spouse and friends that I would be willing at the appropriate point in time to lay my career on the altar of parliamentary reform. I have not had to do that yet.

Parliament is changing. It is reforming. This government made a commitment to be a part of the reform process. I have to point out something that is very fundamental in understanding what drives parliamentary reform. It is almost impossible for a government to say that it will and that it does take full responsibility for parliamentary reform. A government does not own Parliament. A government does not at all times of the day drive Parliament. Parliament belongs to its members and through them to the electorate of Canada.

People must realize that this Parliament is a distinct branch of government, distinct from the executive. The lay person who has not spent time around the House of Commons or who has not studied it in great detail in high school or university might miss some of the more obvious distinctions between the executive branch of government and Parliament.

(1335)

Let me record my perception that there is a huge difference. If Parliament is to be what Canadians expect it to be, it is important for members of Parliament and Canadians to understand that distinction and to understand what drives Parliament and parliamentary reform.

The government has gone on record as wanting to play a role in the restoration of confidence in Parliament and confidence in government. The government can take care of the government but it is those of us in Parliament who have to take the responsibility for Parliament.

It has to be pointed out as well that all ministers of the government sit in Parliament. I hope that their focus when they sit here is as much parliamentary as it is governmental, but I accept that from time to time a minister's role is to account to Parliament for the management of his or her portfolio. The ministers will not, by the nature of their work, be fundamentally involved in driving parliamentary reform.

In any event, from the point of view of the government this is just not talk. We started with parliamentary reform very early in our mandate. In January 1994 we introduced quite significant rule changes to open up the parliamentary decision making process.

The objectives of the reform were to make Parliament more relevant and to consult and work with MPs more in the day to day decisions of government so that MPs would have a greater impact on those day to day decisions. We have to keep in mind that outside of Parliament there is a vast public service which is loyal and operates 99.9 per cent of the time within the law in accordance with the mandate which comes to it by statute or by policy. We also wanted to give MPs a greater role in influencing legislation as it developed.

That is what the government said it wanted to give Parliament. I would like to repeat that it is not as much for the government to give than it is for MPs to take. The history of this place includes the history of all the British Parliaments. Over time, parliamentarians have given their lives to ensure there was a Parliament which would work. We in this country are the beneficiaries of that history. All of us ought to subscribe to the philosophy where we accept the burden of making Parliament work and take the obligation to reform it to make it vital and responsive to Canadians.

We made four changes in the rules of this place at the behest of the government. Committees of the House, which are a very vital part of Parliament, may now draft bills. Those are not just words. That was done.

Bill C-69 was drafted in committee. I sat on that committee. It was a tedious exercise. It is one which MPs are not used to, to actually meticulously draft a bill. We needed a lot of help but we got it done. It was a big job and there is room for more of that in this Parliament.

Bills can now be referred to a committee before the second reading vote. That is the point in time when Parliament approves a bill in principle. By referring it to a committee before the second reading vote, before approval in principle, it provides the committee with much more latitude to make changes or additions to the bill. The committee is not bound by the principles articulated in the bill which would have been adopted at second reading.

That is a very important change. We have already seen the benefit of it several times in this Parliament, including the Marine Transportation Security Act, the amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act and the amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. I sat on that particular exercise and found it useful. There are a couple of other bills coming into the House where we believe colleagues may be so disposed as to refer them to committee before second reading.

Supply

Two of these are Bill C-62 and Bill C-84. My experience is that this is a very useful device.

(1340)

Standing committees of the House will have the power to look at the department's future spending priorities. If there is one area of work in Parliament where I think Parliament and the government has let Canadians down it is in the review of the estimates. It is an institutional fault. The estimates procedure as it has evolved over many years has left this House almost functionless in carefully reviewing government's proposed expenditures.

The new rules turn the tide and provide another area of work for MPs. As a member of Parliament, I cannot say that MPs have taken up the challenge. The process is just beginning and the proof will be in the pudding. I do not know where it will end up. However, if MPs do not take the challenge and work with the new procedures, then we may be seen to have been as ineffective under the new rules as we were under the old rules. That is something which is coming down the pipeline. I for one will watch it closely and do my best to make the system work.

The finance committee was given the power to report on the budgetary policy of the Government of Canada. That was a specific mandate given to a specific committee. There is some historical precedent for that.

There used to be a committee and I think it was called the committee of the whole but it was not the committee in the House. It was a standing committee that used to review all of the estimates and put its stamp of approval on it at the very end. That ended about the time John Diefenbaker ended his career here. He was one person who regretted the demise of that particular committee and procedure. In any event, we are making an attempt to get back to focusing on government expenditure policy in the one committee. At least one committee will make some macroeconomic comment on it, if I can put it that way.

The last thing has to do with Parliament's right and ability to require disclosure from Canadians. In this place we call it the power to call for persons and papers. It basically consists of requiring people to attend, give answers to questions and produce documents much like the power a subpoena would have.

There are a number of things developing in this Parliament where we will have an opportunity as a House to reconfirm the rights and authorities that we have as a Parliament to require disclosure. Over the last decades we have not used it. We have accepted an ill advised view of the executive branch of government that we really do not have those powers. However, we do. Parliament does and at the end of the day we may exercise them at committee and on the floor the House.

I hope when these parliamentary tests both in the House and in the other place come up this year or next, MPs will make the right decision to confirm those powers which have been passed on to us over a number of generations of parliamentary history. It is a challenge and I hope my colleagues will not let us down. I am sure they will not, but the challenge will not be here until it gets here. I invite MPs to play a role in that vital element of parliamentary reform when it gets here.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was glad to listen to my hon. friend. I have had the pleasure of sitting on at least one committee with the member and really respect his fair mindedness, hard work and good judgment.

I wonder if the member would comment on a situation that has been troubling me.

(1345)

At times all members of a committee would like to see a policy or a decision go a particular way. There is general agreement. The hon. member in his years in Parliament probably has seen more than one instance of this in a committee.

However, word comes down from on high, from the minister or the department that it is not the recommendation that is wanted from the committee. Therefore government members on the committee tend to have to move in the direction they are told.

I wonder if the member, even without commenting on any instance of this, could propose or suggest a way that we could deal with the situation so that members on a committee have a greater ability to put their own judgment forward. Is there a procedure he has thought about, a reform or a change that could make the situation a little more workable?

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of raising this question about two weeks ago. I asked a similar question of a former prime minister who was prime minister here for many years. I thought I could get a crisp answer. He gave a good answer but it did not help us at all. It does not have the easy answer.

Each MP sitting on a committee is part of a party. Members realize that they got elected as part of a party in many cases. When some direction comes from the team captain, they listen carefully.

I have found in my experience that as one gets experience in parliamentary work and as committees get experience and build up a sense of cohesion, a policy base and a policy focus, its members are more confident in the views they may take and put forward. As to questions that have come up at committee where there has been some tilt from the executive

part of government, I can honestly say that I have seen these things go both ways.

I remember on one committee a few years ago, I had to wait a whole year to get through a resolution on a matter where the government absolutely did not want that to happen. In the end colleagues on the committee on the government side saw the right way, acquiesced and it went through. That matter is still a matter for this Parliament. It is in the pipeline.

It is a matter of generating the self-confidence and the knowledge in the field. It is a matter of MPs themselves making the right decisions in committee, taking into account their team responsibilities and the public policy interests that may be involved in a question. In the end, there is no simple answer.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in this debate on openness brought to us by the Reform Party, I heard the hon. member speak of his desire for openness, just as his own government dealt extensively with this issue in the red book.

I would like the hon. member to give me his opinion on the March 1987 report by the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General, which recommended that the Access to Information Act apply to all federal institutions, including administrative tribunals, the Senate and the House of Commons.

I would like the hon. member, first, to tell me whether he endorses this committee report and, second, to explain to me why, after 18 months in power, his own government has not ensured openness and free access to information from the House of Commons, the Senate, and some public officials reporting directly to Parliament, including the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the Auditor General. None of these people is subject to the Access to Information Act.

How does he explain that, after 18 months of Liberal government and especially 30 years of Liberal rhetoric on openness, people in Canada and Quebec do not yet have access to basic information, which would ensure openness in public administration?

(1350)

[English]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, this country has some of the most advanced access to information legislation in the world. I did not arrive in this place until 1988 but I did sit on committee with the chair of the committee who played a great role in the report referred to by the hon. member.

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I believe there is a role to expand the ambit of access to information. By the same token I am sure the member opposite will agree there are some areas of government that simply are not conducive to full and complete access.

Where do we draw the line? Which agencies will be accessible via open access to information and which will be on the schedule as not being fully open to access? Even agencies that are on the schedule and cannot be accessed completely and comprehensively provide information with exclusion, for example, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service. Many others will provide information with some exclusions.

Parliament has never been bound by access to information statutes or privacy statutes. Parliament in my view never did bind itself. Members need not feel restricted by those statutes. If a committee of Parliament wants access to an area of government, there are no restrictions on Parliament's ability to access them. That is something of which all members should be aware. These powers have been given to us historically over the past centuries. If members want the information, they have the ability on the floor or at committee to get that information. For heaven's sake, use it.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I understand that the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe wishes to speak.

Mr. Leroux: Mr. Speaker, could I perhaps have the floor right after Question Period? My time has not expired yet, but I would prefer not to interrupt my remarks. I would like to deliver my comments all at once.

The Speaker: Agreed. You will have the floor right after Question Period.

* * *

[English]

REPORT OF AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker: Colleagues, I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons, volume 1, dated May 1995.

[Translation]

I remind hon. members that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(d), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Since it is almost two o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to statements by members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

[English]

THE MEDIA

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CBC has been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in the name of free speech to get the permission of the courts to show tapes of the Bernardo trial.

Has it asked Canadians if they want to see these shocking visuals? I want to know and the people of Canada want to know what can be done to protect the families of the victims of the Paul Bernardo case from the media.

In light the CBC's refusal to respect the rights of the victims' families, perhaps the CRTC should be given the power to prevent the wasting of tax dollars on this sort of tabloid journalism. Some efforts should be made to stop the media from its selfish and uncaring attempt to make money and boost ratings at the expense of the privacy of the families of the victims with total disregard for the rights of Canadian children.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bloc Quebecois members have always opposed any attempt to abolish the Official Languages Act.

However, some Reform, Conservative, NDP and Liberal members, including the Liberal member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, gave their support to the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada, by tabling petitions asking the House of Commons to abolish the Official Languages Act.

The government is guilty of double talk. How else can we explain the closure of the only French speaking military college in Canada? How else can we explain the evasive answers to our questions on the insignificant attention given to French as a working language in the federal administration, in Ottawa and in Hull?

This government wilfully contravenes the Official Languages Act. That is confirmed by the reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and also by the actions of Liberal members.

The Speaker: My colleague, I should point out here that, when tabling a petition in this House, a member does not have to support or reject that petition. In fact, the Chair asks members to refrain from making comments when they table petitions.

THE FAMILY

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, because of a court decision yesterday, same sex couples can now adopt children in Ontario. Although the nuclear family is the basic unit throughout all societies on earth and standard throughout all ages of history, this definition can now be quashed at the stroke of a pen by one man acting in one court. This is a sad day for the family in Canada.

I remind the government that polls show that 67 per cent of Canadians believe that same sex adoption is a negative development. I would remind the government that the Liberal Party voted solidly against changes in the definition of the family. I remind the government that a provincial bill authorizing same sex adoptions was resoundingly defeated not one year ago in the Ontario legislature.

Who runs this country, one man in one court in one province, or the people of Canada? The courts are embracing a public policy shift far removed from the people. The federal government bears a solemn responsibility to do whatever it can to fight this trend, to fight to protect the institution that forms the basis of our society. We must continue the fight for the nuclear family.

* * *

NATIONAL FOREST WEEK

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is celebrating National Forest Week from May 7 to May 14. However, there is nothing to celebrate at the Petawawa National Forestry Institute.

This forest research laboratory, surrounded by 41 square miles of its own recorded research forest and history, is closing. Not only is this institute the oldest recorded research forest in Canada, but it is known nationally and internationally by top scientists. Tourists have come from around the world to visit it.

With its impending closure, we are witnessing a brain drain. Some scientists have indicated their departure to other areas outside Canada and others will be obliged to take early retirement even though their interests and hearts are still with the Canadian Forest Service.

It is rather ironic that trees that have come to the MPs in both lobbies of the House over many years of celebrating National Forest Week have come from the Petawawa National Forestry Institute.

We are not celebrating. We are in mourning.

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CEDARBRAE COLLEGIATE

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today a group of students from the student body of Cedarbrae Collegiate, located in my riding of Scarborough Centre, are visiting Ottawa. Along with my colleague for Scarborough West, I extend a warm welcome to them.

(1400)

Cedarbrae Collegiate evokes fond memories to me of the occasions in the past when I visited the collegiate and participated in citizenship ceremonies.

I also thank the collegiate publicly for previous occasions when I and others were treated to some exceptional performances conducted by its excellent and renowned music department.

Congratulations to all the staff, administration and the student body. A special note of thanks and welcome to Mr. John Connors, also a member of the school administration.

* * *

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently returned from the UN congress on the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders held in Cairo, Egypt.

I am proud to report that Canada continues to be recognized as an authority on human rights and a leader in attempting to identify the root causes of criminal behaviour.

Justice and Corrections Canada officials as well as participating NGOs combined their knowledge and expertise to establish a strong Canadian presence.

Our resolution which endorses the elimination of violence against women and children was supported by more than 55 countries. As well, during the Japanese sponsored gun control resolution Canada was commended for its leadership in establishing reasonable approaches to firearms legislation.

Other topical resolutions sought to discuss the standardization of extradition proceedings, the development of crime prevention strategies and to address juvenile and violent criminality and Internet protocol.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC FINANCE MINISTER'S BUDGET

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, unlike his federal counterpart, the Quebec finance minister decided to tackle the deficit in his very first budget. In just one year, he will reduce Quebec's deficit by one third. By comparison, the Liberals only managed to reduce the federal deficit by 10

per cent with their first budget. The cuts in transfers to the provinces announced in last February's federal budget will deprive Quebec of \$650 million in 1996-97 and \$1.9 billion in 1997-98. Yet, the finance minister has the nerve to criticize Quebec's budget.

Did the federal Minister of Finance spend the first year of his mandate trying to figure out how he was going to tackle the federal deficit, only to come up with this idea of offloading it onto the provinces?

* * *

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today we have learned that an Ontario provincial court judge has ruled that laws prohibiting adoption by homosexual couples are contrary to the charter of rights.

The Minister of Justice has frequently insisted that including sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act as he has promised to do will be in accordance with the wishes of Canadians.

The courts and not the legislatures are making the law in the country. In the face of the Ontario court judgment, how can the minister be so confident about how his legislation will be interpreted?

A recent Angus Reid poll demonstrates conclusively two-thirds of Canadians disagree with the Ontario court and do not wish to extend adoption rights to homosexual couples. The Ontario legislature refused to do this last year. In the same way, Canadians overwhelmingly oppose the minister's plan to amend the human rights act.

The Minister of Justice must reconsider his promise to add sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act and represent the wishes of Canadians, unlike the provincial court has done.

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AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on a day when the auditor general's report dominates the day's news let us not forget some basic realities. Canada is being governed by the bureaucrats, not by elected representatives.

A few examples are all I can give in one minute but there is the Hughes contract with Transport Canada officials, a \$377 million contract that got way out of hand. Another Hughes contract is with the defence department which even the minister has not been able to figure out yet. External Affairs transfer costs were identified today by the auditor general.

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Instead of acting as spokespersons for the bureaucracy, it is time for ministers to stop protecting management levels. Make deputy ministers and directors general directly responsible for their actions.

Because termination is currently very costly, the system keeps senior bureaucrats on even when they work at cross purposes with elected politicians.

If cabinet is prepared to return to responsible government, Parliament may eventually be able to do its job of protecting the public purse.

* * *

(1405)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I extend my congratulations to one of Ontario's environmental groups, Fishermen Involved in Saving Habitat, FISH.

Environment Canada and FISH have been working together with the support of the environmental partners fund to carry out an environmental education project. This partnership has resulted in the development of the bronze level of the watershed report card, a management tool for bringing various stakeholders and community members together and collectively designing strategies for the protection of natural habitat. The bronze level is a crucial foundation which will pave the way for the silver and gold levels of the report card which will deal with the implementation of action plans for relevant ecosystems.

This project is possible because of the support of its community partners. These partners include the American Fisheries Society, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy, many volunteer workshop participants and of course Fishermen Involved in Saving Habitat.

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*[Translation]***DR. RÉJEAN MÉNARD**

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the College of Family Physicians of Canada just named Dr. Réjean Ménard, who is from Granby, the family physician of the year.

This is the first time that this prestigious honour, sought by the 12,500 members of the college, is awarded to a physician from Quebec.

Dr. Ménard's dedication to his patients, his availability, as well as his interest in medical training and in teaching, make him a role model. We are very proud of him.

Dr. Ménard deserves our admiration and our gratefulness for his remarkable work, and I invite all the members of this House to join me in conveying our most sincere congratulations.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

*[English]***HEARING AWARENESS MONTH**

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Canadian Hearing Society and the one in ten Canadians who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing, I am pleased to draw to the attention of the House that May has been proclaimed Hearing Awareness Month.

The aging of our population and the increase in noise pollution have made hearing loss the fastest growing disability in North America.

For many deaf people American sign language is their first language. We must ensure they have access to employment opportunities, places of worship, entertainment and services of every kind.

It is also important to remember a little informed courtesy goes a long way in building and maintaining bridges between hearing and deaf, deafened and hard of hearing Canadians.

* * *

*[Translation]***AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT**

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, the auditor general released the results of an audit by his office involving more than 300 public servants. The results are alarming. It appears that 33 per cent of federal public servants are afraid to lose their jobs if they blow the whistle on cases of conflict of interest involving their boss. Even worse, 60 per cent of senior managers would take no action if the process for awarding a contract to a single supplier was clouded in any way.

This is intolerable, and the government must show some leadership here. But how, when the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Prime Minister constantly give preferential treatment to friends of the government? The Liberals, who said they would defend integrity in government, still have a long way to go to deliver what they promised in their red book. It will take more than words to restore the public's confidence.

* * *

*[English]***GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker:

When the last election battle
Was engaged the red book won
The promises all there to see
In plain talk they were put down
A new way to do politics
Make commitments that you'd keep
The public would be reassured
And go right back to sleep
The problem's not the deficit
Don't get hung up on the debt
Just get everyone back working
Jobs, jobs, jobs we need, you bet
We'll save our social programs

And replace the G.S.T.
 The infrastructure program will
 Bring work for you and me
 To show we're really serious
 We'll give special attention
 To a symbol that the public hates
 We'll reform the M.P. pension
 But history won't be so kind
 The red book makes me choke a bit
 It gave us a brand new political phrase
 We now know the hypogrit

* * *

(1410)

ONTARIO ELECTION

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians are feeling it must be 1993 all over again. A Liberal leader has recently presented a red book which offers a clear vision of what can be expected from a Liberal government along with a timeframe for a plan of action, more than the party on the other side.

