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Friday, May 19, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 19, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.) moved that Bill C-82, an act to amend the Royal Canadian Mint Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-82 is of wide ranging significance for Canadians. The piece of legislation will enable the government to modernize Canada's currency by introducing a new \$2 coin.

The bill is part of a two-tier approach that will transform Canada's currency system and save Canadian taxpayers a half billion dollars over 20 years. The other element of the strategy is the decision to change the metal composition of the 1-cent, 5-cent, 10-cent, 25-cent and 50-cent circulation coins. Such a move has become necessary given the rising cost of producing the coins.

For example, it now costs approximately 1.4 cents to produce a 1-cent coin. In all, altering the metal content of the coins will result in annual savings of \$12 million.

[*Translation*]

These new measures, an important stage in the history of our currency, are arousing a lot of interest throughout the country. For Canadians, their currency is more than a mere payment instrument. It is part of their heritage, a national symbol.

By deciding to replace the \$2 bill with a coin and by changing the metal composition of the lower denomination coins, the government remains true to the principles it has always stood for.

Since our government took office, it has been faced with difficult choices. We have never shirked our responsibilities and we always tried to face the music in cooperation with all Canadians.

[*English*]

The savings to the people of Canada are considerable. I have already discussed the savings that will accrue to the people of Canada as a result of changing the metal composition of the lower denomination coins. It is estimated that moving to a \$2 coin will by itself save taxpayers \$254 million over the next 20 years. This is because coins last so much longer than notes.

At present the \$2 bill costs 6 cents per unit to produce, but with all the wear and tear it takes a note only lasts one year. A \$2 coin, on the other hand, will cost approximately 16 cents to produce but will last 20 years.

The new \$2 coin brings another benefit to the government: within 18 months of issuing the coin the government will obtain \$449 million in seigniorage. The difference between the unit cost to produce a coin and the face value of the coin is seigniorage. Within 18 months of issuing the \$2 coin \$449 million in seigniorage will accrue to the government, thus an additional \$500 million for the government's consolidated revenue fund within 18 months. This is not bad by any stretch.

This move also reflects the government's sense of priorities. All Canadians understand that we have to get the government deficit under control, which demands spending cuts in every government department. As was stated in this year's budget, Canadians want the government to spend money and secure savings in ways that make sense and that reflect their values. To do so it is essential that our efforts be guided by clear principles.

[*Translation*]

The proposed changes to our currency are a good example of the savings that can be achieved with some determination and creativity.

Let me also tell the House that the government is looking for other ways to reduce spending in order to avoid tax increases. The introduction of the new \$2 coin and the proposed changes to the other denomination coins will also meet our needs, since coins are still widely used in Canada.

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In fact, despite the growing popularity of credit cards and debit cards, coins are still used in over 75 per cent of all financial transactions made in this country.

The third principle is frugality; each dollar matters. The initiatives put forward today are probably the best way to illustrate this principle. Some will argue that savings of \$12 million a year, or half a billion dollars over 20 years, are not a big deal, but on this side of the House, we think that every little bit counts and as the old saying goes: "Little streams make big rivers". This government thinks that a dollar saved is a dollar in the pockets of the taxpayers.

[*English*]

By making these impressive savings in the production of our coins we are helping Canadians avoid painful budget cuts in other areas. Let me be perfectly clear. Our government is committed to eliminating the deficit, which will require more spending cuts in the years to come. Reducing the cost of our currency is a good example of spending cuts that are fair to all Canadians and relatively painless.

(1010)

Some people have expressed concern about the changes to our national coinage, but the disadvantages which are mostly related to the bulk of coins are far outweighed by the advantages, especially the considerable savings.

I am convinced that if given the choice all Canadians would choose a few more coins in their pockets or purses over fewer dollars in their bank accounts as a result of tax increases. Canadians understand that a \$2 coin will add a little weight to their pockets but will take a big load off the debt.

The government also understands the concerns of the vending industry and is committed to giving this and other important factors the time they need to adjust to the changes. The 8 to 12 months advance notice they have received should allow them to convert their equipment to handle the new coins. One reason we decided to introduce the new \$2 coin at this time as we change the composition of other coins is to assist the vending industry.

By pursuing the two initiatives at the same time the industry will only face a one-time investment in recalibrating its machines.

[*Translation*]

Not only will the new \$2 coin be better adapted to the needs of our trade and industry sector, it will also be more practical for users. As more and more goods and services such as coffee, snacks, laundromats, subway tickets and public parking require the use of coins, the need for printing low denomination bills is increasingly reduced.

By modernizing its currency in this fashion, Canada is joining the ranks of the many countries all over the world that already have higher denomination coins. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan and Switzerland are only some of the countries which have recognized the practical value of coins as a method of payment. Many countries have coins that have a much greater nominal value than ours. For example, in the United Kingdom, the one pound coin has approximately the same value as our new \$2 coin.

France is another country where low denomination bills have been withdrawn. In fact, their smallest bill, the twenty franc bill, is worth almost \$5. Some European countries have coins that are worth as much as our \$10 bill.

[*English*]

The proposed coin is composed of a nickel outer ring with a round aluminium bronze core. The use of bimetallic coins is another trend that is growing throughout the world. Such countries as France, Italy, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mexico and many others are already using such coins. The government's choice of a bimetallic \$2 coin reflects another one of our principles, that of helping Canada break into new markets with new products. The capability of producing a bimetallic coin in Canada will position the mint and Canadian suppliers to compete internationally for the bimetallic coin business.

This is especially true given the Royal Canadian Mint's worldwide reputation for unsurpassed quality, its markets and its production expertise internationally. I am convinced that the capability of producing the bimetallic \$2 coin will give the mint and potential Canadian suppliers another advantage in foreign markets.

I have outlined many of the tangible benefits that will flow from the changes. Canadians will benefit directly from the immediate cost savings as well as from the more cost effective method of producing coins. All this will result in a more efficient and effective coin system that can only help our economy.

The criteria for an effective coin system are that the system will first meet the needs of trade and commerce, will be cost effective, will have public acceptance and will meet public preference.

(1015)

I have already addressed the first two points regarding the new coin. I would now like to address the issues of public acceptance and public preference. As was the case with the introduction of the ever popular loonie, I am confident that Canadians will also come to enjoy the convenience, the distinctive look, and the feel of the \$2 coin.

The \$1 coin may give us an idea of how popular its sibling could prove to be. Since its introduction, more than 685 million

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\$1 coins have been struck, which is more than double the number of \$1 bills that were in circulation when they began to be withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

As a matter of fact, after seeing the success we have had with our loonie, the U.S. general accounting office is looking at reintroducing the \$1 coin in the United States. That says a lot.

It is not necessary to wait and see if our \$2 coin will be popular. According to the information we have now, more than 79 per cent of Canadians are in favour of the new \$2 coin because of the savings it will bring.

Once they are informed of all the advantages associated with the new coin and of the modifications that will be made to the metal composition of other coins, I am convinced that Canadians will support this project wholeheartedly.

Canadians in all the provinces have shown their support for the new \$2 coin by sending their ideas on the theme and the illustration of the coin. The Royal Canadian Mint has already received over 17,000 submissions from school children, artists, coin collectors and other Canadian men and women.

I encourage members of this House who have received suggestions from their constituents or who want to make their own suggestions to send them to us, but they have to do it as soon as possible because this cost-saving measure is progressing very quickly.

Our government is making these changes in the interest of all Canadians. The savings alone justify this decision but, more importantly, these changes reflect our determination to prepare for the future.

[*English*]

In making these changes we are also responding to the message we received from Canadians from coast to coast and we are putting into practice the message we sent out in the February budget. They want us to spend money and secure savings in ways that make sense and reflect Canadian values. We want to carry out their wishes in ways that cause the least pain possible.

It is only a small step in our larger march toward the future, but it is a symbol of our government's ongoing commitment to reducing the cost of government while providing service to Canadians.

Surely the people of Canada will benefit greatly from the introduction of the new \$2 coin. That is why I strongly urge all members of the House to help us in passing Bill C-82.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-82, an act to replace the \$2 bill with a coin.

As the parliamentary secretary just explained, this change would save the government some \$12 or 13 million yearly for the next 20 years. This measure will save us money. In fact, as he explained, the production cost of a bill, which has a circulation life of about 1 year, is 6 cents; the cost of minting a coin, which has a circulation life of 20 years, is 16 cents. Hence, the savings of \$250 million over 20 years.

However, the parliamentary secretary neglected to mention the costs, amounting to approximately \$30 million, which will be associated with the new coin. There certainly is the potential for savings; that is the main reason the government tabled this bill. When it comes to that pursuit, the Bloc Québécois has always striven to propose to the government ways of saving money. This is always practical, especially for a government facing a deficit.

(1020)

Some businesses, in particular bus companies, also support this initiative because they are having problems with their money boxes. All those \$2 bills tend to get stuck in the money boxes on buses. That is indeed a great problem, and perhaps one of the arguments in favour of replacing the bill with a coin.

We can talk about savings for the government and for the government only. That is where the savings end. Substantial costs will be associated with making the transition to the use of the coin.

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, when a member has the floor, I think his colleagues should at least give him a chance to express his views and other people a chance to listen. The comments being made right and left make it impossible for us to listen undisturbed to what the speaker for our party has to say. I would appreciate, Mr. Speaker, if you would call my colleagues to order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I am sure that is what we want, regardless of the topic or the member who is speaking, and I hope hon. members will remember this, and that the debate will proceed in a way that is acceptable to all members on both sides of the House.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for Joliette for coming to the rescue. I was so absorbed in my speech that I did not notice the other conversations that were going on, but now, as I look around me, I see people talking.

As I was saying, the purpose of Bill C-82 is to issue a coin that will replace the \$2 bill, as a money saving measure that, I agree, will save approximately \$240 million over 20 years. But that is where the saving stops. When we consider the transition period until this legislation can be implemented, we are talking about substantial expenditures, because it is clear that the private sector will again be stuck with spending several million dollars during the transition. As you know, when the government issues

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a new coin, in this case the \$2 coin, it means all cash registers in every business in this country have to be changed.

At the present time, cash registers can accommodate coins in denominations of 1 cent, 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents and one dollar, and now all cash registers will have to be changed to accommodate the \$2 coin. Who is going to pay? The merchants, of course. We will have to change all the vending machines across the country, at an estimated cost of more than \$80 million. And yes, there is more. We will have to change parking meters in our municipalities to accommodate the \$2 coin, and ticket counters and video games. And what about telephone booths? There are a lot of those in Canada. Apparently, the additional cost for the private sector in Canada will be \$400 million during the first year, and that is a conservative estimate. That is the minimum cost to the private sector.

These are very substantial amounts.

(1025)

It is nonsense to say, like the parliamentary secretary, that it is painless for the business community. There is nothing painless about obliging merchants to change their cash registers at a time when many are already suffering as a result of poor decision making by this government. Consider the GST and all the paperwork small businesses have to cope with, businesses that in some cases are on the verge of bankruptcy. Now they are being asked to change their cash registers. This is not necessarily good news for them.

We can hardly say this is painless and that the government is acting in the best interests of a private sector that will have to spend at least \$400 million because a new coin is being issued.

I heard some comments from government members. Sure, this will get the economy going. This will make a real difference. Four hundred million dollars at least will be spent. That will make a difference. I think this reasoning shows a lack of imagination and I would even say a lack of intelligence on the part of the government, because we know perfectly well that if the government really wanted to boost the economy, it could do it in a positive way.

If the government really cared about promoting private enterprise and small business, it would make an effort to simplify the paperwork, the forms and all the taxes imposed on small business and forget about issuing a \$2 coin.

Issuing a \$2 coin is no help to small business or even businesses in general in Canada. It complicates their lives. It forces them to spend money for something they did not ask for. Who, in the end, is going to pay for it? Businesses will pass the cost on to the customer. It will have an inflationary effect, perhaps like the introduction of the GST and all the other government measures of the past. It will have an inflationary effect.

We all know that, with the introduction of the dollar coin a few years ago, a whole slew of things that sold for 80 cents, 85 cents or 90 cents suddenly started selling for a dollar. The same thing will happen again. Everything that now sells for \$1.75 will now suddenly be selling for \$2. It is not fair. This negative effect is not fair for consumers who will have to pay a little more for each purchase.

All the business people who will have to buy another cash register will pass the cost on in the goods and services they sell to their customers. Basically, the consumers will be the ones to pay. On the pretext of saving \$250 million, the federal government is handing another bill to the consumers, who will have to pay two or three times more. This is unimaginative, would you not say, Mr. Speaker?