As in 1993, there is a strong Liberal leader with a great Liberal team. Lyn McLeod has offered the voters of Ontario a platform which reduces the deficit, offers hope and will make Ontario strong again.

Lyn McLeod is working hard to become premier and all Liberals are earning the trust of the people of Ontario. Liberals know we need more than empty promises from parties offering doom and gloom, destined for opposition like the Reform Party.

Like in 1993, a strong leader and the red book will paint this province red.

* * *

ONTARIO ELECTION

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome Lyn McLeod, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, to the national capital region. Lyn McLeod will be in Ottawa tonight to support local Liberal candidates in the provincial campaign.

The provincial Liberals unveiled their action plan recently which contains the basis of their platform. This action plan follows a trend set by federal Liberal red book promises which will be kept.

The provincial Liberals have made it clear to Ontarians how they intend to get the province back on its feet and clean up the mess left behind by the NDP government.

I encourage all Ontarians to support Lyn McLeod and all her supporting team in forming the next Government of Ontario.

* * *

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I bring to the attention of the House two research achievements

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developed in my riding and in the riding of Rosedale at the University of Toronto.

The first involves a computer interface design called EID by industrial engineering Professor Kim Vicente. This innovation could lead to improved safety and reduced human error in the running of nuclear power plants of the future.

The second involves work done by a team at Mount Sinai Hospital headed by Dr. Joseph Fisher. They have discovered that the main airway, the trachea, can constrict and dilate significantly during breathing, a discovery that could help in the understanding of asthma.

I congratulate these individuals for their work. These examples continue to prove our investment in research and development produces tangible results.

As we mentioned in the red book, a technologically centred industrial policy is the key to create a new economy and accelerate growth, thus creating badly needed long term and permanent jobs.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, have officials from the Minister of Justice's office called the James Bay Cree or the Council for Yukon Indians on this gun control thing? Has the minister attempted to respond to their letters? The Cree say no. The Yukon Indians say no.

Have justice officials been speaking with their counterparts in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Yukon? Has the minister attempted to resolve the impasse between those provinces and the federal government? The attorneys general say no.

Has the Minister of Justice met with Canadians from all across the country in public, open meetings? Has the minister attempted to address the thousands of Canadians who have reservations about this legislation? The people of Dauphin, Manitoba say absolutely not.

During the Manitoba election just held the voters of Manitoba said no to both the Liberals and the justice minister's legislation.

The final no ought to be said on this issue here in the House.

* * *

THUNDER BAY

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to inform the House of the outstanding successes from the hockey capital of Canada, Thunder Bay.

The Thunder Bay Flyers were crowned Ontario Junior A hockey champions. Not to be outdone, the Thunder Bay Senators fought tooth and nail to capture their second straight Colonial Cup.

Oral Questions

Lo and behold, more victories were still to come. Shortly thereafter, the Thunder Bay Midget Kings battled on to win the Air Canada Cup.

Following these three successes, Thunder Bay went on to enjoy a fourth victory when it was once again acclaimed Canada's number one hockey town.

(1415)

One cannot imagine a more successful city at the country's most favourite pastime. I salute the fine efforts of Thunder Bay's hockey warriors. These athletes have outdone themselves and stamped their mark on Canadian hockey for years to come.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

*[Translation]***TAINTED BLOOD**

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health. When the Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada started its proceedings, Commissioner Krever announced that he did not intend to start a witch hunt by identifying the people responsible for this situation but would suggest ways to correct the deficiencies in the blood supply system.

Considering the very serious revelations made yesterday in Toronto, does the minister intend to intervene and ask Commissioner Krever to make recommendations for possible legal action against those responsible for the tainted blood scandal at the conclusion of his inquiry?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we must let Justice Krever continue his inquiry and finish his work. I do not intend to interfere.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you must admit we have a problem. We have blood purchased from prisons in the U.S. that contaminated the Canadian blood supply system and, in the process, dozens and dozens of Canadians. We have a commissioner who announced at the outset that he was not there to look for the guilty parties, and we have a minister who does not intend to take her duties seriously. We have a problem.

Would the Minister of Health agree that she has the authority to ask cabinet to take action and ask Justice Krever to change his position and ensure that charges are laid in connection with what happened, when the commission finishes its work? Does she agree that is the case?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this inquiry is to find out what happened in the

eighties and make sure that everything has been done to ensure this does not happen again. That is the purpose of the inquiry.

We asked Justice Krever to continue this inquiry. We support this inquiry, we provided \$12 million in funding, and we must let Justice Krever do his job.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, considering the serious revelations made before the Krever Commission and the reply we were given just now by the minister who told us that the purpose of the inquiry was to ensure this would not happen again, does the minister not realize that she is supposed to be responsible for the health of Canadians, that Canadians agree this should not happen again but also want the guilty parties taken to court and punished for needlessly contaminating hundreds of Canadians?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on testimony now before the Krever Commission.

(1420)

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

All imported blood products must be systematically inspected and approved by the Department of Health.

How does the Minister of Health explain that blood Connaught imported into Canada from American prisons could have entered the country without being inspected by Health Canada? Could she explain that to us?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat it in the other official language of the House.

We have asked Justice Krever to do an official inquiry into the happenings of the early 1980s. We are allowing Justice Krever to continue his work of looking into what happened to make sure it does not happen again.

That work is continuing. We support that work. We await the outcome of his work.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, answers like that from the minister are a disgrace.

Some hon. members: Shame!

Mrs. Picard: In the light of the serious allegations weighing on her department's officials, is the minister prepared to initiate an internal investigation to find out how such things could have happened and whether present officials are involved in this matter?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Justice Krever has full authority to examine everything that happened. He has already examined what happened at the provincial level. Now he is talking to the people at the

Oral Questions

Red Cross. He is empowered to look into what happened in those years. We support his work and will continue to support it.

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[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, according to the auditor general's report our public servants' knowledge of ethics guidelines is mediocre at best.

Today's report estimates that 57 per cent of senior managers are either unaware or could not mention any element of the policy governing the ethical conduct of civil servants. This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the red book promise of restoring public confidence in government.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. How does the government account for the fact that 57 per cent of its senior civil servants are not aware of their own ethics guidelines?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a limited and random sample was taken by the auditor general in four departments of the government involving less than 400 people.

There were some statistics as a result of that, but I am very happy to report that 86 per cent of public servants felt the ethics standards were very high. The auditor general said that when it comes to comparisons with other governments or with the private sector there is nobody that surpasses the ethics standards of the Government of Canada.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party recognizes that the ethical conduct of the majority of public servants is beyond reproach. Our concern is with the 25 per cent who would accept goods and services at cost for their own personal use and the 30 per cent who would think it is appropriate to hire their brothers-in-law. Surely the Prime Minister would be relieved to find out that bureaucrats were not asked about sons-in-law.

I have a supplementary question. Given the fact that a notable proportion of the public servants would not report such unethical behaviour, will the government introduce legislation to protect whistleblowers?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he points out the 30 per cent. How about the 70 per cent that quite clearly understood the question and gave the appropriate answer?

There are systems in place that properly protect the ethics and the cost efficiency of operations of the government. There is an

open bidding system. There are contract review boards to help ensure that it is all properly handled and above board. That is the essence of this. Furthermore training is provided for our employees. It has been subscribed to in even greater numbers over the last few years.

I think we are in good shape and I think that is what the auditor general is also saying.

(1425)

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board talks about the training and the auditor general has proposed that we introduce training, reporting and, more important, leadership from the top down.

The auditor general emphasized that it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister and his cabinet to provide ethical leadership and suggested that ethic counsellors be appointed in every government department.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Will the government lead by example and implement the auditor general's recommendation for an ethical framework for public servants, including establishing truly independent ethics counsellors starting with the cabinet?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are doing precisely that. We have a framework for ethics, and the red book is a great demonstration of that.

Since we formed the government, through the initiatives of the Prime Minister an ethics counsellor has been put in place. There is a lobbyist certification for all contracts. The Lobbyist Registration Act has been amended. There is a conflict of interest and post-employment code for public office holders.

A great deal has been done to ensure confidence in the integrity of the system. I think the auditor general already recognizes that we are building on a very strong base.

* * *

[Translation]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the auditor general released a report—to which my colleague alluded moments ago—regarding ethics in the government, which was based on a survey of 329 federal public servants. It revealed that 46 per cent of those surveyed would not intervene to prevent a member of their family from being hired and that 33 per cent of them feel that they would be putting themselves at risk if they were to point out a conflict of interest implicating their boss.

Oral Questions

Will the Deputy Prime Minister admit that these figures are unacceptable and that they are the symptoms of the very serious problem that the public service has with ethics? Is it not the government's responsibility to react quickly to remedy the situation?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Yes and the government is acting quickly, Mr. Speaker.

We have certainly brought to the attention of the deputy ministers in all departments that they are to get the proper information to all employees so that the policies of the government are followed.

It is interesting to note that 91 per cent of public servants would report a significant fraud or illegal activity and that 78 per cent of public servants recognize there are very high ethics within their departments and within the operations of the government.

The vast majority understands the code. They read the code. They are given it. They all sign in writing that they have read it and fully understand it.

We will continue to ensure that the code is followed and that the highest ethical standards are followed both in the public service and in the government itself.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given that 12 per cent of all senior officials see nothing wrong with altering contract specifications to give a certain tenderer the edge, a very serious act, will the Deputy Prime Minister acknowledge that the government hierarchy is riddled with problems with ethics and that, unfortunately, the example comes from on high?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many of the people who were sampled, as I indicated before, are not in a position to make those kinds of decisions.

Nevertheless, the ethics standards are important for all people in the public service to be aware of. The government, as I have said already in answering the question, is making every move to comply with what the auditor general has said. We have no disagreement with the auditor general whatsoever and are already taking steps to ensure that is implemented.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in news reports released today the auditor general disclosed that 12 per cent of senior managers believe it is appropriate to undermine

competition for a contract at the request of a supervisor. Furthermore one in three public servants would not intervene to stop it. Nor would they report it.

My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. How widespread is the undermining of the open bidding process? What checks are in place, if any, to prevent such unethical behaviour?

(1430)

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope that the opposition, particularly the Reform Party, realizes that it has several people asking the same question.

As I have indicated before, there are systems in place. There is an open bidding system. There are in fact contract review boards. There are codes of behaviour which are known to all of our employers. The vast majority recognize the good ethical standards which need to be followed.

The system is working well. There is always room for improvement. We certainly agree with the auditor general. However, the auditor general also said that in terms of comparison with the private sector or with other governments, the ethics standards of this government and its public service are very high indeed.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is despicable that any senior manager would even consider undermining the competitive process. But then whose example are they following? We have the backroom José Perez deals, the Power Corp. deals, the Canada Communication Group deals, the Seagram MCA takeover.

Ministers and deputies should lead by example. The best way to assure that they are would be to make the ethics counsellor directly responsible to Parliament and not to the Prime Minister.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister: For the umpteenth time, will the Prime Minister honour the explicit red book promise and make the position of the ethics counsellor report directly to Parliament?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this subject has been discussed previously on numerous occasions.

We have shown leadership by example in terms of the ethics counsellor, in terms of the Lobbyists Registration Act, the lobbyist certification of contracts, the code of conflict of interest and the code of post-employment. All of these things, led by the Prime Minister, have helped to establish a very high ethical standard for the government.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

In a letter to his Quebec counterpart, the minister rejected rather casually the \$333 million in claims submitted by Quebec to the federal government. These claims include reimbursement of the costs incurred during the Oka crisis, the federal contribution to the education of aboriginal peoples in northern Quebec, and stabilization payments.

Can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs assure us that, when he meets with his Quebec counterpart next Monday, he will be more open to Quebec's claims than he was in the letter he made public yesterday?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the claims mentioned in the letter to Minister Beaudoin were submitted a while ago and dealt with under a totally proper and standard procedure.

In the case of the Kanesatake claims, the federal government has already paid a certain amount, and the remaining bills are being audited by the auditor general, who will report back to us within a few months. This equitable, normal procedure will allow us to resolve the problems in this matter according to the usual standards governing relations between the federal government and the provinces.

The two other cases are similar, and we also expect the process to achieve equitable results. Therefore, the letter referred to by the opposition is totally proper and in line with good federal-provincial relations.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the claim relating to the education of aboriginal peoples in northern Quebec, how can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs wriggle out of his responsibilities under the James Bay Agreement and argue that the matter is progressing normally, when the first claims in this matter were submitted in 1986-87? Is a ten year delay normal?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts are not as presented by the hon. member. In fact, the federal government has so far spent some \$450 million on native education.

(1435)

In this matter, the Province of Quebec refuses to implement the provisions of the agreement and to submit the various budgets to joint approval. That is why the federal government paid an amount equal to estimated costs. We asked Quebec to present us with its bill so that we could pay the balance.

Again, this is proper procedure, and unfortunately in this case the Parti Quebecois is preventing us from settling this matter once and for all.

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*[English]***ARTS AND CULTURE**

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage does not understand our fiscal situation or he does not care. Instead, he is siphoning funds out of his programs into his ministerial slush fund, the cultural initiatives program. He has funded the Bronfman Foundation, Harbourfront, projects in ridings of his cabinet colleagues and who knows what else. The minister is using departmental funds to keep his Liberal friends happy.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage stop abusing his funding powers and cancel the wasteful cultural initiatives program?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would rather our hon. colleague specify which programs she finds so despicable. Some of these programs are carried out in Ontario, a part of the country which is represented by Liberals. In addition, some of the projects my department contributes to are funded jointly by the federal government and the provincial government, which, in this case, cannot be mistaken for a Liberal government.

Instead of making unsubstantiated allegations, I think that she should take a closer look at which programs are approved on their own merits and funded through the grants and contributions allocated to my department.

[English]

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, continuing on this topic of wasteful spending, the minister toured Norway at the taxpayers' expense. He took political staff to lunch in Los Angeles. Now he is going to the movies in France. He is going to help 16 culturecrats spend \$350,000 at the Cannes festival. What an expensive night at the movies.

We understand this is the last year for Telefilm to have a booth at Cannes. Given our times of fiscal restraint, when Telefilm is laying off staff, how can the minister justify this last kick at the Cannes?

Oral Questions

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me first dispose of the cultural initiative program. I know where the member is coming from. She wants the CBC to be privatized.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dupuy: Mr. Speaker, I see that I had it right.

She also wants to get rid of programs supporting Canadian culture and return it to the private sector in the hopes that one day all of Canada will be under American culture.

As to her allegations concerning trips to Cannes, she does not seem to be aware that the Cannes festival is the greatest marketplace where films are traded. If she is for the private sector, she should be concerned that Canadian products are properly marketed in that most important marketplace.

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[Translation]

PRIME MINISTER'S MOSCOW VISIT

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

There is some confusion as to why the Prime Minister did not attend the military parade in Moscow. The Prime Minister said he boycotted the parade to protest against the war Russia is currently waging against the Chechens. On the other hand, the Prime Minister's assistants denied repeatedly that he had refused to attend, arguing that the parade had never been on the Prime Minister's agenda.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister explain the discrepancy between the statements made by the Prime Minister, who said he had boycotted the parade, and his assistants, who said that he was never scheduled to attend?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, his assistants were wrong.

(1440)

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for her laconic answer, to say the least.

How can the Government of Canada think that the Russian president would take seriously this symbolic protest against Russia's attitude in the Chechen conflict when in the same breath, in the same interview, the Prime Minister stated that the top priority for the Canadian government was to increase trade with Russia?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the fact the Prime Minister chose to boycott the military parade along with all the other heads of state does not take anything away from the message to the Russian government.

That said, it is also obvious, as the Prime Minister indicated, that the celebrations marking V-E Day reflected the fact that 27 million Russians lost their lives in World War II. That is why he wanted to be there, with the other heads of state, to celebrate V-E Day, without forgetting what is going on in Chechnya. He took up the matter with the president and that is why he boycotted the parade.

* * *

[English]

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

One hundred and seventy-five nations are now meeting in New York to consider the extension of the 25-year old nuclear non-proliferation treaty. While the non-nuclear states have honoured that treaty and have not acquired nuclear weapons, the nuclear states have not honoured article 6 to reduce and eliminate their nuclear weapons.

In order to assure the extension of this important treaty, could the minister say what is being done to oblige the nuclear states to reduce their nuclear weapons in accordance with article 6?

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I also compliment him on the many years that he has been working with other nations on this topic in his membership with the Parliamentarians for Global Action.

Today is a historical day because in New York it was agreed to extend indefinitely the present NPT. The NPT will prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and it is very vital to Canadian security. All hon. members will be pleased to know that it was a Canadian resolution that won the support of more than 100 nations which led to this consensus.

* * *

FIREARMS LEGISLATION

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's doctors are experts on saving lives. Bill C-68 is designed to do the same. Today the Canadian Medical Association said that it is "unconvinced that the registration provisions in Bill C-68 will be effective in reducing suicides or homicides".

The justice minister says he will consult the experts. Will he listen to Canada's healers?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Medical Association presented an extraordinary brief to the justice committee. It testified today making a solid case for every element in Bill C-68. It is true to say that the Canadian Medical Association representatives were not able to say they supported registration. They said that they did not oppose it.

Oral Questions

They took no position. That is interesting. For whatever internal reason within the CMA it made it impossible for the CMA to arrive at the logical conclusion flowing from the facts upon which it relied.

What is also important to note is that before the committee this morning were not only the politicians of the profession but also the practitioners, the emergency room physicians and the experts on suicide. As the hon. member knows because of his presence at the committee this morning, the emergency room physicians and the suicide specialists strongly favour registration as well as every other—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Macleod.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the Canadian Medical Association first looked at this bill it supported its objectives. When it went through the bill thoroughly, it said it was unconvinced about registration. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Yukon all say the same. It is a nice way of saying the bill will not work.

(1445)

Will the justice minister admit in the House that Bill C-68 on gun control is unravelling?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it appears that no one favours this bill except the Canadian people.

Some hon. members: Bravo.

Mr. Rock: The hon. member makes reference to the extraordinary position taken by the attorney general of Manitoba. In taking that position, in opposing registration of guns, the attorney general of Manitoba opposes the position taken by the police chief in Winnipeg, the police chief in Brandon, and the Manitoba Police Association. She takes a position that is adverse to the women's groups in Manitoba. This is a person responsible for the status of women in the province of Manitoba who conceded yesterday to the committee that she did not consult with women's groups before taking the extraordinary position that she opposes legislation that they have supported for many years. The record speaks for itself.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

In his last budget, the Minister of Finance announced that immigrants and refugees would have to pay a \$975 tax to be able to gain permanent resident status in Canada. We have learned

that the Mississauga processing centre alone rejected over 4,000 applications for settlement, between February 27 and April 28, because claimants could not pay that tax.

How can the Minister of Immigration, who pledged that no immigrant or refugee would be adversely affected by this new tax, explain that 4,000 applications processed in Mississauga were rejected for the sole reason that claimants did not have the means to pay that \$975?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is basing his question on an article in *La Presse*. The report is wrong. The reporter was called and a clarification is forthcoming.

Let me outline for the member and the House the real numbers. Since the budget of February, some 18,000 cases have been processed. Of these, some 3,800 were processed without the landing fees attached. Therefore, they were not rejected. They were returned to the applicant for the fees to be attached. Those fees are now being attached and the applicants are reapplying quickly.

On top of it all, of the 18,000 applications since February, only 3 per cent, some 400 cases out of 18,000, have requested a loan. I cannot suggest, based on those facts, that the fee is imposing the kind of hardship the member wants to impress upon the House.

In addition, applications have gone up since the budget, not down.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the minister's denial, which we will look into, the situation is serious and is getting worse.

How can the minister persist in denying the adverse effect of such a tax, given that, in two thirds of the cases, his department rejects loan applications from immigrants and refugees, on the grounds that they are insolvent?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have just outlined the facts of the case. If the member does not want to accept the facts, that is one thing. If he wants to look at the facts and have a reasonable discussion, that is something else.

He says that the fee will jeopardize refugee cases. Let us look at the situation. A claimant coming to Canada makes a refugee claim to the best system in the world. As a result of the government's action last year, the claimant will also be able to work. If the claimant is accepted, he or she has the most important priority they were seeking—protection, refuge, sanctuary in the best country in the world. And they will get that.

Oral Questions

(1450)

The fee only gets applied after the refugee determination. It is a landing fee with a loan provision if they have a hardship. For what? In order to salvage settlement. The people who use settlement the most are refugee claimants. His proposition would have us do away with settlement and therefore jeopardize refugee claimants even more.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the James Bay Cree have stated that the justice minister did not consult with them concerning Bill C-68 and by failing to do so has violated section 24.4.26 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement, which forms part of the Constitution of this country.

I ask the Minister of Justice, did he or did he not consult with the coordinating committee of the James Bay Cree on Bill C-68 in the prescribed manner and in accordance with the Constitution of our nation?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we complied completely with all legal requirements on the Government of Canada with respect to consultation. In fact we went beyond that. In the preparation of Bill C-68 we had the most intensive, most widespread, and most prolonged consultation conducted personally by a Minister of Justice that this country has seen.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder why the James Bay Cree are making these statements if that is true.

Yesterday the attorney general of Manitoba stated that the justice minister's consultation with the province of Manitoba on Bill C-68 was "extremely, extremely minimal". I ask the Minister of Justice, did he or did he not engage in continuous consultation with the attorney general of Manitoba on Bill C-68, as he has claimed in the House?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the consultation engaged in by the Department of Justice with officials from the provincial and territorial governments across Canada was indeed continuous. They were provided throughout this and last year with particulars of the process as it emerged throughout the drafting and preparation of Bill C-68.

One of the points we relied on, which directly relates to Manitoba, was that in that province accidental firearm deaths are two and a half times the national average. We relied upon the fact that hospitalizations as a result of firearms in Manitoba are more than twice the national average. These appalling statistics, showing the need for further gun control, were very much on our

minds as we consulted with Manitoba and the other provinces on these issues.

* * *

HATE LITERATURE

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Justice.

I returned to my riding just yesterday to discover the streets strewn with hate literature. The local law enforcement people tell me they are inhibited from laying charges by two aspects of the Criminal Code under section 318: first, they have to get prior consent of the attorney general; and second, only distribution, and not simple possession, is an offence.

What does the minister offer in support of enforcement agencies to ensure that our streets are free from this disgusting activity?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the features of section 318 to which the hon. member has referred were intended at the time of introduction as an effort to balance on the one hand the need to have in the criminal law a sanction for those who spread hatred and on the other a recognition of the freedom of expression. That difficult balance may not be achieved perfectly in the code and perhaps there is room for improvement.

The code is under review. Also, our campaign commitment to create a round table on hatred chaired by a member of the cabinet remains outstanding and will be addressed. The features of the code to which the hon. member referred will be considered in that context.

It is the concern of the government for this very kind of expression of hatred that inspired the introduction of Bill C-41 to the extent to which it deals with hate. I urge all members of this House to join with the government in supporting every provision of Bill C-41 so we can show through the criminal law that hatred will not be tolerated in this society.

* * *

(1455)

*[Translation]***EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

After some enquiries, we have discovered that several of the organizations seeking to enhance the employability of young Quebecers are still waiting for an answer from the minister regarding the renewal of their subsidy for the current year, which began on April 1. Moreover, others only got a

Oral Questions

three month extension, in spite of the fact that the training they provide usually lasts an average of 16 weeks.

Why is the minister waiting to provide an answer to these organizations, given that the agreements have already expired, or are about to expire?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to note that the hon. member for Lévis is in full agreement with and supports the federal government undertaking action to support employment of youth in the province of Quebec.

It is certainly a good expression of the willingness to work together, federal and provincial governments and the private sector, to help the serious problem of youth employment. If the hon. member has specific concerns I would be glad to look at them.

As I have said in the House previously, we are attempting to allow our local employment centres the discretion and judgment at the local level to make judgments about how the money should be spent. If the hon. member would like to make direct representations about specific projects I will look into them.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to make me say a lot of things, but he need not look very far since the files are on his desk.

Does the postponement of these decisions mean that the minister has a hidden agenda, namely to cut even more deeply than the 15 per cent reduction announced last year, or is the minister punishing those Quebec organizations which refused to integrate the youth service corps or the young trainee programs into their activities?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is so pleased with himself that he thinks he got a proper shot. However, he made one fundamental flaw in his logic. He has not recognized that in this fiscal year we have increased funding for youth employment across Canada by \$43 million. We have increased it by 15 per cent, not cut it by 15 per cent.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, an Ontario provincial court judge has ruled that laws prohibiting

adoption by homosexual couples are contrary to the charter of rights.

The Minister of Justice has frequently insisted that including sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act is in accordance with the wishes of Canadians. The courts and not the legislatures are now making the laws in this country.

In the face of the Ontario court judgment, how can this minister be so confident about how his legislation will be interpreted?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question, if I may say so, demonstrates a lack of grasp of the issue that was before the court in the case that was decided yesterday.

What was at issue yesterday was the constitutional validity of a provincial enactment dealing with the rights of adoption. That is entirely within the provincial sphere. What is intended by this government is to amend the federal human rights act, dealing with discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The judgment yesterday speaks for itself. It may be subject to appeal. I will not comment upon it. I think the distinction between the provincial jurisdiction dealing with adoption and the federal human rights legislation should be borne in mind.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I well understand the difference between federal and provincial. What I am asking about is how anyone in the courts will interpret the law, whether provincial or federal.

Poll after poll demonstrates conclusively that Canadians disagree with the Ontario court and do not wish to extend adoption rights to homosexual couples. The Ontario legislature itself refused to do that last year. In the same way, Canadians overwhelmingly oppose the minister's plan to amend the human rights act at the federal level.

Will this minister reconsider his promise to add sexual orientation to the human rights act and represent the wishes of Canadians, unlike the Ontario provincial court recently did?

(1500)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, coming back to the central point, no, we are committed to the change in the statute. It is a matter of fundamental fairness and we will see it through.

There can be no connection in logic or in law between a federal statute dealing with the prohibition of discrimination and provincial legislation dealing with rights of adoption. One cannot and does not affect the other.

*Supply***EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will know that the latest Statistics Canada report on unemployment shows that 56,000 women gave up looking for work in the month of April, sending the labour force participation rate for women over the age of 25 down to its lowest rate in 11 years. He will also note that the participation rate for youth has fallen by 8 per cent since 1990, and the small drop in the unemployment rate last month was due entirely to people leaving the labour market.

Will the minister admit that this is a disgraceful performance by the economy which is supposed to be in a recovery and which needs massive job creation if there is any real hope of meeting the problems of the deficit?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last year the Canadian economy, thanks to the competitiveness of Canadians, has produced a large number of jobs. In the the last year it has produced a record number of jobs; over 433,000. In the last quarter the private sector has produced over 100,000 jobs.

As a result of the activities and the greater productivity of Canadians, as well as the investment climate in which the government has certainly played an important role, the job creation capacity of the economy is stronger than it has been for a long time.

That does not mean there are not major problems. The hon. member has identified them in terms of women's participation, in terms of the participation of youth, and the hangover from the terrible recession of 1990 to 1993.

As a result, the very strenuous activities, fundamental reforms and the vision of the Minister of Human Resources Development are so important to the building of the country.

* * *

SMUGGLING

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

In March 1994 the government introduced an anti-smuggling initiative to combat contraband such as cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and firearms. I ask the parliamentary secretary what progress Canada customs has made in stopping the flow of contraband goods at our borders.

Ms. Susan Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I am pleased to announce that as recently as Monday, May 8 a customs detector dog identified 25 pounds of cocaine hidden in luggage at Pearson airport worth an estimated \$5 million in street value. On Saturday, May 6 another customs detector dog uncovered \$7.5 million worth of hashish at Mirabel airport. On April 29 Revenue Canada seized another \$4.4 million worth of cocaine at Pearson airport.

That represents a seizure of \$16.9 million of illegal drugs by Revenue Canada in less than 10 days. The minister, the customs officers and our fine nosed dogs, Shad and Buck, should be congratulated.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government in the House to provide details on what is in store for the next few days.

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to see that it is Thursday once again and I have a chance to provide the weekly business statement.

Today we will continue with the opposition motion. Tomorrow we will resume the legislative list on which we have been working: Bill C-67, the veterans' bill; Bill C-54 regarding pensions; Bill C-88 regarding internal trade; Bill C-87 with respect to chemical weapons; Bill C-86 regarding the dairy commission; Bill C-82 concerning the Mint; Bill C-85 with respect to MPs' pensions; and Bill C-65 regarding the reorganization of certain agencies.

(1505)

On Monday we will begin with Bill C-89, the CNR legislation and then return to the list just given. We will continue with this list on Tuesday and Wednesday, adding items to it as we make progress. In particular, we would like to proceed quickly with the bill on the Federal Business Development Bank which the Minister of Industry is introducing this week.

Finally, next Thursday shall be an allotted day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—GOVERNMENT POLICY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to take the floor regarding the Reform

Supply

Party's motion condemning the government for its lack of transparency and its inability to keep its red book election promises regarding the accountability of MPs to the electorate.

Above all, I would like to thank my Reform Party colleagues for introducing this motion condemning the government and the least I can say is that it is timely.

I therefore would like to take advantage of my time to bring to the attention of this House what I think is the most important point in this motion: the Liberals' lack of transparency. Indeed, day in, day out, these first 18 months of the Liberal government's mandate are far from shining examples of transparency, both as regards political appointments—a point which my colleague from Berthier—Montcalm irrefutably demonstrated this morning—and contract awarding and management. It is obvious that the promise of transparency contained in the red book was a trick to fool the Canadian public. Just smoke and mirrors to get elected.

Regarding the Reform Party's motion on the Liberal government's lack of transparency, I would like to raise the following issues in the House: firstly, the status quo regarding access to information since the Liberals acceded to power and, secondly, the role of lobbyists in the management of this government's affairs.

The Access to Information Act was passed in 1982 and went into effect the following year. It gives people the right to obtain federal government documents. Under this act, government institutions must give people access to their documents. Logically, we would have expected the Liberal government to rigorously apply the Access to Information Act, given the promises of transparency contained in the red book which the Liberal Party of Canada trumpeted so loudly during the election campaign.

On the contrary, after 18 years of Liberal reign, government bodies such as the House of Commons, the Senate and certain positions reporting directly to Parliament, such as the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Auditor General of Canada are still not subject to the Access to Information Act. Another example, that of Atomic Energy of Canada, is particularly striking. Why has this body never come under access to information legislation? Does such a dangerous and polluting energy have to be developed in the utmost secrecy, far from public scrutiny? I ask the question.

What about the transparency described in the red book? Why not make Canada's Parliament subject to the Access to Information Act, since it is the ultimate symbol of democracy in the Canadian federal system? In this context, the Bloc Québécois, the official opposition, in the name of democratic principles and through its desire for greater transparency in the present system,

has no choice but to support the report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General of March 1987, which recommended that the Access to Information Act be applied to all federal institutions, including administrative tribunals, the Senate and the House of Commons.

(1510)

The Bloc Québécois gives particular importance to increased transparency in the Senate, our dear Senate.

The public is entitled to be able to study in depth the wild imaginings of this body, which is nothing more than a place for political appointments. Given the political context in Canada since the reign of the Liberal Party of Canada in the 1970s, we stress the urgent need for such transparency throughout the entire administration of federal institutions.

The events of the last few years, especially those involving the conduct of government members, raise serious doubts as to the Liberal government's political will to establish a code of conduct ensuring total openness in public administration. The red book promises are pure fantasies needed to ease the Liberals' conscience and to make Canadian federalist democracy look good.

Throughout the fall 1993 election campaign, the Liberal Party of Canada maintained that ethics would be an important part of its mandate. In the January 1994 throne speech, the government claimed that it attached the utmost importance to integrity and that it wanted to enjoy the people's confidence. It would therefore appoint an ethics counsellor to watch over government integrity and restore public confidence. So what happened? The ethics counsellor, who was appointed by the Liberal government, still reports to the Privy Council. He has no independent power of investigation and continues to report to the Prime Minister. The official opposition has often pointed out in the House that this hurts credibility.

According to the Liberal Party's red book, government integrity is in question every time people feel that lobbyists set public policy by wielding undue influence behind the scenes.

Recent events show that the whole Liberal strategy regarding a parliamentary code of ethics, confirmed by a government motion tabled in this House some 10 days ago, is just a smoke screen. The Broadcasting Act, which comes under the Minister of Canadian Heritage, is no match for the powerful lobby for PowerDirecTv, a company run by André Desmarais, the Prime Minister's son-in-law. The Liberal government even started defending ideas that Brian Mulroney's Conservative government held dear, turning into the advocate of competitiveness in North America.

Reading the ministerial orders from the Minister of Canadian Heritage, one can only bow before the powerful lobby for PowerDirecTv and kiss democracy goodbye at the federal level, where money and political friends rule.

Supply

The weakness of our political institutions and representatives is cause for concern. Not only does the government flout its own law and disown the CRTC, which is responsible for its application, but it takes retroactive measures preventing ExpressVu, a competitor, from starting to provide service in September. All that in the name of competitiveness. In the meantime, the ethics counsellor promised in the red book is cooling his heels in the Prime Minister's outer office. And what about the recent visit of the Minister of Canadian Heritage to Los Angeles, where he was to meet with the majors of the American film industry.

The facts are as follows: three weeks ago, Edgar Bronfman Junior, an American citizen, and Seagram announced the takeover of the American giant MCA, a multi-million dollar deal. This announcement was made from a Los Angeles hotel, with the heritage minister in the next room. So far, no problem, or so it seemed. But it must be pointed out that MCA holds 20 per cent of the shares of Cineplex, a Canadian company controlled by another branch of the Bronfman empire.

(1515)

MCA also wants to control Cineplex by merging with Cinemark USA Inc., whose head office is in Dallas. The trip made to Los Angeles by the Minister of Canadian Heritage makes me wonder, considering that Edgar Bronfman Junior seems to be trying to convince the federal government that MCA is a Canadian company, so as to avoid a review by Investment Canada. This is the kind of transparency displayed by the government.

Let us not forget that, according to the government's official policy, companies actively involved in the cultural sector must be controlled by Canadian interests. This explains why Mr. Bronfman is trying to give a Canadian identity to MCA. Under the circumstances, it becomes obvious that the real purpose of the minister's trip to Los Angeles was to reassure Liberal friends, namely Seagram, of the federal government's support.

While the government House leader is tabling a motion to establish a special committee to develop a code of conduct for parliamentarians, that same government violates the most basic rules of democracy by favouring friends of the Liberal Party and by governing on behalf of the Canadian financial establishment.

Another example which illustrates the political trickery of the red book, and which also shows the flaws of Bill C-43 regarding the ethics counsellor, is the letter sent by the heritage minister to the CRTC, supposedly an independent body under his authority, in support of a licence application.

It must be remembered that the Prime Minister waited more than three weeks before seeking the ethics counsellor's advice on this sensitive issue. How can we not come to the conclusion

that the Prime Minister cares little about the ethics counsellor and, therefore, about ethics?

The Liberal leader simply wanted to save face. The appointment of an ethics counsellor and the Liberals' campaign promise to that effect were supposed to give the public the impression that the government is really doing something about restoring the integrity of our institutions.

In the West, democratic institutions are now facing a crisis in public confidence. It is clear that in the future, it will be necessary to restore the trust that should exist between governments and the public they serve. This means public policy must be discussed, debated, influenced, changed and identified in a process that is absolutely open and transparent.

This is one of the concerns that goes to the very heart of the kind of society we want for Quebec. The federal political scene has for too long been dominated by the political scheming of the Liberals and their friends. The acknowledged expert on scheming and adumbration in the political arena is unquestionably Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

As Professor Guy Laforest explained, this bourgeois aristocrat, this lackey of Canada's financial establishment and anti-Quebecer managed, during his many years in power, to establish close ties between the Canadian financial establishment and the Liberal Party. This political and financial network is the engine of Canadian Liberal ideology, a political perspective that makes every effort to isolate Quebec, to take away its distinct identity and make it a part of Anglo-Canadian culture.

It is easy to identify the members of this political and financial network. They are the ones who keep referring to "the most beautiful country in the world to govern". The present Prime Minister is this network's new lieutenant. We have the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is responsible for Quebec. And remember Eddie Goldenberg, the Prime Minister's trusty adviser, who happens to be the son of Carl Goldenberg who helped Pierre Elliott Trudeau draft his bill for patriation and a charter of rights in the summer of 1967.

(1520)

The Senate still harbours Leo Kolber, one of the Liberal Party's great bagmen, childhood friend of Charles Bronfman and member of the board at Seagram. Mr. Kolber is also a friend of Tom Axworthy, who was Mr. Trudeau's former chief of staff and is the current Minister of Human Resources Development's brother and the manager of The CRB Foundation, which was set up by Mr. Bronfman. As we know, The CRB Foundation is greatly involved in promoting Canadian nationalism. And Paul Desmarais, Charles Bronfman's equal, is still in Montreal.

As Professor Guy Laforest wrote: "—by boards of trustees and collaborators, their networks are interlaced. The Liberal planet finds everything it needs in its network. John Rae, one

of the key people at Power Corporation, was one of the most important strategists behind the campaigns of the current Prime Minister of Canada”.

It is the financial interests of the richest Canadians which govern Ottawa, not the elected representatives of the people. They are all following in Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s tradition, and that is having a one track mind when it comes to Quebec: having Quebecers assimilate anglo-Canadian values as quickly as possible.

Before our very eyes, once this government got to office, it considerably diluted commitments it made in its red book during the 1993 election campaign. Such an about face raises in the minds of the public a legitimate doubt about whether the Liberal government truly intends to legislate ethics in Parliament.

The Bloc Québécois, the official opposition, believes that, to re-establish the integrity of our democratic institutions, we must put a stop to the empty promises of the past 30 years to legislate parliamentary ethics.