Besides, this is not a new approach. The federal government has often passed a debt on to the provinces or the municipalities in order to save money and reduce its deficit. In this case, it is passing the debt on to the consumer.

Furthermore, this measure not only does not help the economy, it may even have an inflationary effect on certain items. It may even be said to have a slowing down effect, dragging the economy down. Here again, this is not helping private enterprise, which is being stuck with a needless expenditure, one it never asked for. There is no money in this for private enterprise.

(1030)

No business asked for this, except perhaps bus companies which could benefit from the elimination of the \$2 bill. There would be no more \$2 paper money. People would probably have to use one dollar coins. In other words, what I am trying to tell the parliamentary secretary is that there may be other ways to solve the problem caused by \$2 bills in bus fare boxes.

To introduce a \$2 coin at this time, given the present economic situation in Canada, with its crushing debt load and cuts to social programs and elsewhere, could possibly slow down the economy, because of the additional costs to the system. The government is considering expenses the private sector finds useless. It will cause consumers to spend more for the sake of saving a few million dollars.

Again, we, in the Bloc, believe Canada should save money, but not just any which way and at any cost. If, to try to save \$250 million, you ask consumers to pay \$400 million, what kind of saving is it? The parliamentary secretary mentioned the fact that the reaction from the public was very positive, that people were enthusiastic, and that the \$1 coin had become the ever popular loonie. We were given the impression that the public agreed, and so did associations and merchants, but this is not the case at all.

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The majority of merchant associations and consumer associations were not consulted. Only a few were consulted, and some said they felt the government was going too fast. Consumer and merchant associations remember the costly introduction of the \$1 coin which was not readily accepted by the public and is not quite entirely accepted yet. Its impact was not very positive. It took some time to get used to it. Right from the start, the coin was found to be too heavy, too big, and unacceptable. This was a mistake.

The consumer and merchant associations I consulted told me that the government was going too fast. It might make another mistake and introduce a coin which might be heavier, bigger, and even less acceptable for the public, and which will be of no help to the private sector or retail business and will hurt them. It will cost shopkeepers at least \$400 million more to adapt to this new coin and, in the end, consumers will have to foot the bill.

We have to ask ourselves whose interests the government is defending? Who exactly are we serving here? For whom do politicians work? To whom are we accountable? Is the government taking these measures just to solve some small problem of its own? By creating this \$2 coin, we might be solving problems only for the Royal Canadian Mint, while ignoring those of the business people and the population.

(1035)

The parliamentary secretary argued that the Royal Canadian Mint will have the opportunity to develop an industry and compete with other similar industries over the world, even sell \$2 coins to the United States maybe. But can he explain why the Royal Canadian Mint is unable to compete on the international market right now? Why does it need a \$2 coin? We already have the nickel, dime, quarter, half dollar, and dollar coin; we could mint 2, 5 and 10 dollar coins for other countries.

Is helping the Royal Canadian Mint compete internationally a good enough reason to introduce a two dollar coin in Canada, when in fact, the Royal Mint is quite capable of competing on the international market as things stand right now? Are we creating that coin just to please the Royal Canadian Mint? Should we not first try to find out if the public wants such a thing? Do shopkeepers and business people want that coin? That is the question.

Before we implement a change as important as this one, it seems to me we should get to the bottom of the issue and ask ourselves who we are supposed to serve. I happen to think we are here to serve the public. Therefore, before doing anything else, we should consult the public. We should find out if Canadians really agree with the introduction of a \$2 coin.

The parliamentary secretary says that everybody agrees. Everyone wants coins, they love the loonie, the “ever popular loonie”, as he said. Yet, when you look at the poll which was conducted, you wonder whether it was not also orchestrated to please the Royal Canadian Mint.

There were two polls, the one we are interested in was done this year or at least the results were released this year. In fact, this is the only poll done this year by Environics, although it was in two parts. It shows that, deep down, there is a strong reluctance in the public.

The company did one poll that showed that about 50 per cent of the people said no, absolutely not, no \$2 coin. Another 50 per cent said maybe, they hesitated. And this was interpreted as a positive response, 50 per cent said yes.

The parliamentary secretary did not talk about the people who are against it. Environics redid the poll a second time and talked to the same 1,000 people—because they only talked to 1,000 people in Sherbrooke, Toronto and Calgary. They repolled the same 1,000 persons and they told them that the country would be saving \$250 million. That second time, of course, the acceptance rate jumped to almost 80 per cent. Sure, everybody is in favour of motherhood and apple pie.

Everybody in Canada wants to save money. Nobody in Canada would refuse the government a chance to save. But did they take the time to explain to these people that it will also cost a lot of money to merchants and consumers? No, they did not take the time to explain that. They did not take the time to explain the other possibilities or to do a thorough polling to try to avoid the mistake made when the \$1 coin was introduced. There was a big mistake made at the time. We know that.

When you look back at the history of our currency, you realize that there was a very strong opposition to the loonie. People were saying it was not real money, it was just a piece of metal of the wrong colour and it was far too big and too heavy.

(1040)

But worst of all, the government did not take the time to inform the people. It did not launch, let us say, an advertising or information campaign to explain to citizens the need for this coin. It could have consulted people and put some effort into producing a coin that would perhaps be less bulky, lighter and more original, but it did not do so.

Once a coin is introduced, we are stuck with it for the rest of our lives. We cannot change it. The same thing can be said of the loonie. A mistake was made and this is not the ever popular loonie. Even in Kingston, as in cities everywhere, banks have 50 million loonies in their strongrooms, because this coin is not circulating. People did not accept it.

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Here we are stuck with perhaps 50 million loonies which are not in circulation, quite a load. Obviously, in Kingston as elsewhere in the country, we will witness the same reluctance to use the \$2 coin and it is already happening. I sense it myself but one has only to speak to people in the streets, on the buses and so on to see that people do not want a \$2 coin. People did not accept the loonie, so why would there not be even greater reluctance to use a bigger and heavier coin?

Of course such reluctance is normal, because the idea is new. But if we decide to eliminate the \$2 bill, for example, it will be a new experience too.

The government lacks imagination and vision. It does not take the time to really think things through. Even if, for some, the introduction of a \$2 coin will not change the world, one has to take the time to do one's job. The Department of Public Works certainly did not do its job in this case; besides the minister did not even bother coming here to defend his bill this morning. Or rather, the hon. minister is here in spirit, smiling through his colleagues.

I note, however, certain factors that clearly indicate to me that the minister is not particularly interested in defending his bill as I would have liked him to.

Polls which unfortunately are made to serve the interests of the Royal Canadian Mint, but polls which are also incomplete, very incomplete, and which repeat the errors of the past, which do not consider two other alternatives that must be considered, that the government could consider, with the same regard for economy and with a greater respect for the general public.

If, for example, the government took a close look at the situation, maybe it would realize that this is not the right moment to introduce a \$2 coin. Maybe this is not the time. Maybe we should maintain for some time the current system with the \$2 paper bill. Maybe the timing is not right. Maybe the retailers do not want to be involved in another change, when they are already being buffeted by changes in taxation and forms coming from the government. Another government requirement, more useless spending by the government. Maybe this is not the right time. Maybe this is a lack of judgment on the government's part, bad timing, and if the government really, sincerely wanted to save money, it could do it elsewhere.

I could suggest many ways to save those \$250 million. The Minister of Public Works could himself abolish the Atlantic Canada Opportunities agency, something that has been suggested to him many times, because we know that this agency spends its money very freely, making gifts to this one and that one. We read in the newspapers that the minister, who does not have the best reputation in the government when it comes to his handouts, could, by abolishing the agency which spends between \$300 million and \$500 million every year, have saved a

much greater amount than the savings that we are supposedly making by issuing a two dollar coin.

(1045)

There are all sorts of reasons and examples that we can give to encourage the government to save \$250 million. Also, there is a second alternative. First, we can maintain the current situation and continue for a while, because the timing is bad for merchants and consumers. The other alternative that the government did not even consider and that I suggest simply because I too am interested in savings, is to abolish the two dollar denomination, whether paper or coin, as was done in the United States.

In the past—I have a \$2 bill, I had a \$2 bill in my hand—there was a \$2 bill in the United States. I was in New York when they abolished it. There was no problem with that. There are no \$2 bills any more in the United States. It is not the only country in the world that has abolished the two dollar bill. The parliamentary secretary mentioned that a two dollar bill had been introduced in Great Britain. But that is not true. In Britain, it was abolished, and several other countries simply abolished the two dollar denomination.

Some countries did convert it into a coin, but others did not. The parliamentary secretary seemed to want to mention only those who converted it into a coin. Many countries have abolished the two dollar denomination, and if they did, so can Canada. That could be very well received. It is not as if we wanted to abolish the 1 cent coin or another denomination essential to counting money. A \$2 bill is not like a cent. To abolish the cent would have a devastating impact because we would be abolishing a unit essential to counting money. But the \$2 bill is not essential, for that purpose. The proof of that, I repeat, is that other countries did it successfully.

That is what I am suggesting to the government. If we kept the present \$2 bill for a while or if we simply removed it for some time, the government would save more money than by introducing a \$2 coin.

This way, private business would not have to spend another \$400 million to no real purpose. Municipalities would not be forced to spend money replacing parking meters, vending machines, cash registers and all sorts of other business machines all across Canada. We would save a lot of money, and even the government would save.

If the government decided to eliminate the \$2 bill, it would still be possible to reintroduce it later, if it was considered a mistake or if the public did not accept the change. By contrast, once the \$2 coin is introduced, we will already have spent \$400 million. The damage will already have been done. If it were abolished later on because the public did not accept it, the private sector would still have made unnecessary investments.

Some say that perhaps the timing is wrong, since the government is considering the introduction of a \$5 coin. Some countries, Australia for instance, introduced a \$5 coin. By the

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way, in Australia, the \$2 and \$5 coins have not been accepted yet.

(1050)

At least the government understood that this is not the right time to issue a five dollar coin. They have understood that at least. They say: We may issue a five dollar coin in five or ten years from now. Why not wait and issue the two coins at the same time? Why now? What is the hurry? Why impose unnecessary expenses on the private sector? Why not wait for technological advances?

As we all know, we live in a rapidly changing society. I, for one, pay my newspaper with a credit card. I do not use spare change very often. People, at least in my town, use credit cards or debit cards issued by their caisses populaires to make purchases at their convenience store or supermarket. Plastic may be the way of the future.

New technologies could make currency obsolete a few years from now. Why should we have a bill which will force unnecessary expenses on merchants and tax consumers even more, when we know that in a few years from now technology will make coins obsolete? I believe this bill shows a lack of foresight, intelligence and vision.

This government is clumsy. Obviously they have not done their homework. Even their argument regarding fare boxes in buses is clumsy. They claim that there will be no more two dollar bills obstructing fare boxes and that using two one dollar coins instead will solve the problem.

Some say that, if we eliminate the \$2 coin, we will end up with a lot of small change in our pockets, with many more \$1 coins. We will keep them in our pockets instead of leaving them in the bank. Obviously, if a \$2 coin is introduced, we will have more change in our pockets anyway. Having one \$2 coin is no better for us than having two \$1 coins. What I am saying is that four quarters are still equal to a dollar, but that in the end we are forcing shopkeepers to spend considerable amounts.

My government colleagues disagree, arguing that people in Canada are weak and vulnerable; that they do not know how to count; that they are used to the \$2 bill; that if this bill is eliminated, they will have trouble counting to two. These arguments come from the Liberals.

I think that people are smart enough to figure out that one plus one is two. They do not necessarily need a \$2 coin.

Another argument from the government—as the parliamentary secretary put forward a moment ago—is that this coin would be a symbol of our national heritage. Just imagine! Some Liberal members also told me that a Canadian \$2 coin would enhance

the Canadian identity and makes us different from the Americans, who do not have a \$2 coin. What an argument.

The Canadian identity must be pretty fragile if we need a \$2 bill to maintain it. That is a pretty weak argument.

The issue of future developments must also be considered. The parliamentary secretary talked about all the other countries in the world, listing a few—like England—that have introduced a \$2 coin. He said that England had issued a \$2 coin which, in fact, has been eliminated. He is showing bias in his remarks, stating that several countries have issued a \$2 coin, although a number of them have eliminated it.

The way of the future is not so clear. Either we eliminate the two dollar denomination or we introduce a coin. Both examples can be found in this country. The other way is perhaps to act prudently and wait for technological developments to see if credit cards and plastic money could do the job instead.