In addition, the administration of the affairs of government must be as transparent as possible in order to eliminate the grey areas and to ensure Canadians that public policy decisions reflect the general interests of the people and not those of powerful lobbys. However, with the Liberals in power, the reality of the matter is something else.

In the context of Bill C-43 governing the registration of lobbyists, the lobbyists increased their meetings in the months before the tabling of this bill. Others threatened suits if the law forced them to disclose their political ties. In this instance, as in others, a lack of transparency prevented the people of Canada from knowing the extent and the nature of lobby activities with regard to Bill C-43.

We have to admit that Bill C-43 as it stands will not likely prevent such troubling events as those surrounding the privatization of Pearson airport or the business involving the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Worse yet, according to Mitchell Sharp, the Prime Minister’s principal adviser on matters of ethics, even if the legislation arising from Bill C-43 had been in effect at the time of the discussions on the privatization of terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson airport, the public would have been none the wiser.

The Bloc Québécois, the official opposition, presented more than twenty amendments in committee on Bill C-43. They were rejected by government members who had not even been at the hearings or taken part in discussions in recent months.

We were also hoping, good players that we are, that the new rules, or at least the approach taken and the commitments made by the Liberal Party of Canada in its red book would permit in depth discussion of this issue, so vital to a democracy.

Supply

However, we have to admit that the Liberals’ intentions with regard to transparency and ethics are those of the Bronfman, Seagram and Power Corporation families. These measures serve solely to impress, with the government using all kinds of lofty language to keep up appearances for political reasons.

Once again, the federal Liberals’ version of history is written on the backs of the country’s most disadvantaged, and, just as obviously, on the back of Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe a question about an incident that occurred in the House a while ago. Perhaps it is a sensitive issue for him. I pose this question with all due respect. It is about integrity. It is about respect. It is about his feeling of frustration.

(1525)

One day when asking questions in question period he became frustrated with either the answers or the commentary or the behaviour of a minister of the crown or the representative of the minister of the crown. I wish the member would share his experience with us of the incident in which he stuck to his guns and was asked to leave the House. He had to go through a lot. I think it is an example of the lack of integrity displayed by certain ministers of the crown. If he would like to share that incident with us and tell us his true feelings about it, I think it would be another example of the lack of integrity of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before I give the floor to the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, I agree with the member for Calgary Centre that he raises an issue of great sensitivity, but I feel very strongly that we are on the edge.

I want to mention a fact regarding the incident being raised. Had the member withdrawn, the Chair would have deemed the matter closed and would not have allowed the question to continue. I will listen attentively to the reply of the member for Richmond—Wolfe.

[Translation]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my colleague for addressing this issue because, as I just said, today, the Reform Party launched a debate on a fundamental exercise in democracy, that is, openness in government, the role of MPs representing their fellow citizens and constituents, and the possibility for each member to do his or her job honestly and to act in accordance with his or her principles.

As for my experience as a member of Parliament, I think I have been guided by the desire to do my job very openly and honestly. I have been guided by this desire, although I was troubled for a while in this House to hear comments, opinions

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and answers that went this way and that way, that were contradictory. It was obvious to me that everything was far from clear and open in this matter.

My conduct as a member of Parliament has been guided by the desire to be honest, to act in accordance with my principles, and to represent my constituents in a responsible manner. To allow MPs to do their job properly, the government must be open and answer straightforward questions truthfully. I thank the hon. member for his question.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Mr. Speaker, I want to add a brief comment. Without expressing a view for or against the opinions of either member who just had the floor, I appreciate the way both members handled the question and the answer on a very delicate and sensitive matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to commend the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe for his excellent presentation. He correctly identified all aspects of the problem. He reminded us that the official opposition had proposed amendments. I want to ask him a question which, in my opinion, is related to the issue. As he said himself, many people seem to have lost confidence in government because they see links with large corporations.

Does the hon. member think that there is a way to change this, if only symbolically, for example by providing that political parties should be financed only by individuals and that businesses should not be allowed to contribute?

(1530)

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. Indeed, the hon. member for Lévis raises a fundamental issue relating to the democratic process and the ability of a government, opposition or third party to intervene in public interest issues or matters with maximum latitude and independence from lobbies, financial networks or any form of lobbying. One approach developed by the Quebec government and put in place following years of extremely aggressive and stormy debate was party financing.

It is clear that when, in an effort to raise funds to pay its for publicity, promotion and propaganda bills, a political party has to go to large corporations and major financial concerns and that there are no regulations as to how much money can be raised and from whom, this party may find itself in an extremely difficult situation or literally have its hands tied if and when it becomes the government or the official opposition. There is no way that a political party that gets hundreds of thousands of dollars from

institutions and corporations can act with complete freedom once in office. It is just not true.

What happened at the federal level when it was suggested that election campaigns and political parties be funded through donations from the public at large and not from large corporations or labour associations? The federal government never had the courage to amend the provisions of the Election Act dealing with party financing. In that context, while governed by a federal legislation that does not contain any restrictions, yet refusing to be attached to any financial concern, the Bloc Québécois decided on its own, during the last federal election campaign, to operate under the Quebec legislation providing for political parties to be funded solely by donations from the public. The Bloc never accepted donations from businesses or organizations.

With respect to my hon. colleague's question, it is obvious that as long as this government will not take the necessary steps—and the first one is party financing—to free itself from the hold of Power DirecTv, the Bronfmans and the Seagrams of this world, with or without a code of conduct, it will continue to have its hands tied by these major financial concerns and the lobby of backroom boys.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate this afternoon. I heard a few speeches earlier, including the one made by the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, whose arguments were completely out of line.

The member made all kinds of suggestions on other bills before the House, but not on the issue being debated today.

The motion tabled by the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster, reads:

That this House condemn the government for its failure to keep its Red Book promise to make the government more open and permitting Members of Parliament to be more accountable to their constituents.

[*English*]

Mr. Abbott: What a great idea.

Mr. Milliken: Frankly this is one of the silliest motions we have debated in this Parliament. It is based on a completely false premise about what the government has done in the time it has been in office. There has hardly ever been a government in Canadian history that has so fulfilled the promises it outlined at the beginning of its mandate.

(1535)

In 30 some years of being a participant in this process I cannot think of another document that has so affected the lives of Canadians and so directed the operations of a gov-

ernment than this red book has done. It has been a guide book of promises that the government undertook to do and it has kept the promises.

I want to quote from the red book because it is extremely relevant to the motion before the House. After all the motion does mention this little tome. I will read the whole section on parliamentary reform. I know this may be a little long for the concentration of members opposite but I want to read it in any event.

In the House of Commons, a Liberal government will give MPs a greater role in drafting legislation, through House of Commons committees. These committees will also be given greater influence over government expenditures. More free votes will be allowed in the House of Commons, and individual members of Parliament will be involved in an effective pre-budget consultation process. We will establish mechanisms to permit parliamentary review of some senior Order-in-Council appointments.

The pension regime of members of Parliament has been the focus of considerable controversy. It is now the subject of an independent review, which Liberals support. We believe that reform is necessary.

Mr. Abbott: So why didn't you do it?

Mr. Milliken: If the hon. member would just be patient and listen.

Mr. Abbott: I have the same copy right here.

Mr. Milliken: I am glad to hear it. The hon. member only has a page. He should take the whole book home and keep it under his pillow. He might sleep better.

Whatever the results of the independent review, a Liberal government will reform the pension plan of members of Parliament to end "double-dipping." MPs should not be able to leave office and receive a pension from the federal government if they accept a new full-time paying job from the federal government. In addition, we will review the question of the minimum age at which pensions will begin to be paid.

When the Conservative government came to power in 1984, while citing the need for economy it nonetheless found the resources to increase both the size of political staffs and the pay available to them. These expansions created bloated political budgets and inflated salaries for members and friends of the Conservative Party. A Liberal government will reduce the size and budgets of ministers' offices and the Prime Minister's Office by at least \$10 million a year.

I challenge hon. members opposite to find one statement in that whole paragraph on parliamentary reform that has not been fulfilled by the government to date. The government has moved on every single one of its promises and it has gone further on most of them.

Hon. members opposite who have been bleating, whining, blithering and crying all day should repent. Get off it, I say to them, and face the facts. The government has lived up to its commitments in full measure. They were all in the red book. They were all made manifest for the public to look at and consider in an election campaign. The public voted for the red book in droves.

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I know members in the Reform Party in particular do not like to hear that fact. They like to hear only the facts from their own perspective, their own friends. Their idea of consultation is to consult their friends and then say this must be what everybody wants. There are Canadians who are not friends of the Reform Party. There are lots and lots of them where I come from. I know lots and lots who think the Reform Party is quite idiotic. Still they are not the people to whom Reformers talk when they want a consultation.

I want to read why Canadians and particularly the poor souls that have been following the Reform Party have been so badly deceived. We saw this kind of deception go on in the House the other day. I know I cannot imitate the accent but the quotation is this. It was on April 27 in the House:

One of the reasons there is so much public cynicism about politics and government is that governments consistently break their promises.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Milliken: You can tell that is a perpetual opposition party, Mr. Speaker.

This Liberal government, for example, is not yet two years old but already it has littered the political landscape with broken promises.

This is a falsehood. This is completely untrue. I have just read the whole section of the red book on parliamentary reform and we have complied with every single one of the promises and then some. Yet the member for Calgary Southwest had the nerve to get up in the House and utter this complete rubbish. I can only imagine how much worse it is when the hon. member is off speaking to his supporters at meetings around the country. They have been thoroughly, totally and utterly deceived by the hon. member. If they would simply invite me to some of their meetings, we might straighten some of them out. I can name about 176 other members of the House who could do a similar straightening job on some of the members of the Reform Party.

(1540)

I want to turn to the explicit promises with which we have complied. First, there was the promise that committees be strengthened, that members be given a greater role. We have just been through a procedure in the procedure and House affairs committee where we drafted a bill. I was before the Senate committee this morning on behalf of the committee defending the bill. It was the one drafted in committee. It was adopted by the government and then passed in the House.

Bills have been referred to committee under the new procedures that we adopted in the House shortly after we took office where the bill is referred before second reading. Members have full scope in the changes they wish to make to the bill. The Lobbyists Registration Act is a perfect example and there are others. We are going to do it with the CNR bill on

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Monday. This has given members of Parliament untold powers in respect of that legislation which were not exercised or exercisable in the last Parliament.

Hon. members in the Reform Party were not here in the last Parliament. They do not know how bad it was. They do not know how good this is. They do not realize how much they are getting out of this. If they had been here before, their complaints would be cut in half today.

The President of the Treasury Board introduced changes in the expenditure management system so that committees can become more involved in the spending priorities of the government. We are about to embark on that process in the committees very shortly.

We have opened up the process. We have given more power to committees and I need not recite for members opposite the changes to the budget process where the finance committee travels Canada to hear Canadians' views on the budget.

Mr. Abbott: Then they come back with their own recommendation.

Mr. Milliken: Of course they do. What do you set up a committee for but to come back with its own recommendations? At least they listen, which is more than I can say for the hon. members opposite.

I want to turn to the question of free votes because hon. members are suggesting that somehow we have very few free votes. I note it was a red book promise. I just want to talk about how well we have delivered on that promise. Every private members' bill and motion has been a free vote. We have had dozens of them and they have all been free votes.

The members of the House, unlike the last Parliament—hon. members opposite were not here and do not know how bad it was—have had an opportunity to vote on all these bills and express their views. We will continue to do that. There may be times when other matters will be the subject of a free vote but we were elected on a platform, the red book. It is right here. The promises are there.

If members were elected to serve in this Parliament based on that platform, they are expected to vote for the things contained in the platform. That is the way political parties work. The Reform Party knows that is the way it works. Its members tried to do it with their little blue book but unfortunately they have not kept their promises, unlike the government.

It is quite hypocritical of the Reform Party to put forward this motion. We have seen during recent debates how members of the Reform Party perceive it to be their duty to represent their constituents' interests. Our constituents voted for the policies in

the red book. Our constituents are getting delivered to them the promises that were in the red book.

The complaint we are getting from the Reform Party in this motion is that the Reform Party wants us to adopt their policies and say that is what we promised to Canadians. It is not what we promised. We promised something different, something a whole lot better. What Canadians are getting is what is in the red book.

I want to turn to gun control as a perfect example because this bill has widespread support across the country.

Mr. Abbott: Not in my constituency.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member should get the attorney general of Saskatchewan to do a poll like the attorney general of Alberta did. The poor old attorney general of Alberta came to Ottawa to complain about the bill, having conducted a poll that discovered 64 per cent of the electors of his province do not agree with him.

The poor soul must be gravely misguided, if not something worse. I can only suggest to the hon. member that he take a good look at what is happening in his constituency and conduct a proper scientific poll, not one of the pay as you phone in polls for which the Reform Party is so well known.

(1545)

I want to turn to the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest, who is here, I am delighted to say. I know he is a caring person. He conducted a poll in his riding and I understand he may have recanted his heresy at second reading and will now support the government on the bill. I congratulate him for showing a little independence of judgment. It is very rare on that side.

The hon. member who is doing all the hooting and hollering over there should talk to the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest and conduct a poll in his riding and he might find himself constrained to vote with the government as well.

The Reform Party is well aware—as is the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster, of all members to have moved this motion, because he is on the procedure and House affairs committee—that we looked into all these things like free votes, recall, initiative, and referenda. We called witnesses and heard experts on all these subjects in the committee. We considered the matter and the committee tabled a report in the House. The majority of members of the committee disagreed with the Reform Party position and thought that referenda were unnecessary on a massive scale in Canada, that recall was not an idea worthy of importing into the political climate of the country at this time, and that initiative was unneeded. Reform members disagreed, but it does not mean we were wrong. It certainly was not something we promised in the red book.

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I encourage hon. members of the Reform Party to live up to the promise they made on their little blue book to publish the results of their caucus meetings and the votes in caucus. I see the hon. member for Calgary Centre has one. Those things are rare as hens' teeth. When we consider how many of the promises have been broken, I can understand why.

I have a book here that I would be glad to share with the hon. member, and Canadians would love to read it, "The Little Book of Reform"; it is a green book. I will quote from it. I know this may not be popular with the hon. members opposite, but I will find a quote in here as I continue speaking.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): While I am on my feet the member might find that quote.

I would not want the House to think there is any inconsistency on the part of the Chair with regard to props. Understanding of course that the motion today brought forward by the Reform Party on this allotted day specifically makes mention of a particular book, certainly I understand that it will have a greater and wider use than it or any other book normally would. If any other books are used, of any colour or for whatever reason, please quote from them before you do anything else.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, that is fine. I appreciate the opportunity to have a chance to check for the right chapter.

This book is also entitled "The Gospel According to Preston Manning and the Reform Party". I quote the hon. member for Cariboo—Chilcotin. This is openness in government: "For goodness sake, Jack, don't say things like that. We have a reporter in the car." That is a good quote. I suggest that reflects the Reform notion of openness in government. He was in the House a little while ago explaining a mistake he had made in debate earlier this morning to the hon. whip, who caught him up on some facts he had got completely wrong about some appointment. I suspect if there had been a reporter nearby he might have been more careful in his remarks.

I want to turn to the one other thing that happened with respect to free votes. We adopted a motion in the House about free votes. The hon. member may have forgotten. It was a motion proposed by the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam. I quote the motion, because it was adopted unanimously, if I am not mistaken, in June 1994, in compliance again with the red book and our notion of free votes:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should continue increasingly to permit members of the House of Commons to fully represent their constituents' views on the government's legislative program and spending plans by adopting the position that the defeat of any government measure, including a spending measure, shall not automatically mean the defeat of the government unless followed by the adoption of a formal motion.

That was all agreed to. There is no doubt that free votes are permitted and that they happen. The hon. member should be relieved by the fact that they happen on a daily basis.

(1550)

Now I will turn to public consultation, because it is another area where the government has excelled. It has undertaken the most comprehensive consultative exercises to ensure that the views of the Canadian people are represented in legislation that is brought forward in the House. There have been broad national consultations on immigration policy, social policy review, gun control, and on two federal budgets. The result is policies that Canadians support and a government that Canadians respect in record numbers.

This is far from the Reform idea of consultation. We witnessed something of its idea when one of its members travelled to Washington to consult with Americans who agreed with him. That is its idea of consultation. It opposes is trips where you might get exposed to somebody with ideas that are different from your own. When it can take a trip and meet with people who think exactly the way it does it goes. That is the Reform approach to travel.

Mr. Morrison: If you pay your own bills.

Mr. Milliken: I see, it is pay your own way. I am delighted they pay. Even if Reformers went at the public expense, all they want to do is meet with people who agree with them. I am sorry that is true, because I think part of the job of members of Parliament is to listen to all views. It is something that we on this side of the House try to do whenever we visit our constituencies. We meet with constituents whose views are not the same as ours. We talk to them, share their views and hear what they have to say.

Mr. Morrison: Then you tell them.

Mr. Milliken: We tell them our views. I am not afraid to discuss my views. I tell people what my views are.

When they learn that the public supports a government bill, Reform members make excuses, ignore the wishes of their constituents, and vote against the bill just for the sake of opposition. I thought we were going to see a change.

I cannot quote chapter and verse from the blue book because I cannot find a copy. The hon. member keeps waving it, but I do not have a copy. Perhaps he could send me one another day.

One thing I recall from the blue book was that we were not to do things in Parliament the way we used to. My goodness, I am having trouble telling the difference between the party in opposition and the New Democratic Party when they occupied a similar position.

Supply

One only has to look at the record of the Reform Party in its consultations, particularly with aboriginal groups. We have seen the spectacle of its meetings in British Columbia recently where it was discussing aboriginal land settlement issues and it did not invite any aboriginal people to come to the meetings. I think it is a poor way to carry on consultations.

I want to turn to the ethics counsellor and the whole question of ethics, which is indirectly raised—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, honestly, the braying on the other side is excessive. I believe my time is about to run out.

The government has lived up to its commitment to provide more open and accountable government by setting up the ethics counsellor and introducing the lobbyists registration bill. The government also has proposed a special joint committee to develop a code of conduct for members, which motion has been opposed by the Reform Party and stalled in the House by the actions of the Reform Party. Obviously, they do not want the House to come up with this set of criteria of ethics guidelines for members, which I think is important and I would like to get on with.

We have to look at the record of the government overall. I think it has been excellent.

The member for Kindersley—Lloydminister in his speech this morning complained about the government's use of time allocation. Honestly, if the hon. member had been here in the last Parliament he would have learned a lot about time allocation and closure. There are two rules, which the hon. member should know. We have not used the closure rule recently. I do not know whether we have used it all in this Parliament. We have used time allocation. I can only say that if the members had been here the last time, they would think life in this Parliament is bed of roses. It was used by the government on repeated occasions against the opposition at that time. It has hardly ever been used in this Parliament.

Members opposite have got off very, very lightly in respect of the government's approach to the House. We have deliberately tried to allow members to express their views on all these things. Hon. members opposite have had ample opportunity to make their views known, not just on government bills but in other debates.

I would love to go on about some of the other aspects of legislation, but unfortunately I see my time has expired. There are questions and comments and I will be glad to answer questions from the hon. members opposite.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I

noticed in particular that, according to him, all the decisions made by the Liberal government so far were in keeping with the promises in the red book.