(1055)

Perhaps now is not the time to make such a change, requiring business and private enterprise to pay out up to \$400 million for the sole purpose of alleviating a government concern. You know, many reasons militate against passing this bill, but the main reason that I would like to call to your attention is the fact that it was brought forward by the Minister of Public Works, who has quite a reputation.

The minister has already introduced legislation, namely Bill C-52, which had to be put off indefinitely because it was flawed. The minister was trying to introduce through this legislation a means of competing with private enterprise, in particular with the Canadian architectural and consulting engineering sector. There was a general outcry across the country and it was decided not to go any further with this bill. Bill C-52 was never seen again.

Perhaps the Minister of Public Works lacks good judgment in his bills. Here is another example: this ongoing competition with Canada Post, which competes unfairly with courier companies. Again, the minister seems to encourage unfair competition with private enterprise, which goes to show that this minister does not care very much about the business and industrial community. This is a minister who has, time and time again, squandered the taxpayers' money. And the list goes on. If I had more time, I could give you more examples of how this particular minister diverts funds, wastes money and does not do his job, because what we have here is a perfect example of a minister not doing his job.

We, Bloc members, care about savings and there are great savings to be made. Perhaps this is not the right time to be introducing Bill C-82, as it entails major transition costs. This measure will cost businesses and consumers a bundle, and introducing a \$2 coin will not solve the problem with the \$1 coin. We suggest that the government do its job, that is to say put out feelers to check whether or not the time is right to be

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introducing something like this or if other alternatives should be explored, like eliminating the two-dollar denomination altogether, which was not done. This should be done because we stand to save even more by eliminating the two-dollar denomination.

It would also add an element of flexibility, since a two-dollar coin could still be introduced in the future, if need be. At least, this would be a more prudent, economical move. All I have to say to the Minister of Public Works is: "Do your job, because you have not done it so far".

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, it being eleven o'clock, we will now proceed to statements by members, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5).

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from May 25 to May 28 I will join with constituents of Annapolis Valley—Hants in celebrating our annual Apple Blossom Festival.

This celebration signals the end of winter and offers the promise of a new growing season. Since the first festival in 1933 there have been many changes in apple production. However, one thing has not changed: the wonderful sight and breathtaking scent of apple trees in full bloom.

This festival draws people from near and far. It is an opportunity to showcase the beauty of Annapolis Valley and the warmth and generosity of the people who live throughout my riding.

I ask all members in the House to join me in congratulating all the people who volunteer their time to make this event so special. They should truly be proud of their efforts.

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[*Translation*]

ACCESS TO QUEBEC MARKET

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I remind our colleagues from the maritimes and Ontario that, this year, trade between Quebec and the rest of Canada will amount to over \$70 billion in goods and services. In Ontario, hundreds of thousands of jobs are tied to exports to Quebec. As for the maritimes, let us just say that access to the Quebec market accounts for a large part of their GDP.

Make no mistake about it: the Quebec market is the second export market for the rest of Canada. Ontario's three largest private employers, GM, Ford and Chrysler, would really suffer if they were to suddenly lose the Quebec market, which absorbs one quarter of their total production.

The federalists' bluff must be denounced. If Quebec becomes sovereign, no politician from Ontario or the maritimes in this House would be able to ignore these facts and what they mean for the economy of their respective ridings. Negotiating the maintenance of a common economic space will then be a question of common sense and economic interest for all partners.

I leave it to the members of this House to draw their own conclusion.

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[*English*]

HYACK FESTIVAL

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, every May New Westminster, British Columbia holds its annual Hyack festival, a Chinook Indian word meaning "hurry up". The May day celebration dates back to 1870.

This year marks 125 years of these May day festivities. The celebration is an important part of Canada's heritage and continues to be the longest running celebration of its kind in the British Commonwealth. Children dancing with ribbons around the maypole, parades, music and fun fill the week.

Dignitaries from many countries including Queen Elizabeth II have joined the festival in past years which includes marching bands from across Canada and the United States, as well as traditional cannon shots in memory of Queen Victoria, done with two anvils and gun powder between.

The royal city is proud to present the Hyack festival, a symbol of west coast spirit within the Canadian family of communities.

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UNDERGROUNDECONOMY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recent estimates of the size of the underground economy range from \$20 billion to \$140 billion per year. Even at the low end of the range the loss of revenue to Canada is significant enough to warrant the urgent attention of all Canadians.

When a consumer is offered a lower price in return for a cash payment and no invoice not only are they condoning tax evasion, they are also hurting honest taxpayers. Under the table economic activity creates unfair competition to honest businesses, resulting in bankruptcies and loss of jobs. It means lost revenue necessary to sustain health, education and other essential

economic and social programs, and it means honest taxpayers must bear the burden of those who do not pay their fair share.

The preferred approach to reducing the underground economy is voluntary compliance. Therefore I call on all Canadians to just say no to tax evaders. If everyone pays their fair share we will all pay less.

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[Translation]

FRANCO-ONTARIAN GAMES

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Franco-Ontarian Games take place from May 19 to 22, at the André Laurendeau high school, in Vanier, which is part of the Ottawa-Carleton regional municipality.

Five hundred athletes, artists and performers from 60 Ontario French speaking high schools, as well as 250 young volunteers and community leaders are taking part in these games.

For the second year in a row, these games provide young Franco-Ontarians with an opportunity to come together and participate in friendly competition. This gathering of young people reflects the vitality of the French language in Ontario, while also giving us hope regarding the future of the French fact.

I join the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier in congratulating the organizers of these games and in wishing luck to all participants.

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[English]

LEARNING DISABILITIES

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today in order to raise an extremely important but often ignored problem in Canada. Learning disabilities presently affect between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of the population, which translates into two or three children in every classroom. With the proper guidance these Canadians, with average to above average intelligence, are quite capable of functioning normally in mainstream society.

Such guidance is increasingly provided by such organizations as the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Since 1963 this non-profit volunteer organization has been committed to the advancement of people with learning disabilities. The association serves Canadians from coast to coast in more than 140 different communities.

(1105)

It is my pleasure today to recognize the continuing commitment of this organization in helping citizens afflicted with this

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disability. With the aid of this association, Canadians with learning disabilities will continue to be a vibrant and productive part of our society well into the future.

* * *

[Translation]

NEW ARENA IN WINNIPEG

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the wonderful world of politics, it is not unusual to see signs of government posturing after it makes dubious decisions or budgetary choices that are in the very least debateable.

Yesterday, in a very clumsy attempt to deflect criticism, the Prime Minister's behaviour was a prime example of this when he tried to justify the federal grant for the construction of a new arena in Winnipeg under the pretext that it was needed for the 1999 Pan American Games.

I would like to mention a few facts which should debunk this myth. First, Winnipeg's designation as host of the games was not contingent on it building a new arena. Second, the list of competitive sports featured in 1999 will only be issued in September 1995, and hockey is never featured at summer games. Last, an arena with a capacity of 22,000 is not needed for volleyball competitions: a capacity of 17,000, such as in the current arena, suffices. So how can the government continue to maintain that this grant is not an attempt to save the Jets?

People are not stupid. Confronted with these irrefutable facts, the Prime Minister should have—

The Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member. I am now giving the floor to the hon. member for Calgary Northeast.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, to date 81 of 87 members of a Chinese investment delegation who came to Canada on visitors visas have disappeared and gone underground. It seems they were well aware of the government's let them all in immigration policy and the minister's generosity.

Now some of the delegates have turned up to make refugee claims. Now they are entitled to free health care, welfare and lawyers at taxpayers' expense.

This episode should serve as a warning. Next year the immigration minister in his infinite wisdom will be issuing visas and the health minister will be handing out \$1 million to bring to Canada 500 AIDS sufferers from the third world to attend a conference in Vancouver.

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Since AIDS sufferers have been granted refugee status already in Canada, the question is not if some of the 500 AIDS sufferers will jump ship and make a refugee claim, but how many.

I call on the government to use a little common sense. Enforce the law. Do not give visitors visas when Canadian safety is at stake.

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MISSING CHILDREN

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Thursday, May 25, is missing children's day. Every year in Canada police receive thousands of reports of missing children. The overwhelming majority of these cases, about 45,000, are runaway children. Too frequently these runaway children turn to the streets and engage in delinquent activities as a means of support. This makes them extremely vulnerable to further violence and exploitation while on the streets.

A cornerstone of the federal government's efforts to protect Canadian children is the RCMP's missing children's registry. In operation since 1986, the registry is the major source of computerized information on missing children in Canada. It supports the efforts of Canadian and international police and concerned agencies in the search and recovery of missing children.

The RCMP has also joined forces with National Revenue Canada and citizenship and immigration in a joint initiative called "Our Missing Children". This partnership has resulted in a significant increase in the recovery and safe return of missing children here and abroad.

Protecting our children is a collective responsibility.

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[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May 22 to May 26 is Aboriginal Awareness Week. The goal of this week is to heighten public awareness of the aboriginal culture and to honour its contribution to Canadian society.

[English]

In keeping with the spirit of this event I am pleased to inform the House that last April marked the 3rd anniversary of the implementation of the federal government's first nation policing policy. The policy provides a practical way to improve the level and quality of policing services for first nation communities through the establishment of policing agreements.

[Translation]

As of May 1, Canada and the provinces had reached and signed 41 tripartite agreements with First Nations communities.

[English]

These agreements represent concrete progress and partnership at work among First Nations, the government and our provincial counterparts. I am sure all Canadians will join me in celebrating aboriginal awareness week and congratulating the Solicitor General of Canada for the ongoing success of the First Nations policing policy.

[Translation]

I would invite all hon. members to acknowledge the contributions of aboriginal people, which are all too often ignored by the official opposition.

* * *

(1110)

MEMBER FOR CHAMBLY

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the "brotherhood of Bloc intolerance" welcomed a new member into the brood yesterday. It took him a few weeks to do it, but the Bloc member for Chambly has joined ranks with his colleagues, the Bloc members for Louis-Hébert and Chicoutimi, who are demanding that newcomers to Quebec be denied the right to vote because they fear that they will impede Quebec's independence.

In fact, the hon. member insinuated that Quebec's immigrants, who have contributed to the province's economic and social development for years, do not have the same rights as those Quebecers whose ancestors were among the first settlers. This tendency among Quebec separatists to create different classes of citizens based on their language or their cultural origins cannot be tolerated and must be emphatically condemned.

Quebecers do not want to create an independent Quebec which promotes discrimination and racism.

* * *

QUEBEC CITY CONVENTION CENTRE

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said smugly that if Quebec City did not receive federal funding to build a new arena it was because its separatist mayor had decided to spend the money on something else.

Once again, the Prime Minister is so intent on putting sovereignists in their place that he simply forgets the facts. Construction of a convention centre in Quebec City was a first and foremost a promise by the provincial Liberals that came to fruition only because of the insistent lobbying by the Prime Minister's current chief of staff and the present Minister of

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Foreign Affairs, in other words, because another Liberal government got involved. The Prime Minister ought to know as well that Quebec City is not investing a single penny in the construction of this convention centre, which is being financed strictly by the Government of Quebec and the government in Ottawa.

Finally, I will repeat what was said by Mayor L'Allier and I quote: "We are penalized for not showing the flag. This is hardly what I would call democratic, and the real republic—"

* * *

[English]

WINNIPEG JETS

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are continuing to seriously bungle the finances of the country, thereby threatening health care, welfare and post-secondary education. Unbelievably, they are to give \$20 million to the Winnipeg Jets professional hockey team with its multi-million dollar, fast skating stick handlers.

The Manitoba Entertainment Complex applied to Revenue Canada for special tax status which will allow it to create some form of a crown owned entity which would be eligible to give instant tax receipts. Canada's tax gathering system means every Canadian will be supporting the Winnipeg Jets professional hockey team. This is an unconscionable use of tax deductions.

I call on the revenue minister to immediately shoot down this ridiculous Jets plan. The Liberals have stick handled their way into a hat trick with their \$20 million for the Jets, private luxury boxes, new digs for the athletes and now tax deductions for supporters. The result is penalties to the Canadian taxpayer.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, aboriginal groups from across the country have made presentations regarding their concerns about Bill C-68, the firearms legislation.

The James Bay Cree and the Council for Yukon Indians have presented well documented briefs which illustrate the government did not initiate the required consultation process on this legislation. The onus was on these two groups to hold the government accountable for the agreements which have been made.

Given the CYI agreements were proclaimed in February of this year, it is quite shocking that barely four months later the Minister of Justice had not complied with certain aspects of the agreements.

While these agreements are between two parties, it is inevitably the First Nations that are expected to ensure compliance with even constitutionally entrenched agreements. Is it any

wonder there is a high degree of mistrust of the federal government by aboriginal peoples?

The Inuit-Tapirisat, the AFN and the Metis have all presented their concerns. The minister has said he will consult. What he has not said is what he will do to meet these specific concerns. The minister has both a legal and a moral obligation to be forthright and address these issues today.

* * *

ONTARIO ELECTION

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after listening to last night's Ontario leaders debate, there is no question Lyn McLeod is the best choice for premier of Ontario. She showed she has the intelligence and the integrity for the job and the determination to do what needs to be done. With her action plan she has the ability to achieve it.

(1115)

Bob Rae was consistently put on the defensive by McLeod over his dismal economic record. He failed completely to live up to his billing as a champion debater.

Mike Harris failed to gain any ground, and the Liberal leader was successful at proving that Harris could not defend his unbelievable 30 per cent tax cuts. He failed to show himself as a potential leader of the province.

Lyn McLeod used the debate to sell her plan to Ontarians. She focused on the issue of jobs and highlighted the specifics of how her government will create these jobs.

McLeod won the debate and the respect of Ontario voters looking for credibility. She proved that her plan and her team can capably guide the economy in these challenging times. She will win the election on June 8 and restore growth and prosperity to Ontario.

* * *

[Translation]

ONTARIO LIBERAL PARTY LEADER

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night in the debate among the party leaders running in the Ontario election campaign, we again had the pleasure of listening to Lyn McLeod, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

With great eloquence and sincerity, she showed that she is ready to take over the reins of the government in Ontario. Her style, clear and forthright, reflects her firm resolve to serve the people of Ontario.

There is no doubt in my mind that Lyn McLeod is worthy of representing her fellow citizens. A few weeks from now, Ontarians will at last be free and unencumbered by the savage

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constraints of socialism à la Bob Rae. At last they will be able to put their trust in their leaders.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

WINNIPEG JETS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In the context of the announcement of \$20 million in direct assistance to the Winnipeg Jets, Izzy Asper, the head of a group of businessmen trying to acquire the hockey team, has confirmed that discussions on federal funding for the Jets have been going on for a long time.

Would the Deputy Prime Minister confirm Mr. Asper's statement that discussions have been going on for a while between the federal government and the promoters trying to save the Winnipeg Jets?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the member is mistaken. There is no direct assistance for the Jets.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pardon me if I laugh. Answers like that are a laugh for everyone.

Yesterday, the President of Treasury Board confirmed having found funding for the Winnipeg Jets with the cancellation of a \$35 million highway contract. In the meantime, however, the Prime Minister was stating in this House that the funding had come from the cancellation of a series of small projects worth \$3 million, under the infrastructure program.

My question is simple and straightforward and, I am hoping for an answer from the Deputy Prime Minister. Would she tell us clearly which projects were cancelled to pay for the government's \$20 million subsidy to the Winnipeg Jets?

[*English*]

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the very specific project that was referred to was a \$30 million overpass near a CN mainline, and the member will know that the overpass project was opposed by many constituents. I personally received letters as Minister of the Environment in opposition to the project. The decision was made by the local community not to proceed with it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the owners of the Winnipeg Jets will decide next Thursday whether

the franchise will remain in Winnipeg. The federal government, for its part, yesterday agreed to pay \$20 million toward the construction of the new arena the Jets need.

Would the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether the federal government's funding is conditional on the Jets' remaining in Winnipeg or whether it will still be provided to build a 22,000-seat arena even if the Jets leave Winnipeg?

(1120)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in putting the infrastructure system in place, we gave municipalities and provinces the option of making their own decisions.

We do not agree with the comments by the Leader of the Opposition, Lucien Bouchard, who has a hard time believing that Ottawa would spend public funds to refloat a hockey team. In his opinion, the federal government would be wrong to invest in Quebec City or in Winnipeg.

We do not agree with this approach, because we feel that, if the mayor of Quebec City chooses a project, he should be entitled to proceed with his choice. This is why we agreed to fund the infrastructure program in Winnipeg, just as we did in Quebec City.

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Canada seems to be the only one not to know that she has just given the Winnipeg Jets \$20 million. The premier of Manitoba and the mayor of Winnipeg both are not hiding the fact that they want to save the Jets franchise.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister put \$20 million in a 22,000-seat arena for the Winnipeg Jets, without any business plan, whereas, last year, the attendance figure per game was 12,500 on the average and the team has lost \$30 million over the past four years?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did what people in Winnipeg and Manitoba wanted, just as we did when we decided to fund the congress centre in Quebec City, at the request of Mayor L'Allier who said, and I quote: "The congress centre has been a regional priority for the past ten years. Economic spin-offs are proven. We cannot sideline the centre which, year after year, employs thousands of people in the hotel and catering industry, for some infrastructure this area does not need, but which is needed by one company to survive here. This is the reason why I cannot support Marcel Aubut's approach". This is exactly what the mayor of Quebec City said.

We respect Quebec City's decision to spend money on a congress centre, just as we respect the wish of people in Winnipeg to spend infrastructure money on an arena.

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Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, why is the Deputy Prime Minister refusing to admit that the federal government uses double standards when it deals with Quebec? Indeed, when asked to come to the rescue of MIL Davie—the industry minister knows this well—and its thousands of workers, who do not skate for one million dollars a year, the government demands to see a business plan, but when it comes to the Winnipeg Jets, the money is paid without conditions or guarantees.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we respect the will of cities to make their own economic decisions. Quebec City chose a congress centre and received \$25 million from the federal government.

Similarly, Winnipeg chose to build an arena to promote economic development; this is why we are giving this city its fair share, just as we gave it to Quebec city for its congress centre, the first project awarded under the infrastructure program.

* * *

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the hockey fans and businesses in Winnipeg deserve a great deal of credit. They have come together and are well on their way to keeping the Jets in Winnipeg and in Canada.

What I have to question, however, is why infrastructure money is being used to build luxury boxes and to subsidize a professional hockey team. This program was supposed to improve sewer systems and make Canadian highways safer. Instead, it is going toward bocce courts, the Calgary Saddledome millionaire club, and the Peter Pocklington bottom line. The infrastructure program is a failure.

How does the Deputy Prime Minister justify Manitoba's reallocation of infrastructure funding?

(1125)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): In the same way we justified the decision by the city of Calgary to finance infrastructure funding for the Saddledome.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is quite right that it is up to the province or the city and they make their request. However, the issue is why the infrastructure program is designed in such a way as to make hockey arenas, museums, and other sports facilities a legitimate expense.

Canada's sewers and roadways are deteriorating. It will cost taxpayers billions of dollars to replace them. Infrastructure that benefits the maximum number of taxpayers should be the goal, not political gain.

Where will the money come from for the real infrastructure spending that will be required?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that the member for Calgary, the city that hosted the Olympics, and the world had an opportunity to see his great city, is now saying that infrastructure is a bad investment.

Infrastructure in sports is also about nation building. That is why I am sure he would not want to turn his back on the infrastructure spending that paved the way for the Calgary Olympics, nor would he want to turn his back on the infrastructure spending that made it possible for the Saddledome.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, true infrastructure spending is fine, but direct subsidies to the private sector are not fine. The taxpayers are against that.

We learned yesterday that the save the Jets group in Winnipeg is considering applying for charitable status. That would make every donation tax deductible, and then tax weary Canadians would be picking up even more of the tab. The Minister of National Revenue said it was out of the question. However, the Manitoba Entertainment Centre applied for charitable status six weeks ago. Since the Jets have received so much government money and will be receiving more now, they should consider renaming themselves the Winnipeg Challenger Jets.

Will either the Deputy Prime Minister or the representative of revenue and taxation assure the House and Canadians that the Jets and their supporters will not receive charitable status?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member exhibits what I hope is an unintentional misunderstanding of the infrastructure program. He says there are direct subsidies. There are no direct subsidies.

What we have done for Winnipeg is exactly the same thing we did for Calgary at the request of the former mayor of Calgary, Premier Ralph Klein, who endorsed the Saddledome funding.

Frankly, I did not see the member for Calgary stand up and complain about the Calgary Olympics; he did not stand up and complain about the Calgary Saddledome. Heavens, he should not stand up and complain about the Winnipeg arena, which is going to permit a Canadian national institution to stay in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said that \$5 million out of the \$20 million spent on saving the Winnipeg Jets came from the Pan American Games budget. Yet, no event featured in these games requires a 22,000 seat arena.

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Since no event featured in the Pan American Games requires building a 22,000 seat arena, will the Deputy Prime Minister admit that, by taking \$5 million from the federal contribution to the Pan American Games and giving it to the Winnipeg Jets, the government is in fact misappropriating public funds?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, just as we will accept the decisions made by the Québec 2002 committee as to the need for a renewed infrastructure, should that city be selected, we accept the decision made by the Pan American Games committee to set aside \$5 million, precisely because it wanted to put in place the infrastructure required for future Pan American Games in Canada. We respect the committee's decision, just as we will respect those of the Québec 2002 committee.

(1130)

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister's response makes no sense. This is appalling.

Since Winnipeg hosted the Pan American Games in 1967 and has just been selected as host of the 1999 games, in particular because it already has all the facilities required, why does the Deputy Prime Minister refuse to admit that the Prime Minister was the first to authorize the misappropriation of \$5 million solely to serve the political interests of the human resources development minister, who is the person responsible for Manitoba and the member for Winnipeg South Centre?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I find unfortunate and dishonest—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Copps:—about the opposition's stance is their claim that what we did for Winnipeg, we are not willing to do in other cases.

We simply respected Quebec City's decision, which was supported twice by Mayor Jean-Paul L'Allier, to build a convention centre in order to promote its economic development.

In the same way, we have accepted the request made by the City of Winnipeg and the Manitoba government, which feel that this infrastructure is important to Winnipeg's economic development.

If you agree with the principle that Quebec City is free to make its own decisions, why do you not accept it for other cities?

The Speaker: My colleagues, I must remind you that you should always address the Chair.

[English]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, to set the record straight for the Deputy Prime Minister, the hon. member for Calgary Centre publicly denounced the government for the misuse of infrastructure funds on the Saddledome in Calgary. To bring him into it is absolutely unfair and uncalled for.

I want to continue to shed light on the Liberals' bailout of the Winnipeg professional hockey team. She did not answer the question. The Manitoba entertainment complex has asked for charitable status. Will she, on behalf of her government, unequivocally state that the government will not give the Manitoba entertainment complex or any organization related to this unconscionable bailout charitable status?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no bailout.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the question again. Will the Deputy Prime Minister unequivocally state on behalf of her government that there will be no special status, no further tax grab from the Canadian wallet?

Is there anything she does not understand about my question?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the basic premise of the member's question is false. There is no bailout of any hockey team.

I am astonished the Reform Party, which swept into office in western Canada on the wave of allowing people to have their say locally, is now prepared to turn its back on the local initiative of the city of Winnipeg that sees this is a priority. Who are you—

(1135)

The Speaker: In the heat of rhetoric we sometimes get carried away but I am feeling awfully lonely. Please address your remarks to the Chair.

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*[Translation]***TRANSFER PAYMENTS**

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Gauthier: Perhaps we will finally get an answer.

Mr. Loubier: Since he tabled his budget on February 27, the Minister of Finance keeps repeating that, next year, the cuts in transfer payments to the provinces will represent only a \$350 million shortfall for Quebec, mocking the \$650 million figure put forward by the official opposition.

Yesterday however, in his testimony before the finance committee, Bill Murphy, a senior official at the Department of

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Finance, assessed this shortfall at \$625 million, which is very close to the amount put forward by the official opposition.

In light of the statements made by finance officials, does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs still maintain, as his colleague from finance does, that cuts in the Canada social transfer will translate into a \$350 million shortfall for Quebec in 1996–97, and not \$650 million as suggested by the official opposition?

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, there are three factor affecting transfers to the Province of Quebec: equalization payments, tax points and cash payments.

When Bloc members or the Parti Quebecois finance minister quote an amount of approximately \$650 million, they are not taking into account tax points or equalization payments, or both.

I repeat that the exact shortfall figure, when you factor in the reduced transfers to Quebec and these three sources, is only \$350 million.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has control over its cash transfers to the provinces and those are the transfers that were cut back in the last budget. These cuts total \$650 million for Quebec. The federal government's own officials said so yesterday. They are the ones who brief the Minister of Finance and they should brief this government.

Why does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs persist in denying the facts, if not to conceal from Quebec until after the referendum the true extent of Ottawa's cuts to social program funding? The shortfall will reach \$650 million next year.