(1555)

I wish to remind the hon. member that, during the election campaign, the current Prime Minister, who was then Leader of the Opposition, was against free trade and in favour of GST reform and said that he would not touch social programs and transfers to the provinces. But we know what happened to all these resolutions. The Liberal government did just the opposite.

I remember another matter that was widely discussed during the election campaign, especially in Ontario, namely the Pearson airport deal. It is one of the areas in which the former Tory government had to pay for its poor performance under the circumstances, since the Liberal Party had promised to review the matter. Yet, once in power, the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Nixon, a former Ontario finance minister, to look into this deal. During the investigation, Mr. Nixon himself said that there might have been certain irregularities due to lobbyists.

A little later, the ethics counsellor, who reports not to the House of Commons but to the Prime Minister, admitted at committee meetings that Bill C-43 would not have changed anything regarding the misconduct of lobbyists in the Pearson airport deal. He said himself that it would not have changed anything. Yet, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands brags about the merits of the bill.

I have two questions for him: First, how does he explain that it took the government 18 months to table this bill with the Pearson airport deal in the background, when the information obtained under the Access to Information Act reveals that Bill C-43 has been modified and is not in keeping with Liberal promises, precisely because of lobbyists' influence? I would like him to answer this question.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member misunderstood the circumstances. First of all, I must say that the Minister for International Trade is here and that he is the one who made the necessary changes to NAFTA so that we could support it. That is why the Prime Minister promised during the election campaign that the agreement would be changed. The Minister for International Trade, an excellent minister, made all sorts of changes to the agreement so that it could be passed in this place. That is my first point.

Regarding Bill C-43, I must tell the hon. member that this bill was introduced in this House June 16 1994. So, this is not brand new. If we had problems with this bill, getting it passed in this House and all, it was because of the hon. members opposite filibustering, talking endlessly and showing such a keen interest in this bill.

*Supply**[English]*

I say to the hon. member do not criticize the government for being slow and bringing it in 18 months after we took office. We introduced it six or seven months after we took office. It has taken almost a year to get it passed because of the obstruction primarily of members on the other side of the House, because we have not put up an inordinate number of speakers on the bill.

Since the hon. member touched on something else the Prime Minister promised, which was transfer payments to the provinces, the Prime Minister indicated there would be ample notice of changes in those transfer payments. He never promised they would remain the same or always increase, and he has lived up to that promise fully.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians from coast to coast know by now, the holy grail of the Liberal Party is its now infamous red book, otherwise referred to as the dead book—cold and getting clammy as each day goes by. I remind members opposite the infamous red book is a two edge sword. It will also hold them very accountable for what they have not done which they had promised to do.

(1600)

My question to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and I ask it most seriously, has to do with the efficacy of using the red book, primarily an election document. It was a compilation of promises put together in a binder. It was a method of appealing to voters and saying this is how they could get elected.

In the last election the Liberal Party gained 177 seats, a vast majority in the House. It did so by getting something in the order of 41 per cent of the total votes cast.

An hon. member: It was 43 per cent.

Mr. McClelland: The hon. member opposite tells me it was 43 per cent. I am wondering if the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands would speak about the integrity and whether it is right, proper and appropriate to foist on Canadians holus-bolus the Liberal election document as a mandate for change when that party received 43 per cent of the total votes cast. It is nothing like a majority.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Given the brevity of the question from the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest, I will take an equally brief question from the hon. member for Kootenay East and the parliamentary secretary can respond to both.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in reading from this holy grail, the red book, the chapter "Governing with Integrity", it says the erosion of confidence with public servants, the members of Parliament, seems to have many

causes. Some have to do with the behaviour of certain elected officials, others with an arrogant style of political leadership.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary agrees the justice minister, particularly today, showed a tremendously arrogant style when he completely dismissed the question of my colleague from Macleod in saying doctors supported objectives of the firearms legislation when he knows full well every Canadian supports the objectives of the firearms legislation, when he would have known that: "The CMA, however, is unconvinced that the registration provisions proposed in Bill C-68 will be effective in reducing suicides or homicides because they seem to concentrate their efforts on that group of users which poses the least risk to society".

Does the parliamentary secretary not agree this is a very clear cut case of the Minister of Justice showing an absolute arrogance on the part of the Liberal government when he misquoted the CMA?

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I will deal with the questions in the order in which they were put.

The first question suggested promises in the red book were being foisted on Canadians who did not vote for the Liberal Party and that because we have a majority in Parliament we should not foist the red book on members of the public.

The hon. member, and I know he is one of the few reasonable members of his party, would agree we are at least operating on a blueprint. The red book was not just a series of election promises, it was a blueprint for action when we took office and it was advertised as such by the party. In putting it into place in government we are doing exactly what we said we would do with the 177 members elected as Liberals because they were relying on the red book and putting it forward as their policy.

The problem the hon. member raises is not one he put in his question, but his colleagues would know this is the case. They want us to put in place the policies in the blue book and the policies they are espousing in the House which had the support of far fewer Canadians.

In the circumstances we are probably doing the right thing in the context of the democratic system under which we have operated in Canada for the more than 130 years we have been in existence. I will leave it at that.

With respect to the Minister of Justice and the phoney allegation of arrogance, the Minister of Justice is far from arrogant. We would be hardpressed to find a Minister of Justice who has done more consulting in respect of this bill and who has a firmer grip of the facts on which he bases his acts than the present Minister of Justice.

Supply

(1605)

The hon. member in his question is showing considerable contempt for his electors when he indicates to the House he is not supporting the gun control bill.

I quote from an article written—

Mr. Abbott: I am showing contempt for my electors?

Mr. Milliken: Contempt for your voters, I say to the hon. member.

Mr. Abbott: My voters? Right.

Mr. Milliken: I quote from a *Globe and Mail* column this morning by Jeffrey Simpson. Jeffrey Simpson is not a friend of the Liberal Party. He used to write Tory campaign tracts in his articles in the *Globe and Mail*. He is certainly one of the better known journalists in Canada:

Shoulder to shoulder with the gun lobby, Reformers spout nonsense about gun registration being a plot to curtail liberties.

This week one of the genuinely stupid ideas of our time made its appearance on Parliament Hill when the attorneys general of Saskatchewan and Alberta suggested that their provinces be exempted from the gun control legislation. Yukon joined in this madness.

Not content with one stupid idea, the provincial interveners produced another. This harebrained idea has been offered before on other issues.

In other words, he went through a series of things he thought were pretty stupid. Every single one of them is supported by the Reform Party.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to address the Reform motion that the House condemn the government for its failure to keep its red book promises to make government more open and accountable.

The Reform Party in 1988 compiled a book of principles and policies, which is probably one of the first political parties to ever put its policies and principles in writing and make a commitment to the Canadian public. On page eight it states:

We believe in the accountability of elected representatives to the people who elect them and that the duty of elected members to their constituents should supersede their obligations to their political parties.

I will predict that within the Liberal caucus when it votes on Bill C-41, the sentencing bill, there will be members who will wish to vote against the government but they will not be allowed to for fear of being kicked out of caucus or off the standing committees.

When it comes to Bill C-68, the gun control bill, some members of the caucus will want to vote against the government. They will have to toe the line or get kicked out of caucus.

Unlike Reformers, they will not be able to fulfil the wishes of their constituents. On this side of the House on both those

ills members will vote the clear wishes of their constituents, established in a fashion that has shown and expressed a complete communication system with them, not a poll taken a year and a half ago and then coming out with a law like this gun control bill.

In my original speech I was to speak about how the Liberal government whip has punished, castigated, disciplined, reprimanded, reproached, scolded and penalized several Liberal members for bucking the party line and reflecting the views of their constituents. My colleagues have covered all that. We know about that. The Canadian public knows all about that.

After hearing the government whip's diatribe about Liberal ethics, which I believe is an oxymoron like Progressive Conservative, and hearing about how Liberals are spearheading a special joint committee to develop recommendations for a code of conduct for politicians, I cannot resist making a few comments directed at the Liberal whip.

In typical planet Ottawa fashion the Liberals will study the issue of accountability and review the concept of openness under the guise of a special joint committee. The committee will be comprised of seven members of the Senate and fourteen members of the House of Commons who, along with countless support staff, will travel across Canada and the world to study how other governments hold their representatives accountable. It sounds very important.

Canadian taxpayers will wave goodbye as their brave representatives, along with their entourage, sail off to foreign lands to find out how their politicians conduct themselves.

From experience I know the Liberal members of this committee will constantly utter clichés like "what we need is effective inputs for effective outputs". My favourite is from the Minister of Finance: "What we are trying to do is square the circle with this budget".

That is how governments play up politics in Ottawa with touchy issues like accountability and openness. They study them. The Tories did it and now the Liberals are following suit with their code of conduct committee. It sounds good, looks good but does not do anything.

(1610)

Reform wants to bring back some sanity to this process. We can give rule number one for code of conduct without even leaving the Chamber and without leaving the shores of this land: do not waste Canadian taxpayers' money on needless junkets.

In 1987 the Ontario Supreme Court found the former cabinet minister Sinclair Stevens had breached the Canadian conflict of interest rules on 14 different occasions prior to his

resignation in 1986. As a direct result the Mulroney government introduced a conflict of interest bill for MPs which unfortunately died on the Order Paper at the end of the parliamentary session. A similar conflict of interest bill was introduced in the next session. It too died on the Order Paper.

As a result of these failed attempts, the Mulroney government created a special joint committee of the House of Commons and Senate to study the issue. Does that sound familiar?

A lengthy study of issues like conflict of interest and accountability was conducted. Witnesses were heard. Testimony was given. A 60-page report was submitted to the House and the Senate. Among the major recommendations was that an independent office be created, the holder of which would oversee the disclosure of assets and liabilities of both the members of the Senate and the Commons and act as an adviser to parliamentarians investigating possible breaches of the act. Does this sound like an ethics counsellor?

The report also recommended clear procedures be established requiring members not to vote on issues in which they have an interest.

These are a few of the recommendations of the 60-page report to the Mulroney government in 1992. Nothing has changed. The hon. Liberal whip was a member of the committee at that time. Now it appears we will spend more money and send another group out to do exactly the same thing. Can he remember what the witnesses said? Can he remember what they told him? I do not seem to recall "vote Liberal and we will reinvent the wheel" in the red book.

It is obvious the Liberals have already attempted to act on a recommendation of the 1992 report which I mentioned earlier. They appointed an ethics counsellor. However, they did not follow through with the full recommendation in their red book. The ethics counsellor does not answer to Parliament. That is a sad disgrace. That lacks integrity. That smacks of misrepresentation.

The Liberals observed this in opposition and subsequently incorporated the recommendations made to the Tories in their red ink book. I have no problem with a party picking up the ball and running with it if it has been fumbled by another party. The Liberals are very good at borrowing ideas from other parties like the Reform Party on the budget.

However, I do have a problem when they waste money to play politics with an issue so they can sell it as their own idea and initiative.

The groundwork for a code of conduct was laid in the last Parliament. Surely the issue of ethics has not changed that dramatically in the past three or four years. The only problem was that the Mulroney government lacked the intestinal forti-

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tude to act on any of the recommendations of the code of conduct.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Morrison: The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Mr. Silye: Indeed.

[*English*]

The Liberals want to be able to use the creation of yet another special joint committee as ammunition in the next election. The Prime Minister will stand in front of voters and talk about how Liberal ideas and initiatives have restored an integrity to the parliamentary system in Canada as a *fait accompli*. He will speak of how they established a special joint committee to study the code of conduct for MPs and report to both federal Houses. Finally, the Prime Minister will take great pride in the establishment of an ethics watchdog to scrutinize the conduct of Canada's politicians.

People in the real world will think that sounds pretty impressive. They should think again. The Liberals still will not concede any control over the scrutiny of their affairs, as we have witnessed and seen with the conduct of three or four cabinet ministers, two or three members of Parliament of the Liberal caucus. Nothing has been done according to the usage of the ethics counsellor in applying the rules of conduct that currently exist at all the various levels. It is a scam, a sham and a disgrace.

The ethics watchdog they appointed is a lap-dog with no teeth. The bottom line is you do not appoint somebody to scrutinize your activities and those of your colleagues. Where was the ethics watchdog during any of the three "Dupuy-gate" incidents? Nowhere to be found. Where was the ethics watchdog when the CRTC decision on direct to home satellite TV was suspiciously overturned by cabinet to the benefit of the Liberal family compact? The watchdog was nowhere to be found. I think the Liberals have lost their lapdog.

I truly gained some insight about how the Liberals are justifying the expenditure of more taxpayer money to create yet another joint committee on a code of conduct. While in opposition all these code of conduct bills were falling by the wayside. The Liberal government whip was on the committee that reviewed the Tory proposals, in particular its last ditch effort at a code of conduct, Bill C-116.

In his speech last Monday the Liberal whip referred to the difficulty he had reviewing Bill C-116. He stated:

I realized that so much time had gone by that some documents were becoming outdated.

For example, the report of the Parker commission on the dealings of Sinclair Stevens was just about forgotten and we did not have a clear recollection of its recommendations.

It was not easy to examine the whole issue.

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(1615)

Let me put this into perspective for members of the House. We had the Liberal whip saying that it was difficult to debate the last Tory code of conduct bill because too much time had passed since the Sinclair Stevens fiasco, which started the ethics review process, to remember the specifics. Reports were dated. Sources were poor. Details were foggy.

The Sinclair Stevens report was released in 1987. In October 1992, five years later, the Liberal whip wrote an essay in the *Parliamentarian Journal* entitled "Members interests: New conflict of interest rules for Canadian parliamentarians". In the essay he quite clearly referred to and built his argument around Sinclair Stevens case, the very case he said in the House he could not remember.

The Liberal whip is using this memory lapse to justify the creation of a new code of conduct committee at great expense to Canadian taxpayers. If the Liberals want to send members to start a code of conduct review from scratch they should at least be up front about it. They should not feed the Reform Party the line that they cannot remember what was said in the past or that old reports are useless when it is quite clear that the member remembered. In fact his party used portions of the 1992 report in some of its policies and actions to date.

The rationale used by the government whip to justify the need for the joint committee reminds me of a child with a perfectly good bike trying to justify the need for a new bike to his or her parents.

They say: "It is too old. It is not working. I do not like it because it was not my idea. Let's steal this one from the Conservatives. Let's steal the other one from the Reform Party and call it ours". That is what the Liberals are saying about all the extensive code of conduct initiatives that have previously been undertaken. They want a new bike. They want a new special joint committee to show off to Canadian voters. The speech made on Monday by the Liberal whip is testimony to the fact.

The Reform Party is saying that in a time of fiscal restraint there is nothing wrong with using an old bike and the Liberals do not need to blow taxpayers money on a new one. We do not need to send politicians across Canada and across the Atlantic to develop ideas to make politicians more open and accountable. It can be done right here using the information we already have and the minds of those who were sent to Ottawa to do more than collect frequent flyer points, those who were sent here to think, to act and to accomplish.

If the Liberals are truly serious about scrutinizing the conduct of MPs, senators and cabinet ministers, the Reform Party will work with them in the House and in the procedure and House affairs committee. More important, the indepen-

dent ethics counsellor should be able to enforce the rules without fear of repercussion from his boss, the Prime Minister of Canada: a watchdog that can bite and not just bark.

I cannot understand how the government plays games with words in the English language. It uses sophistry all the time, sophistry in terms of the budget presentation, sophistry in terms of Bill C-85, the MPs pension bill. Somehow because salaries are frozen is justification for \$1 million, \$2 million and \$3 million payouts for life after six years of service and attaining age 65.

Why do government members not come clean with Canadian taxpayers, talk about truth and talk about the facts? They said that the ethics counsellor would be answerable to Parliament. They breached that. They have not done that. They are talking about promises in the red book. They are talking about holding politicians more accountable. The Prime Minister clearly breached that promise.

Nobody hears from the ethics counsellor. He never says anything. All we ever hear is the Prime Minister saying: "I checked with him and he told me it was okay". Where does an ethics counsellor fit into the equation? He is supposed to be there to make sure, when the minister of heritage writes a letter to the CRTC advocating that a certain constituent be considered as a recipient of a radio licence, that it is a breach of his responsibilities and not in line with what he is supposed to be doing as a minister of the crown, especially after he has sworn an oath that he would not interfere or try to influence agencies and boards that work for the government.

Where is the decision on that by the ethics counsellor? There was none. Is that fair to the Canadian taxpayer who is paying for a system that is there structurally but has no teeth to it? That is not the way the system should work. That is not integrity.

(1620)

Is it integrity to rise in the House and continually shoot partisan shots at each other that do not have the facts behind them? All parties are guilty of it to some degree and we should stop it.

Mrs. Chamberlain: I agree.

Mr. Silye: I have some support from the Liberal benches.

Members of the House of Commons are elected not only to represent their party platform. When issues come up and they have to consult with their constituents they should be free to represent them and if they do not they are kicked out of standing committees like the three Liberal members were kicked out of the standing committee on justice because they could not support gun control. There are lot more, but those are the courageous ones.

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The biggest hoax, the biggest issue in my mind that lacks integrity is the business of the double standard of a politician. It disgusts me. I have been in the private sector almost all my life, with the exception of the last 18 months. I was outside this fish bowl. I thought I could come here and make a contribution, make a difference, but it is very difficult.

Now I am inside the fish bowl with everyone else. I am finding that there are little red fish, little blue fish and little yellow fish swimming around. The national media is swimming around with us. We cannot even make a suggestion without it being distorted by a stupid headline and a stupid commentary. The people who write the articles are not the ones who create the headlines.

In question period ministers continually do not answer questions. Why? They say that it is not answer period, that it is question period. We are charging up about \$1 million per year per MP in the House, and this is the quality of work we are delivering to the Canadian taxpayer. We should be ashamed that we do not pay attention to our responsibilities and to the work we should be doing here.

There are 200 rookies here. We have an opportunity to change things. Unfortunately we are the third party. We have already shown the courage and the intestinal fortitude to do what we said we would do.

We say the MP pension plan is terrible and overly generous, and we opted out. We are showing leadership by example. That is not so with these people opposite. I cannot believe the stupidity of some Liberal rookies who allow the veterans to talk them into trough regular: "For anybody in the previous government we cannot change that. We have to leave that and get a 6:1 ratio".

Then there is trough light: "We will cut back. We will only take 3.5 to 1. We will wait until 55 years of age. We will only put in 9 per cent. We will reduce our accrual rate. We will do all this because I guess you guys know what you are doing".

Then there is trough stout where the cabinet ministers can continually add more to their pensions than anybody else.

Where is the intelligence of those rookie Liberals, some of whom I have met, some of whom I respect and some of whom I know are much more intelligent than I am? I know some of them understand the issue much better than I do and agree with me privately but do not have the guts to say so publicly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I know the hon. member for Calgary Centre has a great mastery of the English language. I would ask him to withdraw the expression he used—I do not think I have to repeat it—and to find another one that will be more appropriate.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected. I apologize for using the word. It is a slang expression that former football players used. I would replace it with intestinal fortitude.