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, one cannot conceal the truth by playing with figures. It was clearly set out in the agreements negotiated by the federal government and the provinces—read them—that transfers to Quebec would be in the form of tax points and cash payments.

Also, equalization payments are not freebies given for one reason or another to the provinces. These payments are made to have—not provinces, so that all the provinces, rich or poor, can offer comparable levels of public services. Consider that more than 60 per cent of provincial expenditures are social expenditures. So, equalization payments are clearly part and parcel of the transfers designed to fund social programs.

Logic demands that the three types of transfers be taken into account in determining that the shortfall is only \$350 million.

[English]

PENSIONS

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry thinks that highly paid CEOs set a bad example for ordinary Canadian workers. I think I have heard it all now.

The minister is eligible to receive \$1.5 million in pension payments in a plan that is three times more generous than the best private sector plans. What kind of an example does he think this sends to the ordinary Canadian workers who are paying for it?

(1140)

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain exactly the point I made in a speech I gave to the Canadian Association of Family Enterprises last week.

At this stage in our economic cycle when corporate profits are recovering, which is a very good sign, it is time for Canadians to continue to invest in further productivity gains and further competitiveness as we had through the economic cycle.

We have been very successful in gaining competitive points vis-à-vis the rest of the world although much of it has unfortunately been based on our exchange rate. We need to continue to save and continue to invest.

Canadians from coast to coast have lived on no increase in family income on average over the past 10 years. They will be asked by their corporate leaders to continue to keep their belts tight as federal public servants have and as all members of the House of Commons have by not taking a wage increase in over five years. The time is not yet to start raising wages. The time is now to continue to invest and save.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I respectively suggest that the minister and the government should save their managerial advice for the companies that managed to lose over \$35 billion last year.

I wonder what business the government and the minister think they have commenting on the issue of private compensation when yesterday the government, in alliance with the separatists, decided that it would refuse to hear testimony from private citizens, from private organizations and from ordinary taxpayers on the issue of MP pensions.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think one point needs to be made very clearly. I made the point in the interview I gave based on that speech. I really do not have any particular interest in what any CEO is paid. I am not a shareholder of any of the companies.

Oral Questions

However what is clear is that Canada stands poised to succeed very well on issues of competitiveness in the world. Now is the time for us to continue to save and invest.

This man wants to talk about pensions. That is all they really think about. I will tell him something. When we deal with issues of compensation in the House, let us talk about what it costs many people to be here as well. Let us cost out what the forgone opportunities are. Then we will put everybody on an even footing.

At the same time let us also recognize that members come to Ottawa to serve their constituents often at great cost to themselves and their families. We are looking for a recipe for continuing competitiveness in the world. In that way we will benefit all Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Once again, the minister has refused to grant entry visas to three Algerian actors scheduled to participate in the Theatre Festival of the Americas, in Montreal. At the same time, we have learned that Mr. Abdennour who, according to the Quebec-Algeria committee, is a lawyer close to the Islamic salvation front, was granted a visa by the Canadian embassy, in Paris.

How does the Minister of Immigration explain the fact that a person close to the Islamic salvation front can come to Canada without any problems, while Algerian actors who denounce torture and fundamentalism cannot do so?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is mistaken because the minister has refused no visitor visa to anyone. The visitor visa is done on a processed basis. It should be done fairly and not with any favouritism to anyone regardless of background.

There are a million applications for visitor visas. Surely the member does not expect a minister or a government to be interventionist with visitor visa applications easily and loosely. Eighty-five per cent of all applications are approved.

There is a process in place that if a visitor visa is refused, the remedy is to reapply and try to address some of the concerns. The member should know one of the three actors has gone to the embassy today to make such a formal reapplication. The other two actors have not seen fit to go back.

We should allow the individuals to do as they please, rather than to force the issue and play politics on the backs of a visitor visa program.

(1145)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's explanations, but this is not the first time that such a situation has occurred.

Given the obvious incompetence of his departmental officials at the Canadian embassy in Paris, who make surprising decisions almost on a daily basis, will the minister tell them to shape up, so as to put a stop to these errors in judgment, which have become too frequent?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, his leader used to be a Canadian ambassador to France, situated in Paris. It was under his leader's jurisdiction as well that some visitor visa applications coming through France were accepted, some were refused, and some were reviewed. That was the process when his leader used to be a Canadian ambassador in France. That continues to be the process today.

What I would suggest is that the situation in Algeria, by no means easy or by no means orderly, should be solved by the international community. What I would suggest to the hon. member, however, is that to utilize a visitor visa program for any one country is not the solution and it would jeopardize our visitor visa program internationally.

There is a way to deal with refugee crises. There is a way to deal with how to utilize a country's forces to address a destabilized area. That solution, however, does not lie in a visitor visa program.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question deals with international trade.

A recent study by the accounting firm KPMG has indicated that cheaper labour, cheaper benefits, and a cheaper dollar make Canada a very competitive place in which to do business, more competitive in fact than the United States.

Would the minister please tell the House what this study means to Canadian workers, to Canadian business, and to Canada's role in the global community?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): The report to which the hon. member for Hillsborough refers substantiates the conclusions of similar studies in the recent past that have emphasized Canada's highly competitive position in the global marketplace. Thanks to a number of

measures that have been taken, including such factors as payroll and benefits, material and energy inputs, taxes, research and development costs, and distribution costs, as the report notes, Canada has become increasingly competitive.

I would want to emphasize that in creating jobs through such international competitiveness, the principal factor that is going to play in the future is the excellent budget the Minister of Finance brought down, which will increase further Canada's competitiveness.

* * *

EBOLA VIRUS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, phone lines have been lighting up in my office in Ottawa and in my constituency over the Ebola virus. People believe that they are not being protected by their own government. They are frustrated with the health minister's non-answers to direct questions.

Now that we have the minister in a forum where she cannot run away, I ask the minister why she chose to withhold information from Canadians regarding the number of people who have been detained at Pearson because they were suspected of carrying the Ebola virus.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no information has been withheld. We have been quite straightforward about describing the two individuals.

The first individual arrived in Toronto. It had been three weeks since he had been in Zaire. The period of incubation had passed. The gentleman was nevertheless examined by a physician and was found to be in very good health.

The second individual arrived in Toronto. He claimed that his mother had died after visiting Kikwit. He has been detained, is under quarantine. Nevertheless, he is in good health and has no signs of illness.

These are the facts.

(1150)

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is the same kind of babble we heard yesterday.

Canadians need to know if they have a Minister of Health and a Minister of Immigration who have the wherewithal to take direct proactive measures to protect the health of Canadians.

There is a simple solution to all of this. Will the immigration minister put Canadians' minds at ease by stopping the threat at the source? Will he place a temporary moratorium on visitors' visas from Zaire and surrounding regions until this disease is safely contained there?

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Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find this member of Parliament irresponsible in the way he is trying to exploit the situation.

What the member should do is take a page from the health critic of the Reform Party, who yesterday said—and he is a doctor—that the government's action and approach to dealing with this dilemma were "sensible".

Today instead we have the immigration critic, who is not a doctor and not responsible or respectful of what his colleague said, saying his phone is lighting up and things are on the downslide. You are fearmongering, that is what you are doing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Following a review of all outside research contracts awarded by the Department of Natural Resources in the last five years, we came to some pretty damning conclusions. Our study indicates that Quebec research centres and companies got only 10 per cent of these contracts.

How can the Deputy Prime Minister justify the fact the Quebec gets less than half of its fair share of those outside research and development contracts?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Obviously, we are not responsible for the contracts awarded by the previous Conservative government. Obviously, we are not responsible for the funds allocated in the last five years.

We will of course try to direct our grants on the basis of need. For example, a national pulp and paper centre was set up in Montreal, because that is where most of the interest and the technology in that field can be found. I do not think we will start to allocate funds according to regional development. We should instead spend the money where the expertise is, such as for mining in Abitibi and PAPRICAN in Montreal.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, again, the Deputy Prime Minister just sold us a bill of goods.

The Minister of National Defence said recently that he could not afford to be fair to Quebec in terms of the distribution of his department's spending. Are we to understand that the Deputy Prime Minister is in the same position and has neither the will nor the means to be fair to Quebec?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where some of these people get their quotes. I never said that at all. I would never say that.

I was pointing out a situation in which certain expenditures are made across the country. Certain installations are built across the country as a result of historic circumstances. To imply that there was something discriminatory in this is completely outrageous.

* * *

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

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

The government has legislation ready to be tabled in this House that would ban the importation of MMT, a gasoline enhancer. The ban is based solely on evidence provided by only one of the two vested groups, namely the Motor Vehicles Manufacturers' Association.

The minister stated in the House on May 5 that "any cabinet decision to move on MMT is supported by all ministers of the government".

(1155)

By making this ban, is the minister setting a precedent of bias for the process of decision making for all the industries within the purview of government, including natural resources?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my supplemental question is for the same minister.

By banning MMT her government is supporting the claims and data brought forward by only the MVMA. This must mean that the contrary scientific data from Ethyl Corporation is false and incorrect.

What conclusive information does the minister have that discredits the data provided by Ethyl Corporation that would cause the government to side with the MVMA and thereby perhaps place the environment at greater risk?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the hon. member has thought of a different use for the product we all buy at the pumps. Perhaps he has. I am not sure what it is. The last time I checked, most of it goes into motor vehicles.

He will know that Canada has benefited very well from the fact that there is a very strong continental market in motor vehicles. We produce about 17 per cent of the North American

production and we only consume about 8 per cent. That benefits us very directly in terms of jobs and economic growth.

The vehicles that are being produced use the product at the pumps. It should have come to his attention that the new cars require fuel without MMT. If he would like to have his constituents purchasing vehicles that either cost a lot more or have their diagnostic systems unplugged, then he ought to be in support of keeping the MMT in the fuel. But until we find some other use for it—and perhaps he breathes it, I do not know—we have to have continental standards in fuel.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Aboriginal groups have criticized Bill C-68, the minister's gun control legislation. As a treaty and First Nations member, these criticisms are of great concern to me and I take them very seriously.

Treaties form the fundamental relationship that exists between the First Nations and the Government of Canada. Treaty rights are recognized and protected under the Canadian Constitution. Will the minister tell the House and assure the aboriginal people of Canada that Bill C-68 will not take away, abrogate, or derogate these treaty rights?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of this government to treat all Canadians fairly in connection with this legislation. We also are very much aware that aboriginal people have both aboriginal and treaty rights to hunt, and we intend to respect them.

I learned for myself as I travelled the length and breadth of the country last year and visited aboriginal communities how firearms are often treated as a tool and how their use is very much a part of their way of life.

The way we responded to this need is through consultation. Just after the action plan was tabled in the House last November 30, some 690 letters went out with copies of the plan to the aboriginal leadership across Canada. We wrote again to those same 690 leaders of aboriginal communities early this year. We followed up, with the help of about 70 of them, in assembling one of the most comprehensive and unprecedented consultation processes known to the government. In nine regions of Canada we are meeting with representatives of rural, urban, on reserve and off reserve aboriginal persons. In the coming months we will conclude that very direct and personal discussion process to determine how this bill can be implemented in a manner that is sensitive to the reality of aboriginal lifestyles, culture, and treaty rights. We will then prepare regulations, which will be

Oral Questions

sent in draft form for comment to those same people. We will then table them in the House for the 30-day review.

We intend to comply with our obligations and respect the rights to which the hon. member has referred.

* * *

[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that almost two years after having been elected, the government has not yet amended the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation in the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Will the Minister of Justice have the courage and the sense of responsibility to table amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act before the end of this session?

(1200)

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is not an issue is the commitment of the government to the changes in the human rights act to which the hon. member has referred.

I must tell the hon. member today, as I have in the past, that commitment remains unchanged. We have long recognized the need to amend the human rights act as he has suggested, not only to add sexual orientation as a ground upon which discrimination is prohibited but in a variety of other important ways. This is to bring that act up to date to reflect improvements that have been introduced in provincial legislation on the same subject, to meet the needs identified by the chief commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and to fulfil commitments the government has made. We will indeed proceed with those changes.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, recently a program on Manitoba television, which included an interview with the department of Indian affairs supervisor in Manitoba, identified that the Jackhead Band had misspent money, cheques had been forged and the RCMP were investigating the disappearance of over \$70,000 for house construction. This situation has placed individual band members in very tough financial circumstances. The department of Indian affairs has exhibited no interest in their welfare.