Where is the intestinal fortitude to stand up to their convictions? Why is it that only Reform Party members are willing to take the heat from the national media to express their points of view? Why does the national media seem to support and encourage the status quo when everyone across the country wants change? They want reform. However, because everyone in the House is worried about the media hit, they are afraid to speak their minds. I am embarrassed. I am ashamed. It lacks integrity.

I do not want to speak to the veterans because they are coerced. They are finished. They have done it. They are has beens. They are millionaires. They are ready to collect at any time. However the rookies in the House have an opportunity to make a difference. The rookies in the Liberal government have a distinct opportunity to exert pressure in caucus on cabinet. Many members of the Liberal caucus are doing so. We read about them in the paper. They are the ones who are reprimanded for making democracy live and making the changes that Canadians want. They are the ones who are getting respect, not the ones who are following the line with the status quo. We need more of that. That is what this debate is all about. That is the point of the motion before us.

(1625)

The Liberals said a bunch of things to get elected. The rhetoric was up here; the promises were way up here. They issued the red book in which the implementation of the rules was achievable. The targets were easy but still a double standard. The pension plan is still three times as good as those in the private sector but very achievable. They made some improvements.

Their promises were up here, to get elected. Everybody knows they campaigned on the pension plan. They were to make it the same as those in the private sector. They were to address it. What did they do? They made these little changes.

My point is that everybody in the House, especially the rookies, can make a difference. If we are to restore integrity to politicians then we in opposition have to hold the government accountable. I am holding rookie Liberal members accountable for their lack of solidarity in encouraging the government and ministers of the crown to act in accordance with what the Canadian public wants. They know what I am talking about.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will comment on a couple of matters.

With respect to the ethics counsellor, the Prime Minister made a clear statement before the House that regardless of

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any positions out there the one person in Canada who is responsible for the integrity of the government is the Prime Minister. That is our ethics counsellor and that is the person to whom Canadians should look. We have an ethics counsellor—that was an undertaking in the red book—whom the Prime Minister, as the member knows well, consults.

The member commented on the matter of gun control and the removal of members from the committee. The member will well know that the bill at that time was only at second reading. The purpose of the vote was to move that important bill to committee. There has been much more consultation, much more work, much more deliberation and much more debate. Amendments are forthcoming, as the member also well knows.

When a position comes forth from a government it is important that government policy be supported by its members. That is what was asked but it was not forthcoming. I believe the three members acknowledged that they had not given the process the full opportunity and that it was not really necessary for them to stop debate at that point and make a decision. There was more to be said on behalf of all Canadians.

The essence of the comments of the member concerned the credibility of the government and the credibility of members of Parliament. I read with some concern reports of the Reform Party's immigration critic who travelled to the U.S. capital on taxpayers dollars to attend a rally for presidential candidate Pat Buchanan. He was there and shared a platform with people who were saying that immigrants should be controlled, that immigrants were creating violent crime, reducing the standards of education and murdering their children. Here was a Reform member of Parliament, a critic of the party, sharing a platform before the public. What would the member say about the credibility of MPs when things like that go on?

I raise the example of the hon. member who just spoke. In the House he recommended that members of Parliament should receive \$144,000 a year. Now he is back pedalling. If the member is concerned about the credibility of members with regard to their voting record, does he not think that the public expects the actions and the words of members to reflect the views and the interests of all Canadians?

I point out to the member that he has made calculations that would effectively double tax free expense allowances and somehow end up with a figure of \$120,000. I understand the mechanics. The member has failed to recognize that if expense reimbursements on a pre tax basis are put in salaries those expenses will also be deductible for tax purposes. Therefore on the tax return the gross salary equivalent which the member has said is \$120,000 in fact is only \$92,000.

(1630)

The member's credibility on matters of importance such as tax matters is also in question. The member should try to explain himself in terms of credibility.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like we are back on a budget debate here.

With respect to the ethics counsellor it interesting when we point out that the Liberals failed to keep their promise in the red book. They promised that the ethics counsellor would answer to Parliament. The fact is he does not and it is to a registrar or directly to the Prime Minister. The Liberals say the best ethics counsellor is the Prime Minister and that he really is who the ethics counsellor is. That is our point. We do not have an ethics counsellor and the Liberal government promised one.

On the business of the Liberal caucus members who now claim to have not allowed the process to work, the member claims they agreed that maybe the process could work. The point is that a lot of people are saying the gun control bill will not reduce crime. Registration will not reduce crime. We already have a registration system in Canada. It has proven that it works better than the old system. Whatever level of crime we have it will not change based on registration. Criminals will not register their guns. A lot of people are saying that. That voice is not being heard by the Minister of Justice.

In terms of credibility, let us take the member's intervention here. How credible is it for a member to rise and say that one of our members, the immigration critic, took a trip to Washington at taxpayers' expense? That member himself knows there is no way that a member of Parliament, outside of cabinet, gets reimbursed for travel outside this country. It is only for travel within Canada that we get reimbursed.

If the hon. member has facts, I leave it up to him. He made an allegation. I would like to have him prove that our immigration critic went to Washington at taxpayers' expense, because that is the impression he is giving. Travel outside this country is not reimbursed. He knows that and I know that. That is an allegation not based on facts. It is just that type of partisan political comment that I think hurts the House and the reputation of politicians.

Then the hon. member went on to attack my own credibility. He charged me with back pedalling on a suggestion I made in the House. In terms of MP compensation and restructuring MP compensation which everyone in the House agrees with me privately that we should be undertaking he said that during debate last week I suggested that an MP's salary should be \$144,000. I said that and I am not back pedalling on that. It is out of line for that to be defended by me outside the House. I said that in the House and I will still say in the House that we have to restructure MP salaries.

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What this whole debate is about is not the amount of remuneration. It is integrity I am talking about. It is about honesty and the lack of the will of the government to address the very issue of MP pensions. It shows the lack of integrity of the government, the rookies, the veterans and everyone in the House who supports this MP pension plan. It smacks of trying to promote something by using the argument that our salaries are frozen so let us overcompensate here; we are undercompensated here, so let us overpay there.

The member who asked me the question has an accounting background. Now that I have everyone's attention by saying \$144,000 in the House, and which went outside the House, let me say what MPs really get.

Those people who have been here for six years or more get \$64,400. They get \$27,000 tax free. If the bill goes through, they will get three and a half times what they are contributing to their pension now; \$25,000 accrues to their account. That is their benefit, their asset. They get it when they turn 55 years. That represents \$114,000. In the private sector no one gets \$27,000 tax free. Gross that up and they are already getting \$140,000.

My point is if someone wants to talk about integrity and have an open and intelligent discussion on MPs compensation, let us have it. If someone wants to talk integrity and have an open discussion on MP pension plans and why they can justify this obscene amount of money on a fat cat Cadillac pension plan, three tier, trough regular, trough light, trough stout, then let us have that discussion. However, to take these cheap shots smacks exactly of what I am accusing the majority of the members of the House, because the majority are Liberals. They are the government. They lack integrity and they should restore it.

(1635)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): That concludes the period of questions or comments to the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Before I recognize the member for North Vancouver, I am going to take the initiative to raise I believe in part the same issue he wishes to address, which is the following. Earlier today I understand the House leader for the Reform Party informed the House that all members of the Reform Party would be splitting their time on this motion. I cannot apologize for not being here, I simply was not here when that was introduced to the House.

The member for Calgary Centre of course with great enthusiasm and so on, used up the full 20-minute allocation. In part, I think we would all understand, due to travel commitments and otherwise, if the House would agree that the member for North Vancouver would do his 10-minute intervention now with five minutes for questions or comments. Then I would go back to the government where we will get at

least two other interventions equally of 10 and five and there will be a little bit of time before we have to conclude the matter at 5.30 p.m. Would that meet the approval of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There being no agreement, we will resume debate with the hon. member for Guelph—Wellington.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to indicate to the Chair that I will be sharing my time with the member for Vancouver Quadra.

It is a pleasure for me to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Guelph—Wellington on the motion introduced by the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster. I do so not to condemn the government but to commend its actions to encourage more openness and accountability to our constituents.

It has been a pleasure for me to have in the past 18 months sought the advice and counsel of the people of Guelph—Wellington at every opportunity. They have shared with me their concerns and suggestions. Through town halls and surveys, my constituents have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in decision making.

I find it ironic that the member rose in this House to speak about broken promises. The red book was our commitment to the Canadian people during the last election. We were very much aware that they were tired of politicians who made promises but failed to deliver and political parties that relied on short memories.

We want Canadians to remember what we promised them because we have kept our promises. That is the legacy of this government, a government that has reaffirmed the new politics of promises kept.

The Reform Party likes to speak in the House about promises. During the last election it offered Canadians its blue sheet, a list of principles and policies, a list that is rarely if ever mentioned by Reformers in the House. They like to speak about the red book but are strangely quiet about the commitment they made to the Canadian people during the autumn of 1993.

The Reform House leader, like many in his party, talks about openness in government. Reformers speak of it like they have a monopoly on consultation and accountability. When the members of the Reform Party presented their platform to Canadians during the last election, accountability of elected representatives was so important that it was listed as number 15 in their statement of 21 principles. They argue that it is the duty of elected members to override their obligations to their political party.

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However, the platform also states that Reform MPs shall vote with the Reform Party majority unless a member is instructed to abstain or vote otherwise by his or her constituents. We have already seen that despite majority support for gun control, only one member has risen in support of the government's proposal. Promises made and promises broken.

Reformers like to share their vision of accountability but do not necessarily like to live up to it. In their own party assembly in 1994 for example, 600 constituency resolutions prepared for debate were reduced finally to 55.

(1640)

Despite a promise in Reform's blue sheet to protect law-abiding citizens, one of its members suggested publicly that Canadians should not comply with gun registration. Reformers suggest we should break the law.

Despite promises to support a new relationship with aboriginal people, the very member who is sponsoring this motion suggested that the aboriginal language should be spoken briefly, such as the length of time it takes to yawn, pause between sentences, or to take a drink of water.

Reformers have asked for a minimum age in the pension plan for members of Parliament and are opposed to double dipping, but have spoken against the legislation that does just that.

Reformers promised in their blue sheet to reduce expenditures by lowering the pay of members of Parliament, while one of their own suggests that salaries increase to \$150,000 at a time of restraint. More promises made and more promises broken.

I have said before that each of us elected in 1993 and our Liberal colleagues elected in the recent byelections are here because of circumstances of frustration and anger on behalf of the Canadian people.

The constituents of Guelph—Wellington were concerned that too many candidates promised one thing and then would deliver another. They asked me to ensure they would be consulted before decisions were made. They wanted to be informed. They wanted us to act and they wanted to be heard. They did not want to reach their member of Parliament by dialling and paying for a 1-900 telephone line. Their idea of accountability is their ability to contact their member of Parliament without incurring a service charge. For Reformers, accountability has a fee.

The success of the red book does not rest simply with its ideas and its suggestions. Success has resulted from action by this Liberal government that was demanded by the people of Guelph—Wellington and people throughout Canada.

The people of my riding welcomed the red book because for them it is a yardstick with which they can measure our success and they remind us of our promises. We are not afraid

of that; we think this is a good thing. As much as the Reform Party said earlier that it does not like the idea of being reminded and having accountability, we are not afraid.

The red book is a contract made by the Liberal Party and affirmed by the people of Canada. The red book has set a legacy of election promises. It is a legacy in which I am proud to share.

Liberals know the old ways of governing can never be repeated. But the difference between Liberals and Reformers is one of substance. Liberals like success. We celebrate good news. We attempt to uplift Canadians and bring them to the best that they can be.

Our government was elected because the old way of doom and gloom was rejected by the Canadian people. Reformers do not yet know that Canadians like good news and want to share in prosperity and happiness. In a recent edition of the *Calgary Herald* writer Catherine Ford said it best. Speaking of Reformers she said: "These are not real cheery, happy people. Everyone needs a spring break".

Reformers saw the last election as a chance for change. They were correct. Canadians demanded and received change. They reduced the Mulroney—Charest Tories to two seats because they saw a government that failed to represent their concerns. They voted for the red book, for good news, for a party that has historically protected their interests. They wanted openness and accountability. They wanted not only a spring break but a break from everything wrong in government.

The government has responded. We are very aware of the commitments we made to the Canadian people. We know our contract is fragile, that Canadians are watching and that they demand the very best and will expect no less, nor should they.

We need no lessons from the other side on accountability. The blue sheet represents promises made and the red book is promises kept.

(1645)

The blue sheet promises reform and the red book delivers a new Canada. The blue sheet offers a narrow vision, and the red book includes all Canadians and challenges them to return to greatness.

Rather than condemning our government, I encourage Reformers to join us in our efforts to rebuild Canada and to make our country strong again. I want them to remember and to celebrate that despite their constant reminders to the contrary, Canada is the best place in the world to be.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Guelph—Wellington tried to point to contradictions in the speeches made by Reform members.

I will let Reform members take care of themselves. However, I myself see contradictions between the Liberal Party program, the famous red book, and some of the things which have taken place since the election campaign, including free trade. I asked the same question earlier to another Liberal member, and I was told—the member's colleague will certainly be able to give me an answer—that so many changes had been made to the free trade agreement that, in the end, the Liberals could not follow up on the matter.

There is also the GST. The Liberals said they would change and even remove this bad tax on goods and services. Unfortunately, the GST is still there. There is also the issue of transfers to the provinces. What did the government do to these transfers? First, it froze them and then announced, in this year's budget, a major cut which will take effect next year.

I represent the riding of Lévis and I was told that a summit on the future of Canada's shipyards would be held during the year. That was 18 months ago and there is still no summit.

The government can certainly point to the contradictions of the Reform members of the opposition, but I am talking about commitments made by the party now in office, when it was in opposition. There is a definite difference between the commitments made and the actions taken.

I want to ask the hon. member about another issue. What does she think of the power of banks as regards the monetary policy, among other things, given that six of the ten largest contributors in Canada are banks? I would like to hear her opinion on that issue. Would she support federal legislation which would limit political financing to individuals, instead of major corporations?

[*English*]

Mrs. Chamberlain: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer some of the points my hon. colleague brought up.

Number one, the member talked about something achieved. I submit to members that in the last 18 months we have achieved a great deal as a party. I am very proud of that. Some things we certainly have made improvements to. I use the word improvements because the world continually goes around; it is not something one just does at one point and never looks at again, never fixes it or never goes ahead on it.

I will come right out; other parties may want me to hide from this, but I will not. We have made improvements to the pension reform. We hope that all members will support that, because it is the way the Canadian people want this to be, with a minimum age and no double dipping. We certainly hope that we have members' support on that.

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We are working toward a united Canada, which is very important to all Canadians. We know that. The member across the way knows that too.

The member talked about free trade. Certainly that has been a real plus for the country. That is indisputable with the figures and facts out there.

The member spoke about the GST, and the reality of that is that we are working on it. We hope to have a solution to that soon. It has not been as easy as one might have hoped.

Real change is not easy, so we work toward it. We are proud to say that we are working hard toward it. We do not hide from that. There is no reason for us to hide from it.

(1650)

There have been improvements to the GATT. Infrastructure has been one of our biggest projects. Every day I am in Guelph—Wellington I am stopped and told that the architects have benefited from this and the mayor says that things are going well. I see the member for Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe is agreeing. This infrastructure program has been wonderful; interprovincial trade, I could go on and on.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to follow my thoughtful colleague, the member for Guelph—Wellington, and to take part in the debate on the proposition of the member for Kindersley—Lloydminster, with whom I have had the pleasure of serving in committee. He is a thoughtful member and he usually brings forward in committee very helpful and reasoned propositions.

He did not acknowledge the source of his motion. Openness goes back to Mr. Gorbachev and glasnost, which he thought was a precondition of perestroika, the open debate. Behind that was also the larger global concept of *novie mishlenie*, the new thinking, which says that you can offer hope for constitutional or other propositions for change, but unless you have some unifying philosophical principles, some sort of larger vision of the sort of constitutional society you want to establish, you are not likely to take these things very far. That was one interesting thing in the constitutional revolution on Russia with perestroika, that there was a larger vision.

It is interesting to note that in looking for foreign models they looked extensively at France, Germany, the United States and other countries but did not borrow from Canada. The largest contributions were made through borrowing of German institutions, which then the supreme court based essentially on American constitutions but updated to post-war conditions.

What I think is rather sad in terms of our constitutional development in Canada in the last 30 years has been the

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pre-emptiveness of the Quebec presence to the exclusion of debate on larger constitutional ideas. If we look back to the golden period of the quiet revolution, in a certain sense its main ideas were achieved very early, by the 1970s, in the languages laws, Mr. Bourassa's on the provincial side and the federal official language law on the federal side. In essence a large social economic revolution was achieved under the guise of a language reform, with very profound consequences.

Beyond that the constitutional ideas seem to lapse into the pursuit of constitutional particularity. If you do not have a larger pluralistic conception of a constitutional development, those ideas are not likely to go very far. Through successive failures they have not managed to go very far.

One problem therefore is the absence of motor ideas. I find the same problem with the Reform Party approach to constitutional change, even though there are some reputable right wing think tanks in the country and there has been a considerable amount of debate in some of these institutions.

One basic flaw in the Reform approach is the failure to analyse the contradictions in the proposals and to produce some sort of operational synthesis. The notion of establishing the independence of members of Parliament, of loosening the party ranks, and of encouraging free votes goes a certain way. When you link it to the concept of consultation and a notion that the results of the consultation are to be binding on members, you are riding horses running in different directions.

This is not *tabula rasa*. It occurs in terms of constitutional development in the history of many countries. In that cradle of so many of the contemporary liberal democratic ideas, the French revolution and the post-revolutionary settlement, you do find the antonyms—government by assembly, highlighted by the convention, where everything was debated at great length and where the convention made all the decisions, and the plebiscitarian idea, which is ultimately consummated by Napoleon and others, of submitting it to the people and getting a legitimate nation by direct popular vote and the legislative chambers become mere ratifying organs.

(1655)

In this debate on questions of openness some of the contradictions have needed to be resolved, and that has not been done. I think that is a pity.

There has been a failure also to realize the complexities of governmental decision making today and the constitutional law making processes. The hon. member for Beaver River, for whom I have a very great respect, asked a question today that was very critical of the judiciary and the judiciary's role in law making. The essence of law making today is the recogni-

tion that there are many roads to Rome in terms of making laws, that there are many players, and no one of these has an exclusive role. They are in a very real sense complementary. There are some aspects of social policy making that are ripe for judicial law making, because judicial law making, in essence, is empirically based and problem oriented. It is a step by step process that proceeds in the particular fact context of particular cases, solves a particular problem in that specific context, and then moves on to the next case. After several of those decisions you begin to get what is called jurisprudence *constante*, an evolution of principles on an empirical basis.

Some other matters clearly are ripe for full popular consultation. I think one of the things that is very clear today is that no substantive constitutional change can be achieved in the future in Canada without submission to the constituent processes, without submission to popular vote. I think this is the irrevocable lesson of Charlottetown. However, it would be a mistake to believe that every aspect of social policy and every fine piece of legislation should go that way. There is a parliamentary role.

I think it would have been helpful in terms of the opposition motion today, of the second opposition party, to have had some recognition of the manifold nature of the law making process. There are some aspects that are ripe for judicial action, some for legislative action in the pure sense, and still others that might be left to popular consultation. Perhaps there should be some offering of criteria for deciding which of these fronts to move on.

In general I felt that the hon. member for Beaver River was on the wrong track today in her particular criticism. That probably was the sort of area where we could have the trial and error judicial process. Every judicial decision is subject to appeal. There is a discretionary issue for attorneys general and justice ministers, and one can expect, with the proper exercise of the executive process and recognizing that it does not conflict with the legislative process, that judge and company operate together, legislature and executive, and that decisions of this sort, if they are regarded as retrograde by some elements of the community, can be appealed. There are interest groups, more developed in the United States, but some of them in Canada, that have taken this a considerable way in terms of the investigation and bringing cases before the courts.

I think this has been a helpful debate. I thought that one of the questions relating to political parties, whether they should be constitutionalized, was a timely question. I hope there will be occasions in the present Parliament to consider that in some detail. I thank the hon. member opposite who raised the question.

Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra spoke of the lack of coherence in the Reformers' program. What took me a little aback, coming from him was that, without any prodding, he spoke of Canada's constitutional development over the past 30 years. I realize that the riding of Vancouver Quadra is quite distant from mine, Lévis, but I must say that one cannot truly talk about constitutional development over the past 30 years because there has been none. All of the constitutional conferences ended in failure and, in particular, I would like to remind him that the first version of the Meech Lake accord, which was signed by 11 premiers, was called into question because, following elections in various provinces, three Liberal premiers refused to respect the accord.

(1700)

Given that the tone of the hon. member's speech would suggest that he is very open to consultation, relating back to the first point he made, which was the Reformers' lack of a coherent program, I would like him to explain to us the coherent program being followed by the Liberal government concerning the constitution.

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I agree that Vancouver Quadra is far removed from the centre of Canada, but I myself am certainly not far removed from this debate.

I acted as a special constitutional adviser to various premiers of Quebec, Ontario and other players in the constitutional game, but I repeat that in those years, the debate concentrated on certain details, while a broader constitutional vision was lacking. Canada probably needed a de Gaulle instead of officials discussing the finer points of a constitutional proposal.

As for what the future holds in store, once the referendum is behind us, and we are very optimistic that everything will be over with before the end of this year, we can then resume constitutional talks without the limitations of pursuing something that was clearly rejected by the Canadian people, including Quebec, in the referendum on the Charlottetown accord in 1993.

[English]

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.) Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra mentioned in his speech that he thought that I, the member for Beaver River, was off base today in my question. In terms of openness in government and some of the opinions that he has just shared, could he explain to me what he was talking about earlier in his speech where he

assumed that courts and the provincial and federal governments are the people that have these avenues?

Although provincial governments have the jurisdiction to administer and process adoptions, as he was referring to, they have absolutely no business, no jurisdiction and no right in either the federal, provincial or court system to redefine family.

In the member's expert opinion, could he explain to me how I am so off base when I asked the minister earlier about legislators making the law and courts interpreting the law. Federally and provincially it looks as though the courts are actually making the laws.

Mr. McWhinney: Mr. Speaker, I did not use the phrase off base with the hon. member. I have a great respect for the hon. member. It seemed to me that her question neglected to include the notion that lawmaking is not limited to legislators alone, that in modern society the judiciary, the executive and others partake in it.

Second, judicial lawmaking is particularly attuned to certain types of social problems because of the case by case development.

(1705)

The decision the hon. member mentioned this morning is subject to appeal. In the normal process a good justice minister would consider that possibility.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member opposite spent so much time talking about the past, perhaps I will start my speech today with a quote from Edmund Burke dating back to 1774. The Vancouver *Sun* used this quote on May 21, 1994 to criticize the electronic referendum on the Young Offenders Act that I ran in my riding of North Vancouver.

Edmund Burke said:

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

Mr. Burke made this statement more than 220 years ago, long before the information age. The level of education then was probably pretty low and it probably would have been doing a disservice to constituents to take their opinions to Parliament. In the 1990s people are well educated and well informed. A modification of Mr. Burke's statement is in order.

I would like to see modern politicians saying: "Your representative owes you not his industry only, but also his commitment to alert you to the affairs of government that affect you so that you may become informed and so that you may instruct him how to represent you".

Supply

The problem is that even if every member in the House agreed that his or her first duty is to represent his or her constituents, we would still have to overcome the hurdle of repressive party discipline that we have already seen illustrated in recent times. We cannot change our present, benevolent dictatorship into real democracy until we come to grips with that situation.

When I was in my late teens and early 20s I belonged to the Young Nationals in New Zealand. I worked at many elections, helping really good candidates to get elected to go to Wellington for which members can read Ottawa. I really hoped they would make a difference.

It was disappointing to me to find that excellent candidates got elected but as soon as they got to Wellington, they were unable to represent their constituents' views. They had to toe the party line. They never voted against the party under any circumstances. At the very least, the strongest statement any of them could make was simply to abstain.

In those olden days there were no computers or fax machines or CNN. Governments pretty well controlled what we knew about the world. Even then, I dreamed of a day when voters would be able to have a much greater say in the decision making of their governments.

We have reached a point in time now when the information age has made it possible for my dream to become reality. We are on the verge of a revolution in democracy, despite the unwillingness of the Prime Minister to see the writing on the wall.

Frankly I doubt whether our parliamentary system can survive the information age in its present form. It must adapt and change more quickly than it has ever done in history to cope with the new power each of us will have as voters. Reading the precedents from Beauchesne the way the government whip often does is going to have less and less relevance in the future.

I can recommend to members a comedy that appears on television on Sunday nights on The women's network. It is called "No Job for a Lady". It is based on the experiences of a rookie woman MP in England. Whilst the program is pretty funny, it is a fairly accurate portrayal of what happens in this place.

The writers obviously have a good knowledge of the workings of the House of Commons. They have no difficulty showing viewers that committee meetings and travel junkets have very little use other than to keep MPs busy between votes. They make no bones about the fact that the system is completely controlled by the Prime Minister and that the wishes of the voters are irrelevant to the process.

There is growing awareness that the present system is becoming less and less relevant in modern times. Let me read a segment from an article written for the *Financial Post* recently by Rafe Mair, a talk show host on radio in Vancouver:

Surely we must now all agree that the system the Fathers of Confederation devised of pasting a parliamentary government on to a federal system no longer suits us and our present difficulties. Our system, with victory to the "first past the post," means a minority becomes an official majority which can do as it pleases for five years. It usually oppresses the majority and certainly oppresses all minorities such as B.C. and Alberta, a clear lesson of the election of 1993—

The main argument against changing our system is that it will result in weak governments. If by "weak" it is meant that the prime minister will not have his way unless the Commons, voting freely, agrees, then I will take weak government. Surely the collective wisdom of all MPs and their leaders is greater than that of a caucus which must agree or lose the perks of power—

For under our system, power is from the top down. The party in power must, to stay in power, stay united no matter how bad things get. The party leader becomes a dictator—for it is he who appoints cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries. He controls the patronage. Every backbencher is held in check by his own ambition to get into cabinet; each cabinet minister is held in check by his desire to stay there.

If Chrétien proves incapable of handling our crisis how do we change him?—He can't be relieved of office unless the majority of Liberal MPs choose to share power, most unlikely given the track record of majority governments in Canada.

The leader to save Canada from its perils may be sitting in the present Parliament—it might even be the Preston Manning or Jean Charest—but we will never know unless the centrally dominated Liberal caucus wants it to happen. And it is an immutable political law—

(1710)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Szabo): I would remind the member to refer to members in the House by their riding and not by their name.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I was quoting from a newspaper article. I assumed it was okay for me to use names in that case, but I will avoid doing so in future.

Canada, in its time of great peril, should not be hostage to an outdated system. Clearly, confidence in the ability of our present setup to settle the great questions which face us is confidence badly misplaced.

That was quite a long article but I thought it was very worthwhile reading to the House because Rafe Mair made some very good points. The Prime Minister will have to face the fact that the system is in the process of change.

Parliamentary democracies around the world are looking for new ways to be more democratic. Thirty years of experience under the old system are not going to account for anything in the information age. In New Zealand in late 1993 the government passed the citizens' initiative and referendum act. New Zealand's citizens now have the right to start initiatives and control referenda on the ballot.

In the 18 months or so since the implementation of the act a number of initiatives have been started. However in almost

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every case, as soon as the initiative was registered with sufficient signatures, the government reacted, addressed the problem and the initiatives were subsequently taken off the ballot.

We have always been told that initiative and referenda are incompatible with parliamentary style democracy, but here is New Zealand proving it works. The real reason we do not have initiatives and referenda in Canada is because the Prime Minister does not want to give up the power he has to control what happens in this place.

Past governments have been no better. Twice the previous government passed a gag law to try to keep people quiet at election time. Twice the gag laws were struck down but the government still chose to appeal the decision of the Court of Queen's Bench in Alberta in an attempt to reimpose the gag law on free speech.

On May 8 the appeal was heard in Calgary. To refresh members' memories, the Alberta Court of Appeal reserved judgment after only one day of hearings on the case. On June 25, 1993, Justice MacLeod of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench struck down several sections of the Canada Elections Act which restricted expenditures by individuals to only \$1,000 and parties could spend up to \$10 million or whatever they wanted.

It was clear from the reaction of the justices, particularly Justice Kerans, that the justices had no patience for the government's appeal. It looks fairly certain they will overturn the government's position and restore free speech, thank goodness.

For the moment the Prime Minister still has power over his MPs but sooner or later, little by little he is going to have to give it up. I condemn the government for its failure to keep its red ink book promise to make the government more open and to permit MPs to be more accountable to their constituents.

Besides all of that, the Deputy Prime Minister promised to resign if the GST was not gone within one year of the election and she still has not done it.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am interested that he went back to Edmund Burke. He would have Parliament reduced to nothing more than having us be voting machines. We could have a questionnaire every night, push a button and there would be no need for the House to exist. There will be no need to study in detail various bills.

(1715)

When I look at the motion the inference is members of the Liberal Party are not given more freedom. I remind the member that if he were to examine the record in the House he would notice there is a lot more divergence in voting among

the members of the Liberal Party, the government side, than there is among members of the Reform Party.

Mr. Abbott: On government bills?

Mr. Telegdi: Examine the record. When we look at Reformers for the most part they vote as a block. It is borne out by examining the records of the House.

I point that out to the members. I think they are being hypocritical and they do not examine the record. They try to say they represent something they do not.

I applaud two members of the Reform Party who actually did what they said they would do which was represent their constituents' wishes in terms of legislation. It relates to gun control. I applaud the actions of the member for Edmonton Southwest as well as a member from Calgary who stood up and represented the wishes of their constituents.

How can the Reform Party, whose central campaign was representing the wishes of its constituents, do such a flip-flop and ignore the wishes of its constituents when it comes to the gun legislation or legislation supported by law enforcement officers, by chiefs of police, and something that is needed for law and order? Not only do its members not support that, they are preaching civil disobedience against it.

Could the member inform me why they do not follow the wishes of their constituents on the gun legislation?

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his questions.

When it is obvious to any clear thinking person that we should vote down a bill on the other side it is not the least bit surprising that 52 clear thinking Reformers would vote against it.

The member brings up all the usual red herrings that MPs would become voting machines and so on. In my riding there have been in the last year only two really controversial issues which I have taken back to my constituents. I have done comprehensive surveys and even a scientific survey which I am currently undergoing with the gun control bill. I am perfectly satisfied that within my caucus members are representing their ridings. There is no problem with that at all.

These red herrings about how we would become voting machines are nonsense. New Zealand has proven with its initiative and referendum act MPs do not become voting machines if you give people more power. I have proved it in my riding.

Last year I overturned a grant for a women's monument project in Vancouver. The people who were organizing that were really upset. Two of them called me on a conference call and said: "We will make sure we get rid of you at the next election". I said: "Please, do not wait until the next election. If you can get 15 per cent of the voters in this riding to sign a petition to say I am not representing the majority, I will resign". They asked if they could get that in writing. I said yes. I put it in writing. To this day I have not seen one signature.

Supply

Democracy is powerful but we have to give power to the majority. We have to give power to the people. That is what Reform is attempting to do. It does not mean we turn into voting machines. It simply means we give a Canada to people built the way they want it to be instead of built the way the elite want it to be.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow my hon. colleague. I agree with what he had to say.

It is helpful to have this type of motion presented every now and then for a reality check to see if anything has changed in Parliament.

(1720)

I will speak today about parliamentary reform. When we first arrived here in the cold of the winter 1993–94, I took on the responsibility of chairing the group in my party particularly interested in parliamentary reform. Except for the members for Lethbridge and Beaver River, we were all pretty new at this and we felt that with a little change here and there and a slight move parliamentary rules could probably be changed quite easily.

We became quick learners, realizing rules and traditions grown up over many years were not so easily changed. I admit in some instance we became aware of the need for these rules and why they should be left alone.

If life is a great learning experience, parliamentary life is at least doubly so. Two things happened very early in this Parliament that led me to believe real change was possible. The first was the introduction and subsequent adoption of the government motion which directed the procedure and House affairs committee to study a whole range of matters dealing with reform.

The motion referred to freer voting, sending bills to committee prior to second reading, allowing committees to draft bills, referendums, recall and other methods by which backbenchers or private members could become more involved in the policy influencing process.

The second matter that gave me hope was the adoption of my private members' Motion No. 89. During the third hour of debate it was amended by the government to read:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should continue to increasingly permit members of the House of Commons to fully represent constituents' views on the government's legislative program and spending plans by adopting the position that the defeat of any government measure, including a spending measure, shall not automatically mean the defeat of the government unless followed by the adoption of a formal motion.

Notice it does not specify Private Members' Business. It was adopted unanimously. This was the setting for real change, a committee ably chaired by the member for Kingston and the Islands and a motion advanced by an opposition MP from the Reform Party calling for freer voting adopted

unanimously by the House of Commons. This was the hope. Let us look at the reality.

To be fair to the members on the government side, we have seen some change, and one measure I proposed as a private members' bill was the beneficiary of this changed attitude. Bill C-232, a bill to give grandparents right of access to grandchildren, passed through the House a week ago and was sent to the justice committee for study.

The bill had been kicking around Parliament in one form or another for more than 10 years and never came this far. I have a changed attitude towards Private Members' Business to thank for at least getting the bill through second reading and off to committee. Private Members' Business does seem to be one avenue where the government is attempting to make changes.

In my discussions with members opposite regarding whether they would support the bill, I was continuously assured free votes were allowed on private members' bills. It would seem from the number of private members' bills now in committee this is true.

However, this is only the first very tentative step along the way to true freer voting in Parliament. It is almost the government saying when it really does not matter all that much, backbenchers are free to vote as they please. I believe it is time we moved this beyond the first step and started to apply freer voting to government bills as well.

We have had with Bill C-68 first hand experience with punishment being handed out to those on the government side who dared to vote against the party line.

It was the opinion of those involved in the writing of the McGrath report in 1985 and those who sat on the House management committee in 1993 that dissent should be allowed to be expressed without fear of retaliation by the leadership of the political party concerned. Both groups believed the expression of dissent would make the House a healthier place.

I have to endorse that. It would be a healthier place. It would be a place where members who felt very strongly about an issue would not have to vote the party line and could do so without fear of retribution.

What happened? We need only to look at the voting patterns in other Parliaments similar to ours to realize the confidence convention has been relaxed and the sun still rises in the east every day and governments have not crumbled.

Some members in the House on the government side today worked on the McGrath report. What happened? The reality of the day seems to be while in opposition they protest loudly but when the people of Canada give the opposition a mandate to do everything it promised to do, suddenly it is no longer the champion of democracy.

Supply

(1725)

As my fellow Reform member for Calgary North reminded us all earlier, democracy has to be looked after. It has to be protected. Sadly in the House we do not have rule by the people, we have rule by the party. She was quite right.

It appears party discipline is as strong as ever. When constituents clearly tell their MP how they feel on an issue that MP is not allowed to vote to represent a democracy. Rather, he or she is punished if they have the intestinal fortitude to rise in the House and truly represent their constituents, just for keeping their promises to their constituents.

Something is wrong. We have 295 MPs but we do not have democracy. It is a sign of strength to allow dissent to be expressed. It is not a sign of weakness or of weak leadership.

Professor Philip Morton, an academic in Great Britain who has devoted a great deal of study to this issue of freer voting or cross-party voting, has concluded this phenomenon, as he calls it, has led to a growing awareness of what can be achieved by such action by backbenchers. The lack of retribution or punishment of members who vote against the party line in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand has produced a change in attitude on the part of many MPs as they now felt their views mattered and they were really participating in the policy process.

The process had been expanded beyond the cabinet table. I say to those like Professor Robert Jackson of Carleton University who oppose freer voting on the grounds they would lead to chaos, nonsense. We are not advocating free votes on every piece of legislation. We are simply advocating limited expressions of dissent from the party line be allowed to take place without fear of repercussions from the party leadership.

What happened in the House recently on Bill C-68 showed us very clearly on the government side—and let us be honest and truthful about this—it is not a fact yet. It is something I hope will come in the House but at this time it is not a fact that members of the government can vote according to the wishes of their constituents without severe repercussions. That is a sad state of affairs.

All this bickering back and forth, all these smart, snide remarks will not change the facts or the truth. Let us stop with the silliness and start dealing with the truth. It is a fact that happened in the House.

I spent many years teaching and I tried to tell students one thing. When one debates one does not make smart cracks or

snide remarks to people; one deals with facts. When students debated in competition in British Columbia, which is the only experience I have to go on, judges and their peers sat in the back row. If a student were to ever make a point without fact there was a stroke right across the card. That student was never able to win in points on debate. I am really sorry because I thought when we reached this level we would see people really using wisdom and experience.

I have seen some excellent debaters in the House. I am always so sorry when I see this cheap shot being taken. I hope we can start remembering to treat each other more with respect in the House and debate as the House is worthy.

We would like to see the intent of Motion No. 89 adopted unanimously by the House to be applied to government bills. I also congratulate those on the other side who voted against the party line on Bill C-68, but definitely not because they went against the party line. They allowed the wishes of their constituents to be expressed in Parliament at great personal risk to their political futures. They are to be congratulated, not condemned. They should remember they can always find an ideological home right here. I think we still have some spare seats.

Moving on to other aspects of reform, committees, two in particular, have been allowed to draft bills. One bill deals with electoral boundaries and the other with lobbying.

We on this side are concerned that at least with regard to the lobbying bill it was ultimately drafted to corresponded with instructions from either the Prime Minister's office or the privy council office. However, it seems we have made a start in this area, albeit tentative, and we should do much more with regard to committees drafting legislation. No one knows better than I how much time the drafting of legislation takes and then securing support for the legislation, but we owe it to our constituents to take this time.

Will legislation be coming forward to allow for referendums to be of help on moral issues such as physician assisted suicide? What about the recall of members of Parliament who are not doing their jobs? What about legislation to provide for citizens initiatives?