What has the minister done to ensure these abuses will be rectified and to obtain reimbursement of these moneys?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of what is going on in Jackhead. This is under review by the department. I am pleased the hon. member has risen today because he has not risen in a week. Usually I find all 10 of his toes do not touch the ground.

Last Friday, this hon. member made an allegation against the member for Prince Albert—Churchill River. I thought today this hon. member would stand up and withdraw. He said the hon. member was honoured by the chiefs and he was in a conflict position. Not only was he not honoured but it was not a conflict. I would have thought that if he wanted work to progress with aboriginal people, he would take Fridays and speak about the dignity and respect we are supposed to bring to aboriginal people, not bring unjust accusations which he usually does on Fridays.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

North American security is threatened more on the environment than on any other front. Now the U.S. clean water act and the clean air act are under attack. We learned that the U.S. House of Representatives has diluted the clean water act making it easier for industry to continue polluting the Great Lakes with airborne dioxins and furans.

What effect could these amendments have on Canada? What action is being taken to ensure the Great Lakes water quality agreement is upheld?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed the member has underlined a very serious concern. If the proposed amendments that have passed the House of Representatives proceed through the Senate without amendment, they will gut the current provisions of an international agreement which affects the drinking water of 50 million people on both sides of the border.

The member will know the single largest international body of water is the Great Lakes. We do not intend to allow the Great Lakes water quality agreement to be watered down. We have been in touch with the office of the president.

Today I myself have contacted by letter the administrator responsible for the Environmental Protection Agency. We have also been in contact with Ambassador Blanchard by way of letter in advance of the decision of Congress.

We are going to do everything we can to ensure the amendments put forth by Congress do not see the light of day. We do not want to put Canadians' health and the environment at risk, which would be the effect of accepting these amendments.

Privilege

The Speaker: That would bring to a conclusion the question period. I have notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Elk Island which I will hear now.

* * *

PRIVILEGESTANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STATUS OF
DISABLED PERSONS

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been over one and one-half years since I was elected as a new member to this most important Chamber in the country. I came here full of hope and anticipation of what the democratic process would be. The breach of privilege of which I speak today is such a severe aberration and breach of the most fundamental premises of democracy that I am really sorry I have to raise it.

(1205)

I also recognize that what I am going to say is important. I realize your position, Mr. Speaker, is of tremendous importance here. In your office and in your person lies the ability to maintain the very basic premise of democracy and the rules under which it operates. I am asking today not only for your ruling, but also for your guidance because of my deep concerns.

I want to specifically give the reasons for my complaint. I was a substitute authorized member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons on Tuesday and Wednesday. I know, Mr. Speaker, you heard one question of privilege already and you ruled on that, but my problem is a different one and much more serious. It has to do with the conducting of a vote in that committee.

Specifically, this is what happened. Our party moved an amendment. When the chairman of the committee called for the vote, we said yea. There was not a single nay heard. The chairman ruled that the motion had been defeated. Now that is so fundamental it is not even in the rule book. It is assumed in a democracy that when everybody who casts a vote says yea and the chairman says that it has been defeated that it is a flagrant and violent abuse of democracy such as we cannot tolerate if we want to maintain our system.

The chairman declared that motion defeated and of course I immediately challenged the chair. When I did that, the chairman of the committee said that his ruling would stand. I objected and the chairman then invoked the rules of order which ask for the majority of the people in the committee to decide if the ruling of the chair stands. The Liberal majority woke up and they faithfully fell into line and supported the ruling of the chair. I could not accept that.

This was such a serious aberration that I told the chairman he could not do that. He said he could. I suppose I should have apologized at that stage for becoming a little upset, but to me

this was such a violent attack on the democratic process. I then moved to report this incident to the Speaker because it was my understanding that such an issue could not come to you unless it was reported by the committee. I may be wrong here and I have some reasons for considering that I may be wrong, but that was my understanding at the time.

I moved the motion that this be reported, but the chairman would not accept the motion and ruled it out of order. I told the chairman it could not be out of order. He then proceeded to ask if the ruling of the chair was sustained and the majority of the members present said yes. Now that is unbelievable. I cannot accept that.

I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, that this be corrected. There must be some things the committee does not have 100 per cent autonomy to do. It cannot by vote alter the truth. This is a democratic tradition that has been upheld for so long that an arbitrary rule of a motion defeated when in fact it has passed cannot be accepted.

If the majority of members were not paying attention and did not vote when they should have, just wishing that they would have been awake does not give them any justification for using their majority to override the previous vote. Only a person who voted on the side that won the vote can move a motion to reconsider. That was not done in this case. The chairman arbitrarily and incorrectly declared the vote lost and the members were not paying attention and chimed into his defence.

This is so serious, Mr. Speaker, that I appeal to you that some corrective action be taken. As I said in my preamble, I do require your assistance as well as your ruling because I want to know how to handle this. This cannot be accepted by this Parliament, the highest court of the land, as such a serious aberration of the democratic process.

(1210)

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect for the comments the hon. member has made, there is a procedure for dealing with this matter. With the greatest respect, I think the hon. member ought to follow that accepted procedure.

The same point was raised in the House yesterday. Your Honour very properly ruled that there was not a question of privilege before the House because no report had been received from the committee.

I think the hon. member is confused, again with great respect to him, because I know he is trying to raise a very serious concern. He misunderstood the import of Your Honour's ruling yesterday, which was that this cannot be brought before the House until there is a report from the committee. By that statement I think he is inferring that there must be a report on the incident from the committee or else he cannot raise the matter.

Privilege

I suggest that is not what Your Honour ruled or intended and it is not in accordance with the practice of the House. I refer the hon. member and Your Honour to citation 894 of Beauchesne's 6th edition. I will read paragraphs (1) and (3) under the citation:

(1) Until the report and the *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* have been laid upon the Table, it is irregular to refer to them in debate, or to put questions in reference to the proceedings of the committee.

Then I will skip to (3).

If alleged irregular proceedings take place in committee but are not referred to in the report that the committee presented to the House, then it is not competent for the House to go beyond that report to debate this matter.

The hon. member can clearly raise it in the House at the time the report comes. Whether it will be debated, he can raise it and ask Your Honour to rule. Certainly, there will be some indication in a report if there was a vote taken that something happened. There will be minutes of the proceedings of the committee indicating there was an appeal from the ruling of the chairman. That will be reported in the minutes of the committee and that will come to the House.

All those things will be reported in there. The hon. member will be able to debate those and comment on them in the House and raise his question of privilege, if indeed there is a question of privilege here, when that report has come to the House. Then Your Honour will be seized of the matter, we will have the report before the House and will be able to make some comment.

The difficulty and the reason that Speakers have taken the view that the proceedings in committees are not within the purview of the Chair is that until a committee has reported, the committee is master of its own proceedings. It may change what it has done and correct any errors. That is part of the reason for the rule. Committees can undo what they have done in certain circumstances and redo what they have done and thereby make them correct if there has been some error.

I suggest it is incumbent upon the hon. member and his colleagues on the committee in question to go back to the chairman of the committee, raise the issues before the chair and seek to have the matter rectified in the committee. I think the hon. member knows that there have been efforts made to see that this happens.

I suggest to him that the proper course to follow under the circumstances is to raise the matter with the chairman of the committee at another meeting of the committee instead of boycotting the meetings of the committee and make an effort to resolve the matter. I suggest if that is done it would be unnecessary for him to come to the House with a question of privilege. He would probably find that perhaps not all, but the majority of his concerns would be fully dealt with. He would realize the wisdom of the actions of the chair at one point or another in the

proceedings and we could get the matter resolved there, which with all due respect, is where it should be resolved.

I do not want to suggest that this sort of thing has not happened before. I was in opposition before. I know how committees work. Sometimes things can happen in committees that hon. members feel strongly about and they wish had not happened. That happens on both sides of the House.

I assure the hon. member that I know in this case the chairman of the committee is eminently reasonable. If the hon. member will meet with the chairman in an effort to resolve the matter, I think there can be a satisfactory resolution so far as we can arrange it before the matter comes back to the House in the report. At that time if the member wishes to debate the proceedings of the committee, he is free to do so pursuant to the standing orders.

The Speaker: I will listen to the hon. member for Fraser Valley East.

At this point, it is my interpretation that with what was brought up yesterday in the House there seems to be a slight variation on the whole thing. May I ask, was the hon. member present at the committee?

(1215)

There seems to be a slight variation on the whole thing. Was the hon. member for Fraser Valley East present at the committee?

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): No.

The Speaker: I will permit an intervention by the hon. member but it should deal precisely with this point and not refer to any other decision taken.

Mr. Strahl: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to a separate incident from the one I brought forward at a previous date because of a series of events that continues to happen in the committee.

The Speaker has asked for us to wait for the report to the House. The problem is when incidents such as the one the hon. member for Elk Island has mentioned come up in committee and we ask it even to be reported to the House we are told it will not be reported to the House. We not only cannot debate but we cannot introduce amendments, we cannot ask questions of witnesses, we cannot in some cases even vote.

Then when the votes happen sometimes they are overturned by the hammer of the chairman. Then when we raise these issues and say could it not be reported to the House we are told no. Then they appeal to the committee and the committee says it will not report it.

We are at wits end. We cannot do any of the democratic roles of an opposition. We cannot do any of the things I have described, the legitimate role in opposition. When we want to

Privilege

raise it for investigation or for future reference we are told we cannot even do that. We cannot do any of the roles given to us, privileges as members of Parliament. When we raise points of privilege we are told they will not even be reported to the Chair.

We are at wits end. We cannot fulfil our job, our duty and our responsibility to raise issues of great concern to Canadians. We really feel the Chair needs to intervene. This is the second case, I realize.

The transcripts are in. We could start to go over them. There is a serious breach of democratic rights. We must get it addressed before this committee continues.

To say we refuse now to attend is true. I cannot go to a committee in which the chairman says I have no rights and asks me to sit down.

The Speaker: I will hear from the hon. parliamentary secretary first.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my only reason for intervening is this incident has affected the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

A Reform member came to bring in a motion that the chairman abide by the standing orders because of an incident which happened in that committee. I hope the Chair will not start intervening in the affairs of individual standing committees.

Sometimes the opposition forgets it is in a minority position in committees, as it is in the House. There is a steering committee to decide the agenda. When something is put to a vote, as it was yesterday in our committee, the majority has to rule. Sometimes people are not satisfied with what the majority has voted on.

I hope the Chair will respect the independence of each committee and that what goes on in one committee should not be brought to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The Speaker: I will permit an intervention from the hon. House leader of the Reform Party.

Before further intervention by members I would like them to stay within the confines of the point of privilege the hon. member for Elk Island has brought forth. Please do not go outside of these confines.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate now to comment in light of the comments you just made. Would you give me permission to very briefly answer the concerns made by the parliamentary secretary?

(1220)

The Speaker: No. We are having a debate here. I do not want to get into debate. I want to stick precisely to the question of privilege. I am granting a great deal of leniency and latitude for all members.

Again, I ask members to speak to the question of privilege. I do not want the House to be seized of a debate.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue raised by the hon. member this morning may be different from the incident raised yesterday.

No doubt it is a parallel one involving the same committee. The Speaker's previous ruling on the issue brought by another hon. member the day before would be applicable to the case before the House this morning.

Furthermore, yesterday the committee of procedure and House affairs, pursuant to part of the ruling by the Speaker, has been doing some preliminary work in the whole area of rules as they apply to the work of committees.

We adopted a motion proposed by one of the members who has at least attempted to rise on a question of privilege this morning from the Reform Party to address those very rules.

Earlier this morning there were informal negotiations to attempt to solve the dispute at hand. I do not want to describe them as it would be improper. I am hoping we will continue those discussions in the next few minutes to come to some kind of consensus by which we can afford the House to function properly in its committees.

I recognize, as the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has said, the importance of the work of the opposition in the House. The Deputy Prime Minister and I have probably served longer in opposition than anyone else in the Chamber. We served too long in opposition.

In any case, we recognize that situation and we are attempting through some of these negotiations to resolve it. I hoped to continue with those private negotiations prior to this question of privilege.

The Speaker: I will go to a final intervention by the hon. member for Elk Island if he has new information to bring on my ruling.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have two very important things.

First, the incident I reported which grieves me so seriously occurred after the member for Frazer Valley East came to you to give his intervention yesterday. It happened afterwards. That is very significant. It is also of a completely different nature.

Second, I was using the instruction as I understood it from Standing Order 48(1):

Whenever any matter of privileges arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately.