I hope I am not wrong, but I believe to effect these changes we will have to change places with the political party opposite.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81 the proceedings on the motion have expired.

The House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***ALTERNATIVE FUELS ACT**

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.) moved that Bill S-7, an act to accelerate the use of alternative fuels for motor vehicles, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to present Bill S-7 to the House for consideration. Essentially it positions the federal government in a leadership role when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions into our environment by requiring the government to convert 75 per cent of its motor vehicle fleet to the use of cleaner burning alternative fuels by the year 2004.

In addition to the environmental benefits that we expect, we anticipate there to be cost savings for the government as well as the development of new economic spinoffs.

I commend the bill to my colleagues and ask for their support in managing its speedy and efficient passage through the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I can understand my colleague's enthusiasm, but we are going to try to go into a bit more detail.

I am pleased to rise on the subject of Bill S-7, which aims at converting 75 per cent of federal government vehicles to fuels that are less hazardous for the environment by the year 2004. These alternative fuels are defined in the bill as being less damaging to the environment than conventional fuels.

Of course, we all know that current sources of propulsion energy are not entirely without impact on the environment while being as efficient as we might like. However, in the light of the urgency of finding solutions to the problem of global warming, Bill S-7 seems like a step in the right direction.

Let me remind you that the federal fleet of vehicles comprises over 39,000 vehicles. They release some 150,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide and over 4,000 tonnes of other pollutants into the environment each year.

Canada, as a whole, releases annually 570 million tonnes of greenhouse gases. These gases accumulate in the atmosphere and have been causing the gradual warming of the planet for the past 18 years. Experts forecast that, in the next few years, the average temperature of the Earth will rise by 1.5 to 4.5 degrees Celsius. This increase in temperature will have significant effects on sea levels, ecosystems, drinking water supply and, indirectly, on agriculture and human health in general.

The Government of Canada made a commitment to the international community to stabilize its greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. However, the Minister of the Environment has recently indicated that Canada will not be able to keep its promise and will exceed the global objective by 13 per cent. The plan of action the minister proposed last month contains only voluntary measures, which will have no significant effect on Canadian emission levels.

In fact, the minister was simply unable to reach the consensus required with the provincial ministers of the environment. Quebec emits half the Canadian average for carbon dioxide emissions and has succeeded in reducing its CO₂ emissions by nearly one quarter.

One of the reasons for Canada's lack of success is that some people, including members of the Reform Party, question the validity of the scientific conclusions establishing the existence of a greenhouse effect.

(1735)

To those we can reply that there will always be dissident scientists who question the conclusions of the vast majority. This phenomenon is normal in the scientific community. What is not so normal is for politicians and corporate groups to use the normal scientific questioning process to justify their lack of action and dispense with the most basic prudence. Did Reform members succumb to the charms of the Alberta oil lobby in this matter? Good question.

Too often in the past we have let our environment deteriorate to such an extent that it is no longer possible to go back. The problem of global warming is not one of those we can afford to ignore.

Bill S-7 will force the Canadian government to lead by example, something it has never done so far. In fact, Treasury Board guidelines aimed at converting the federal fleet and improving its management have existed for some years. We must, however, note that these guidelines came up against bureaucratic inertia and the resistance to change that prevails in organizations such as the federal government. Therefore, it seems to me that only legislation can force departments and agencies to conform to the new environmental priorities. After implementing the provisions of the bill, the Canadian government will be in a position to reduce its emission of carbon dioxide by 57,000 tonnes over five years and 20,000 tonnes per year thereafter.

But those are not the only benefits of converting the federal vehicle fleet. It is estimated that the government will save approximately \$43 million in fuel over the first five years and \$15 million per year thereafter. While the unit price of these

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vehicles will be \$1,500 higher, for a total of \$38.5 million over a five year period, this will nonetheless mean net savings of \$7 million over five years.

Finally, replacing the federal fleet of motor vehicles can be expected to have a ripple effect, thereby breaking the vicious circle of low demand for specialized vehicles for lack of fuel supply, itself caused by the lack of specialized vehicles on the road, and so on.

One can hope that the leading automobile manufacturers and fuel suppliers will take advantage of this golden opportunity to develop new models and new markets.

Allow me, at this stage, to express some concern about both the wording of the bill and its scope.

Clause 2 of the bill sets out three conditions to define what constitutes an alternative fuel under the terms of the act. They are as follows: the fuel must be used to propel a motor vehicle; it must be less damaging to the environment than conventional fuels; and, finally, it must be prescribed by regulation.

Clause 2 goes on to list types of fuels deemed to be alternative fuels. Listed in there are ethanol and electricity. It seems somehow that the fuels formally listed are not subject to the three aforementioned conditions.

I appreciate however the highly qualitative and relative nature of the phrase "less damaging to the environment". I do not challenge it. Obviously, the government must have some flexibility regarding the identification of fuels labelled as being less harmful to the environment.

This is why I wonder about referring to specific fuels which may, in a few years, following further scientific analysis and technological developments, be considered to be relatively more harmful to the environment.

For example, it was mentioned in yesterday's issue of *Le Devoir* that, according to a study conducted at Carnegie Mellon University, in Pennsylvania, a 1988 electric vehicle released 60 times more lead, per kilometre, than a comparable vehicle using leaded gasoline.

I will not go so far as to say that it is always the case and that more recent electric vehicles pollute the environment to the same extent. I certainly do not claim to be an expert on alternative fuels.

I simply want to show that what is considered to be the least harmful alternative at one point can turn out to be not so good after all.

Moreover, the sensitivity of our environment to certain products varies over time and space. It was pointed out that intensive use of pesticides for corn crops used to produce ethanol can have major consequences on the environment of a region. If the government agrees to identify ethanol as a more environmentally friendly fuel, it could have some bad surprises down the road.

(1740)

I hope that the standing committee which considers Bill S-7 will examine this issue very seriously and, if need be, make the necessary amendments.

The other concern I have is the need to streamline the federal fleet. It seems obvious to me that Bill S-7 will not address all the problems raised by the Auditor General in his 1991 report. At the present time, the federal government uses 106 different models of vehicles. Seventy per cent of these vehicles travel less than 25,000 kilometres a year and only 10 per cent of them travel over 40,000 kilometres a year, which is roughly the distance travelled by rental vehicles. Finally, only 11 per cent of the vehicles have four cylinders, while 50 per cent have six, and 39 per cent have eight. The Liberal government must clean out the fleet, clean up this mess, and adopt a policy that will lead to a better use of public moneys.

In spite of the reservations I have already expressed, I am pleased to support Bill S-7. Canada, as the world's second largest producer of refuse, second largest consumer of energy, and second largest source of greenhouse gases per capita, cannot afford to miss such an opportunity once again.

Finally, I would like to thank Senator Kenny and my colleague for this initiative, which, I hope, will contribute to improving Canada's performance on the environmental front while reducing government spending. It is initiatives such as this one that can truly advance the cause of sustainable development in Canada and Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the intent of the bill we are looking at this evening is quite noble. It is to cut costs and reduce exhaust emissions. I do not think anyone could quarrel with that, although I would put a bit of a disclaimer on the exhaust emission reductions.

If they are talking about nitrous oxide or sulphur dioxide I would say that is correct. I certainly would go along with that. As far as the CO₂ reductions go, it is a questionable premise that they would be reduced. It is also questionable that it matters.

There is an awful lot of voodoo science around with respect to the effects of manmade carbon dioxide on global warming. There can be pretty good debate on that in any scientific gathering where there are experts who really know what it is about.

I do not think the bill has much to do with the technical aspects. It is about politicians legislating technical decisions about which they know little.

I quote from the Liberal briefing notes accompanying the bill: "Legislation is preferable to government guidelines". That is a loose translation of the standard Liberal policy on

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just about everything, which states that everything that is not prohibited should be compulsory.

There are no guarantees that costs will remain static if the bill is passed. There is talk about a \$7 million saving. Let us not forget that once we get a good market for alternative fuels there will be upward pressure on the price. If the wholesalers of natural gas and propane realize that they are on to a good thing, they will not sit back and allow their product to be sold at an excessively cheap cost compared with other petroleum based products such as diesel or gasoline.

We should not forget that the good old government, as soon as it sees something that is taxable, will move in and tax the pants off it. This will not give us the great saving we are talking about. It will give us a temporary saving until both the market and the taxman catch up with it.

(1745)

I mentioned something about the carbon dioxide emissions. I stated that there is no solid proof that man made carbon dioxide emissions are a direct cause of global warming. Aside from that, let me play devil's advocate and assume that that is indeed the case. I question the figure of reduction of 20,000 tonnes per year of carbon dioxide. I want proof, I would like to be shown.

Propane, LNG, and alcohol all produce carbon dioxide in the combustion cycle. They all contain carbon. I suspect that for a given calorific output there is going to be basically the same amount of carbon dioxide emitted. If that is not the case, I would be very happy to be shown that it is not. Again, I insist: show me.

There is also no proof that 75 per cent of the federal fleet would be able to continue to serve its intended purpose if the whole 75 per cent were converted. There have been successful conversions of urban fleets of taxis and delivery trucks. There is no problem there. If private enterprise decides that it can do better by converting, then we love them and let them do it.

One fleet of school buses of which I am personally familiar that did the conversion from gasoline to propane found that their buses no longer had adequate cold weather capability and that they could no longer handle the hills on the rural routes. After two years they turned around and scrapped the new propane conversions and put in diesel, which is probably what they should have done in the first place, but they were reacting to a certain public pressure to use propane.

We pay our technocrats big dollars to make technical decisions. They are supposed to know what they are doing. Perhaps if we gave them some incentives to do things right and to save us money and be efficient, that might be a better way to go than wielding the legislative club and telling people how to do their jobs.

When I was in industry, as soon as somebody from the higher echelons started to tell me how to do my job, I was gone. It was not a question of being told to do a job, but being told how. You hire somebody to do something, you let them do it.

Those are the weaknesses that I find in this bill. There was some mention made of the necessity to reduce and rationalize the federal fleet. I heartily agree. It is ridiculous that we have over a hundred different types of vehicles out there. There is nothing in this bill to address that problem. They say if we force them to convert then they are going to have to rationalize their fleet because they will not be able to maintain all these odds and sods of vehicles under the new conditions. Why not go ahead and rationalize the fleet off the top instead of trying to come in through this back door and say we are going to force you to rationalize by making it so impossible to operate your fleets?

If there were a bill on that I would still have a little difficulty with it, because again we would be telling people how to do their jobs. What we need is government action through the finance department: "We are going to cut your allowance, so you make it work and do it whatever way is best. If that means rationalizing your fleet, then by all means do so. Get rid of some of the excess vehicles. Cut down on the makes and models. We are not going to give you any more money, so you are simply going to have to do it". That is the prerogative of Parliament and that is what Parliament should be doing.

(1750)

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to rise to discuss the bill. I would like to suggest to those here that this bill is about cosmetic surgery. It is one of those feel good issues. It is very popular in the public domain. However, it is really a bill that talks about two issues, which I would suggest the public is being heartily fooled on. The first issue is the environment and the second is the whole issue of cost.

When we talk about the environment, especially in terms of automobiles, there is a great deal of misinformation that circulates. For example, the assumption is that if we burn ethanol in our vehicles in some way there will be wondrous effects on the environment. We know, for example, that the burning of ethanol in vehicles reduces carbon dioxide emissions into the air. Those are commonly called greenhouse gases. We also know that if we burn ethanol we will increase what are called NO_x, which are also noxious gases that are detrimental to our health. Yet if we listen to the debate on the use of ethanol, we know that those who support this industry say there are only positive effects. That is far from the truth. I am not saying there is no benefit whatsoever, I am just saying that it is neutral. The jury is out on what is happening with respect to the usage of this.

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We only have to look to other jurisdictions where the government has jumped in with both feet and said to the marketplace: "You are going to do this. It is up to you. We are not going to give you any choice in the marketplace." If we are not going to give choice then we also have to explain to people what they are going to pay for the absence of choice.

In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency embarked a number of years ago on an ethanol program, for example, where it required that in certain cities 10 per cent of gasoline contain ethanol. There was a reason for that. They had an environmental problem with respect to carbon monoxide. There were nine cities designated and they embarked on that. There was a great cost to that. There was an industry that was created, but let us remember that it was an industry that had the strength of government dollars behind it.

Recently, about a year ago, the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States went one step further and said they were going to require 30 per cent. It did not consult with the industry; it made a rule without consultation. Fortunately, the American system has seen that as an unacceptable way of doing business and the mandate has been rolled back. Government agencies can no longer act in that fashion.

I suggest that this is precisely one of the factors within the bill that is before us. We are saying that we are not going to let the government have any choice in the matter. We are going to pass a piece of legislation that says that 75 per cent of government vehicles within a prescribed period of time must, of necessity, because we say so, burn certain types of fuels.

Another example can be found in the jurisdiction of British Columbia. The environment department in that province is all of a sudden dictating that certain emission objectives must be met. The industry is saying they can do that, but this is what the cost will be. In the province of British Columbia the cost will increase by eight cents per litre if the dictates of the government and that department are followed.

We have to talk about choice and we have to talk about cost. In this particular bill, the suggestion is that 75 per cent of the fleet must be converted. There are a few things that are not being talked about. First, we are talking about the conversion of vehicles. In doing so, we must realize that the technology comes from the United States, so we are going to encourage manufacturing in the United States. Second, we have to consider the practicalities of it. There are all sorts of exceptions to the rules. You cannot park a car that is fueled by natural gas in an underground garage.

We are creating a broad rule and we are expecting our departments to follow it.

(1755)

Government studies have shown that in order to recover the costs associated with converting a vehicle to natural gas or propane, that vehicle must remain on the road for 13 years. That is a best case scenario where the vehicle is driven at least 50,000 kilometres a year. However only 10 per cent of the government fleet accumulates 50,000 kilometres a year.

In converting the rest of the fleet the government, and more important, the taxpayer may never recoup the cost. My suggestion is to forget about this bill. It has noble objectives but we are intruding into a marketplace we have no business being in. I make this analogy. If I had a medical problem I would not consult my priest. We have an environmental problem and we are consulting everyone except those who know. Effectively that is what this bill is doing.

I will give another example. Over the past couple of years the environment department has been concerned about sulphur content of diesel fuel. The federal environment department went to the industry and said: "We have this problem. Let's see what we can do". The industry went to work and was able to meet the objectives of the government, an adequate sulphur emission level in diesel fuel that was generally accepted. It was done in a timely fashion. It was done in a fashion that was acceptable to the industry. It was done in a fashion that was acceptable to the government and it was done in a fashion that did not incur a great deal of cost.

When we as legislators start intruding into marketplaces for reasons that have to be at best suspect or altruistic, then it is incumbent on us to explain to people what they are going to pay for it. At no time or in no way have I seen anything that would suggest to me that we are being frank or at least transparent—a word everyone loves to use—or very open about what the cost of this is. We hear about the tonnes of CO but we do not talk about the volume of other noxious gases that are created in the burning of some of these fuels.

We have turned away from industry. We are mandating and telling ourselves that we are going to do this but we do not attach a dollar sign to it and we do not consult with industry—heaven forbid we do that—to effect a change.

Certainly the technology is coming for alternative fuels. The day will come when a lot of these industries will make sense. We have to allow the marketplace to determine that. We have to allow the technology to progress. Instead we are saying that we will forget about the technology but at the same time we will force this on the taxpayers of Canada.

For that reason I would suggest to everyone here that this bill once again has laudable objectives, but makes absolutely

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no sense. We have not discussed the cost and we have not discussed the question of choice in the marketplace.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the bill is good. Conversion of the government fleet to propane and/or natural gas makes some sense. The advantages that have been expressed to me are reduced emissions or smog, increase the infrastructure for alternative fuels, some experimentation for the future good of the country and it could save some money.

What expertise does this member of Parliament bring to this issue? I am able to tell the assembled members that I am a car nut. I am very deeply involved in the old car hobby. I am the organizer and founder of the longest running collector car auction in Canada. I restore, collect, buy and sell historic vehicles.

I am also an active participant in racing. I have raced competitively for years. It seems to me that activity has been criticized for the emissions generated during racing. I have followed the debate on this issue very, very closely over the years. Those who criticize the race car weekend should know that a jet plane taking off generates more emissions than all the cars that compete on a weekend.

(1800)

I watched with interest the attempts to develop other alternatives to gasoline powered cars. I have seen battery power, solar power and indeed, alternative fuels as mechanisms to change away from gasoline powered cars.

The costs have really been quite significant in this area. There are the costs for R and D, field trials, market demonstrations, incentives and promotional activities. I have looked for the costs in some literature. I will mention specific costs relating to federal government programs.

In the propane vehicle grant, 71,000 vehicles were converted at a cost of \$29 million. As I said before, these are simply the federal programs. Natural gas vehicle program: 36,000 vehicles converted, \$16 million. The natural gas fueling station program: 150 stations converted, \$7 million. Natural gas appliances where \$500 is given toward installation, 900 units at a cost of \$800,000. The methanol market demo program: \$1.25 million. The ATF market development and demo program: \$3 million. ATF technology development: \$20 million. Methanol and large engines: \$6 million. Hydrogen research: \$12 million for R and D. These are all programs that have been brought forward for the federal government to put money into the area of alternate fuels.

Are changes to our transportation system needed? Is there a problem with our current system? Is there a problem with cost? Is there a problem with supply? Is there a problem with emissions?

It is interesting that emissions have dropped drastically with the modern technology in our new cars. It is so much so that industry is now far and away the biggest source of emissions for gasoline powered engines.

How should changes be undertaken in an area like this? My colleague who just spoke feels that the changes should be market driven and I agree. The taxis here in Ottawa are a classic example. The choice is there. The taxi drivers are not being forced to convert to propane. They choose to convert on their own because they have high mileage vehicles and it is cost effective for them.

If this project is worth its salt, legislators cannot stop it. If the project is worthless, legislators should leave it alone.

I would like to make one final comment. One way we could save a significant amount of emissions would be to put all the ministers of this government in small automobiles. We could save a bundle of hot emission laden air.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add just a few comments to the debate before this goes to committee. We have to keep in mind that the traditional efficiency of gasoline engines since the mid-1970s has increased 125 per cent. This pending legislation describes alternative fuels.

I know the industry in general in Canada and in some parts of our country there is a great push for alternative fuels to read "ethanol". Before Parliament promotes any specific alternative fuel, I think it would be wise for us to consider that perhaps of the alternative fuels, ethanol may not be the most efficient. It could be the least efficient of all of the alternative fuels because of the cost in energy to generate ethanol. We should pay particular attention to the use of natural gas. The concept behind this bill is worthy and we should go ahead with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The bill is agreed to on division.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, today is a parliamentary first. A private member's bill from the Senate has been approved. Given the progress, perhaps we could seek consent to call it 6.30 p.m. and rejoice at yet further steps made in advancing Private Members' Business in the House.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I think the hon. chief government whip might have taken a little bit of liberty, however, is there agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6.30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.07 p.m.)

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