This says to me I have the right to not wait until that committee gave me the permission to come here. That is why I took the initiative to come.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: Colleagues, the points are well taken on both sides. I do not come from another venue. I am one of you and I can understand many of the frustrations when a member is in opposition.

I can also understand, having served in government, that the government has a right to get on with its legislation. Therefore there are two things to be balanced here.

Your Speaker is always guided by the rules of the House of Commons. He is also guided by the precedents of other Speakers and in other Parliaments.

(1225)

I heard today that in this circumstance one of the committees of the House is trying to—I hate to use the word rectify—at least ameliorate the situation so all sides can get on with what the hon. member for Fraser Valley East has said is their job, to represent the people of their constituencies.

On the specific point of privilege, the Speaker will respond to a report from the committee. That is the responsibility of the Speaker. However, your Speaker cannot be expected to be in all committees, to know precisely what is happening in all committees, except through their chairs which the House has approved.

We now have a circumstance of a committee's carrying out its responsibilities. That all members do not agree with what is happening in the committee is normal for this place.

However, I will wait until I have a report from the committee. When the report comes in, whatever is in there, if the hon. member at that time chooses to raise a point of privilege, I give notice now, as is the precedent of the House, that I will hear the point of privilege.

Concerning the rules stating a member must make intervention as soon as possible, the hon. member has done that. He is here now in front of me. Should it be brought up again at a future date, when the report of the committee comes out your Speaker will entertain such a point of privilege.

However, for the time being it is my decision that the committees are masters of their own work and that committee work must follow procedure and be brought to us here in the House. If there is a problem which can only be resolved by the House, then the House will become seized of it.

However, I rule at this time the hon. member, with all due respect, does not have a point of privilege.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

* * *

*[English]***CANADIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet I will table the annual report for 1993-94 of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, in both official languages.

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the standing committee meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly, NATO parliamentarians, held in Marmaris, Turkey, April 8 to 10, 1995.

[Translation]

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association regarding the 22nd annual meeting of the Canadian and European Parliaments held in Brussels, Belgium, from March 18 to March 25, 1995.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 78th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs concerning the associate membership of the Standing Committee on Finance. With the consent of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later today.

(1230)

FINANCE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Finance concerning Bill C-76, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 1995. [English]

I have the honour as well to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Finance on the implications arising out of Bill C-76, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 1995.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition wants to express its dissent with regard to the 15th report of the Liberal majority on the Standing Committee on Finance. We are opposed, among other things, to the promotion of national standards in relation to the Canada social transfer.

The official opposition's dissenting opinion is annexed to Liberal majority report.

* * *

[English]

CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPORT AND IMPORT ACT

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-93, an act to amend the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act.

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

* * *

MANGANESE BASED FUEL ADDITIVES ACT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-94, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to proceed with concurrence in the 78th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which I tabled earlier this day.

I move that the 78th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: Not at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is not unanimous consent.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

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

That the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Gaspé, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Summerside, Barrington, Sydney, St. George and Petty Harbour from June 5 to June 10, 1995, in order to study the restructuring of the fisheries industry, and that a staff of five do accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: Not at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): There is not unanimous consent.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, pursuant to subsection 7(7) of the Referendum Act, chapter 30, Statutes of Canada, 1992, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be the committee designated to review the proposed regulation made in accordance with subsections 7(3) and 7(4) of this Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

(1235)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

VIOLENT OFFENDERS

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present this petition. It is signed primarily by residents and citizens of the Paradise Valley area of Alberta.

They would draw to the attention of this House the fact that they are very concerned about our streets being made safer for citizens and are opposed to the current practice of early release of violent offenders prior to serving the full extent of their sentences.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a few petitions to introduce.

As I am duty bound, I have a petition signed by constituents mainly from Regina and from Fort Qu'Appelle and district that asks Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code prohibiting assisted suicides are enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes to the law that would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I am duty bound, I have a petition mainly from constituents of Regina criticizing Bill C-41.

These petitioners ask that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act, or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way that would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

IMAGE CABLESYSTEM

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also duty bound to introduce this petition from constituents of Fort Qu'Appelle.

The constituents and the petitioners are not happy with Image Cablesystem, which has changed their programming and rates. The petitioners ask Parliament to regulate Image Cablesystem and all cable companies in regard to program services and rates, regardless of subscriber numbers.

They also ask Parliament to address their immediate concern of requesting the CRTC take the steps necessary to restore their previous service, with new programming being offered in additional group packages at a competitive rate.

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not normally read the entire petition, but in this case I will.

I have over 7,706 signatures that I have received from a group in my community called Fair Justice, which came into effect after a very tragic killing in our community.

Their petition reads: In 1990 an average of two Canadian women per week were murdered by their husbands or male partners. Over the period 1974 to 1992 a married woman was nine times more likely to be killed by her spouse than by a stranger. Whereas the domestic killer is treated less harshly than any other by Canadian courts, the crime is usually defined as manslaughter. Killing family is much more likely to involve provocation or the heat of passion than killing acquaintances or killing for money or sex. While almost 60 per cent of those who kill during the commission of another crime are sentenced to life imprisonment, only 20 per cent of family killers receive this penalty.

Therefore, your petitioners pray and request that Parliament amend section 236 of the Criminal Code to include a minimum sentence of 10 years when a person pleads guilty or is found guilty of manslaughter of a spouse or partner.

I will therefore table these signatures that number 7,706, as I mentioned before.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Cariboo—Chilcotin constituents from 100 Mile House, Forest Grove, Canim Lake, and Lone Butte, British Columbia.

Those who signed the petition are of the opinion that existing controls on law-abiding, responsible firearms owners are more than enough to ensure public safety. They therefore call upon Parliament to support laws that will severely punish all violent criminals who use weapons in the commission of a crime; support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions that recognize and protect the right of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms; and support legislation that will repeal or modify existing gun control laws, which have not improved public safety or have proven not to be cost effective or have proven to be overly complex so as to be ineffective or unenforceable.

(1240)

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition that has been circulating across Canada. This particular petition comes from the Calgary, Alberta, area.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession, which has not been recognized for its value to our society. They also say that the

Routine Proceedings

Income Tax Act discriminates against families who make the choice to provide care in the home to preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

The petitioners therefore pray and call upon Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families who decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill or the aged.

BOVINE SOMATOTROPHIN

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have a petition from 258 residents of the province of Saskatchewan, who request and call upon Parliament to desist from legalizing the use of rBST in Canada. They further request that legislation be passed requiring it to be mandatory that all imported products from BST and rBST treated cows be so identified.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise today and table in the House a petition signed by numerous residents of Kingston and the Islands, who call upon Parliament to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 147, 148 and 168.

[Text]

Question No. 147—**Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing):**

For each of the calendar years 1990 to 1994, has the government developed detailed data measuring actual cigarette consumption, and if so what are these estimates for each province for which the data are available, and if not, why not?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): No consumption data are available for 1990 to 1994. However, domestic cigarette sales have always been considered an accurate proxy of retail sales and therefore consumption in the long term. All analysis of consumption have used these data in this fashion.

For statistical data on domestic cigarette sales refer to answer to Question No. 148.

Question No. 148—**Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing):**

For each of the calendar years 1990 to 1994, has the government received data measuring domestic cigarette sales and if so what are the total sales in each province for which data are available?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): The following are figures on domestic cigarette sales, excluding domestic sales of fine cut tobacco, for the years 1990 to 1993. All data for 1994 have not yet been released by the third party source and as such are not available for distribution.

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993
AB	4,910,777,000	4,595,017,000	4,507,052,000	4,415,407,000
BC	5,076,692,000	4,548,090,000	4,611,630,000	4,459,950,000
MN	1,874,370,000	1,605,070,000	1,615,916,000	1,577,968,000
NB	1,026,823,000	732,976,000	747,963,000	657,603,000
NF	741,865,000	630,642,000	588,767,000	476,582,000
NS	1,415,558,000	1,136,282,000	1,205,596,000	1,116,063,000
ON	17,677,352,000	15,561,286,000	14,289,718,000	11,896,233,000
PE	180,163,000	156,183,000	160,746,000	141,318,000
QC	11,820,314,000	9,011,729,000	6,377,051,000	4,586,758,000
SK	1,010,540,000	895,644,000	800,917,000	749,030,000
Totals	45,734,454,000	38,872,919,000	34,905,356,000	30,076,912,000

Question No. 168—**Mr. Robinson:**

On which occasions since September 1, 1994, has Gordon Campbell, the BC Leader of the Official Opposition, communicated by letter, fax or telephone with the Prime Minister or the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, or any officials within their offices, concerning the Kemano II completion project and what were the nature of the representations made on each occasion?

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): I am informed that in so far as the Prime Minister and his office are concerned, Mr. Campbell sent a letter and other documents via fax to the Prime Minister on October 11, 1994 in which he outlined the British Columbia Liberal Party's position toward the Kemano completion project.

In so far as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his office are concerned, on October 11, 1994 Mr. Campbell wrote to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to express the British Columbia Liberal Party's position toward the Kemano completion project.

Also, there was one telephone communication on January 23, 1995, the day the province of British Columbia announced the cancellation of Alcan's Kemano completion project. Mr. Campbell was informed of the federal government's public response.

[Translation]

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

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-82, an act to amend the Royal Canadian Mint Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise again in the House to debate an issue that is of importance to Canadians.

I would like to begin my intervention by simply stating that the intent of Bill C-82 is to establish a new \$2 coin for Canada. The parliamentary secretary this morning, in introducing the bill in the House, gave a fair amount of rationale for it. I will not repeat those things, which we obviously agree on. They are already on the record. However, I do want to make a number of comments about what he said and refer directly to the provisions of the bill.

One thing I think we ought to understand is that even though in his presentation this morning he made rather voluminous reference to the changing of other coins—the penny, the nickel, the dime and the quarter, which are all being changed in content and hence in weight—that has nothing to do with Bill C-82. He was merely talking about another initiative, which is done by regulation and which apparently is going to proceed whether this bill is passed or not.

The fact of the matter is that if Bill C-82 does not pass and if Parliament fails to approve the authorization of the new two-dollar coin, then if the other regulations are implemented there will be wholesale changes required in order to manage the currency of our country by many, many merchants and vendors, irrespective of what this bill does.

I am not proposing that we ought to change the rules and that everything should be done in the House, because we would undoubtedly run out of time. I believe there is a proper role for setting of regulations that will determine certain aspects.

(1245)

The introduction of the coin is not terribly controversial. We have had very little feedback. That is probably due to the fact that this initiative is not yet well known. I doubt whether it will generate a great deal of public outcry. It could even be that the bill will be passed before the public becomes aware of it. I do not think it has sufficient importance that it will grab the attention

of the media. It looks as if it may be pushed through faster than what we can normally communicate via usual communication methods to our constituents.

In order to keep our options open we in the Reform Party will most likely oppose the bill. When I say that immediately the cry is: “They are in opposition; they are against everything”. That is not true. In this instance we are doing it with a very open mind. In the event that the unanswered questions we have at this time receive satisfactory answers, we will have no hesitation to show support for the bill.

As I understand, the primary motivation for introducing the \$2 coin is as a cost saving measure for the government. Much is made of this point. I cannot help at this stage to talk about the very important issue of cost cutting. The government would like Canadians to believe that it is cutting costs at every turn. If we look at the issue we are down to a very small amount of petty change. I say that in relation to the deficit and debt. If members opposite listen carefully they will hear in the next few minutes what I mean. I am not saying things to evoke a reaction. There is empirical, numerical evidence of what I am saying now.

We have a tremendous debt and a huge deficit. We commend the Liberals for bringing it down; it is better than increasing it. It is good that the deficit has been reduced. We ought not to delude Canadians into thinking that our debt problem is solved or that our debt is decreasing because it is not.

Not only does the budget of this year call for total government expenditures of \$2 billion in excess of what was spent last year, but at the end of the fiscal year we will have another \$32 billion of debt that we did not have when we entered this fiscal year. That is the straight fiscal reality. I am merely echoing what was reported by the Minister of Finance when he tabled his budget.

While I say that it is wonderful to be reducing spending and thereby hopefully reducing the rate at which we are going into debt, I also need to criticize it. Perhaps I can use a sports analogy. It is wonderful for the football team to gain a yard. That is better than losing a yard. On the next play it gains another yard. However, if only two yards in two plays have been gained in Canadian football the ball has to be kicked away. The opportunity has been lost.

At this time the matter is severe. Even though the government is saying this and I will echo it, there is a savings of \$254 million over the next 20 years. I am not opposed to that savings, but it is as though we are gaining another yard and meanwhile the game is slipping away from us. We need to be cognizant of that fact. We need to address it very seriously.

I hesitate to say this. If Canadians hear me say that \$254 million is petty change I will get hammered for it. I do not mean it. It is a lot of money, but relative to the total picture what we are doing in this measure is barely whittling away at the edge of the problem. The problem is so large that it is as if we are trying

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to take the water out of the Pacific Ocean with a teaspoon. It will never happen.

(1250)

Let me bring the numbers into perspective. I have shared before in the House that mathematics is my game. I have had some 31 years of experience teaching the subject. I have loved it and have used mathematics since I was a child.

In preparing my speech I immediately got out my calculator, did some number crunching and thought about what it meant. We need to be aware that the mention of savings, which is so highly touted by the other side, is extremely mediocre. Let me tell members how little the savings really are. I am sorry that we are spending time in the House today dealing with this one while the big ones are getting away from us.

A famous politician one time said: "I do not have time to be shooting rabbits when I should be after bear". That was a quotation of Tommy Douglas. That is what we are doing.

I ask the House to listen to the numbers. The \$254 million savings is over 20 years. Usually when the government wants accolades for its savings it says a quarter of a billion dollars, which is a wonderfully big number. Then its voice drops when it whispers quietly "over 20 years" so that nobody notices that it is over 20 years.

What does this mean? It means \$12.7 million in savings per year. We are going to deny it but we need to get it into the perspective of what it actually means in terms of the taxpayer.

I did a couple of side calculations. Here is one of them. Because of our massive debt, our interest payments of some \$40 billion per year work out to about \$110 million per day. Let us remember that I just said this was a cost saving of \$12.7 million per year. Therefore we will save in this measure \$12.7 million over the whole year. Meanwhile we are spending \$110 million per day on interest. In the perspective of how viciously we are attacking the budget, this is not the measure.

Another way of putting it is that the savings "to be realized" by the implementation of the \$2 coin will pay for our annual interest. This savings will account for the interest payment for two hours and 47 minutes of the year. That is the big saving.

Let us do it but let us recognize that if we are to do it and finally bring the debt under control, we will have to take some big steps. We will have to stop stepping gingerly. We will have to start looking at the big expenditures and at the big savings. Otherwise we will lose the game while busily wondering whether we made a yard or six inches.

I would like to bring it down to the individual because it is very appropriate. Not only does it put the savings into perspective. It also puts the economics into perspective. I made some assumptions because I do not have access to instantaneous figures. We are not yet on Internet in the House. It is impossible to get that technology going so it is difficult to get up to date measures.

I made a few assumptions on data that was several years old. It was the best I could get. Assuming 29 million Canadians, the savings this will produce will amount to the sum of 44 cents per year per Canadian. Over the whole year, after we have implemented the plan, every Canadian will say: "I have an extra 44 cents in my pocket this year".

Let us stop to think about it. The change in coinage will probably result in every coin operated machine in the country, telephones, food vending machines and lottery machines which I do not approve of in any case, having to be changed.

(1255)

With the measure Canadians will save 44 cents per person per year. If the merchants increase the price on vending machines by 10 cents to recoup the cost of changing the machinery, any individual who uses a machine more than four times a year will end up spending more money. That puts the economic perspective of the measure into a different light. We need to think about these matters. Whether Canadians are paying money via their taxes or whether they are paying via the goods and services they purchase, it is still money out of their pockets.

I did another calculation. There are approximately 13.5 million Canadians who while filing income tax also pay tax. There are approximately six million taxpayers who file to receive the refundable tax credits. They are really out of the tax picture; they are only doing the paperwork. Those who are actually contributing to government income via the tax system number around 13.5 million to the best of my knowledge. If we forget about the people of Canada and only talk about the 13.5 million taxpaying Canadians, the savings are quite a bit more because there are now fewer people who are sharing the savings. The \$254 million that will be saved by introducing the \$2 coin gives every taxpayer a break of about 94 cents per year.

As a taxpayer I am sure that I use a coin operated machine more than 10 times per year. I am presuming. Maybe they will only increase the price by 5 cents. Maybe some of them will not increase the price at all, which I doubt, because it is our information that to change the coin recognition mechanism of machines will cost \$500 per machine. That is the smallest number I have read about. I believe every coin operated machine in the country will increase their prices. I can anticipate a Pepsi or a chocolate bar which now costs 90 cents undoubtedly going

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up to \$1, so it will require a loonie. Maybe the new machine will accept a \$2 coin and give a loonie back, so people will have almost exactly the same money in their pocket in terms of weight as before.

It has been mentioned that one of the reasons for doing this is that \$2 bills do not last. That is also true. I know I cannot use props; I really know the rules around here. I cannot haul out a \$2 bill, but I looked at one before I came here that was worn. The \$2 bills get a lot of mileage. It reminds me a bit about the way the Canadian government handles grain. The government likes to put it on trains and give it a joy ride before it arrives at its destination. We do that with our currency as well.

The \$2 bill undoubtedly does a lot of travelling. Statistics tell us that on average the \$2 bill we have been using extensively since the \$1 bill was discontinued lasts only a year and then it must be reprinted at a cost of 6 cents. It costs 6 cents every year for every \$2 bill in circulation.

The coin, because it will last for 20 years, will not have that cost. It will cost approximately 16 cents to produce, but as we all know coins last for a very long time. To show that I am a true Reformer, when I was walking down the sidewalk the other day I saw a penny and I stopped to pick it up, as Reformers would be wont to do. I was amazed to see that the penny was almost as old as I am. Somebody had just dropped it. It was not quite as old as I am. The date on it as I recall was 1945 and I am six years older than that. But I thought it was really significant that that coin could last as long as I have. I assure you that no bill in circulation would last that long.

(1300)

I have stated the cost per taxpayer and the saving per Canadian of 44 cents per year as a counterbalance to the statement of the parliamentary secretary. I think I wrote down the quotation correctly. He said: "This will be a big load off the debt". With all due respect, I think not.

I will indicate some other reasons for the temporary statement that we are going to be resisting the bill. I have already indicated that to the individual Canadian it may not be nearly as big a saving as is being touted. I want to find out before I vote in favour of the bill whether it actually is economically feasible. I am not certain. I have not had sufficient data on it to convince me.

Also I somehow feel that we ought to be presenting Canadians with more than just this option. We now have a \$1 coin and we are jumping now to a \$2 coin and then a \$5 coin. The \$2 coin is the one in question.

To my knowledge no studies have been done on the viability and feasibility of dropping the \$2 bill and going from the \$1 to the \$5. I cannot use props here, but I could hold up four coins and show that those four loonies would represent two \$2 bills. After

we pass the \$4 dollar mark we could then use a \$5 bill. You do not ever need more than two \$2 bills. That means we would never need more than two \$2 coins. Which means that if we did not have a \$2 coin we would have to have up to four loonies.

I looked at the spec sheet. The loonie weighs 7 grams. The new proposed \$2 coin is going to weigh 7.3 grams, just slightly heavier. Canadians are going to say: "If I have to have yet another coin, then there is going to be more weight in my pocket". Well, this is what it is: four loonies weigh 28 grams. My generation likes to hear it in the old British system, which is about an ounce. If you had two \$2 coins they would weigh 14.6 grams, which for all intents and purposes is about half an ounce.

We are asking Canadians to approve the introduction of a new \$2 coin with huge costs to all the vending industries and all the coin operated machines in order to save, at maximum, the necessity of carrying an extra one-half ounce in their pockets. I suppose that could be justified. I am interested in studying it further. I am certainly interested in hearing from Canadians to find out whether they are really going to say: "Yes, let us go for the \$2 coin because I walk lopsided if I have an extra half ounce on that side". I am being facetious. My apologies. That was supposed to be a joke to wake up members opposite.

Too many questions of this type remain unanswered. In fact, there are some problems with the bill itself. Consequently, our initial response is that we respectfully submit that we are going to oppose the bill, with the option that if proper answers are given to our questions, then we will show that we are willing to support the bill.

One thing the government has done based on the data we received from it, was a poll which found that Canadians support the \$2 coin. We actually question the accuracy of the poll. The difficulty with the poll is that the only option given was whether they liked the \$2 coin or not. They were not given the option of not having the \$2 denomination at all. Therefore, Canadians were not given a number of choices, but a very narrow choice.

(1305)

I was also told, and I hope this is correct, that the first poll taken was not supportive. The question was changed in order to get a positive poll so that the proposal for the \$2 coin could be advertised as having the support of Canadians. When I found out that this was done, I wondered about the motivation behind it.

Another question we definitely want answered is: Who will actually benefit from the introduction of the coin? I am making no allegations, but it is a question which we will always and carefully ask on this side of the House. I am not going to say which Liberal supporter, but we will ask who is going to benefit from this. Who has the contract? Which are the businesses that change the machines? If there are any problems with that, we are

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going to try to find that out and make sure that the motivations are all above board.

I will also talk a little bit about the retailers. I am sure a lot of Canadians are not aware that when a purchase is made with currency there is almost always change. Very seldom does the customer present the exact change. In any case, every merchant has the option of having the facility to accept a credit card. We understand that a great deal of merchandising is done via credit cards. The mechanism for processing credit card and debit card purchases has been refined to a great extent. That system is fairly efficient, but we still have a coinage system. We still have the rules of currency and legal tender. Therefore, the merchants are required to have change.

If you were ever to look into the till, you would see that there are different compartments for pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and loonies. We have very few 50-cent pieces in circulation; I think most of them are hoarded by collectors. With the introduction of a new coin, every tray in every till in the whole country is going to be put on the garbage heap and replaced with a new tray with an extra compartment because of the new coin.

Another aspect to that which was indicated by the parliamentary secretary is when the \$2 coin was introduced, the government said it was going to do the vendors a favour by changing the metal content and hence the weights of the other coins at the same time. The vendors could then build new coin recognition systems and do that change only once.

That is commendable, but the government is not going to instantly take all of the old coins out of circulation. Therefore, the job for the coin vendors is to have a coin recognition system that no longer recognizes nickels, dimes, quarters and loonies, which is a total of four coins, but they are going to need a total of eight coins recognized. There will be two different kinds of nickels, dimes, quarters, loonies and the \$2 coin, doubloonies, I guess we will call it.

When that happens the mechanism is going to have to be much more sophisticated and undoubtedly more expensive. I read an estimate that the vending machine industry is probably going to have to lay out approximately \$25 million to change the machines. Remember I did the division by 20 on the projected savings. I said that if the saving is \$254 million in 20 years, it is \$12.7 million in one year. By the lowest estimates, we will be spending twice the annual savings of the government in order to change the machines when we start out.

(1310)

Hopefully if there is some stability to our currency system, that change should not have to be made again soon. It is interesting to note it was approximately eight years ago when all the machines in the country had to be changed. I do submit one of the things we would call for is a longer period to guarantee

Canadian businessmen the coinage will not change. Eight years is really much too short a period.

I would also like answers to questions like these: What are the actual total costs to industry? What are the total costs to Canadians?

It would also be appropriate to talk about seigniorage, which is the difference between the value of the coin and what it costs to produce it. We are told that based on this component, we expect to have an input into the Canadian government coffers of \$449 million in two and one-half years. I will admit I am a mathematician but I am not an economist, so I do not fully understand how that accrues to actual value to the Canadian government.

I stand to be corrected but it seems to me that if we can actually bring in \$500 million in two and one-half years to the Canadian government wealth and if it is real wealth, not inflationary wealth, because of the introduction of the new currency—and I understand that part—we will presumably be taking the \$2 bills out of circulation when we bring in the \$2 coin. If there is an actual accrual to the government of \$449 million of added value, then I ask a very elementary question: Why do we not just greatly increase the number of \$1 and \$2 coins? Let us produce them in sufficient numbers to pay off the debt. If it really works then we should do that.

Now I think I know enough about economics to know that would not work. Unfortunately that is not the kind of economic policy that would keep us as a country in good light with all of the other trading partners. Our currency would undoubtedly be devalued by that.

Another aspect of this is profit to the mint. I like the fact that our mint is a money maker. I am sure many people are aware that the Canadian mint not only produces Canadian currency, but also provides a sizeable import of dollars by producing and shipping coins to other countries.

I understand it is definitely economical for the mint to tool up to produce a new \$2 coin. Like a car manufacturer tooling up to make a new model of car, it is always economical because that will be recouped in sales. It is undoubtedly correct for the mint to do this.

I would like to know the details of the mint's cash flow. How is this actually going to work out? We also need to recognize there are ramifications to moving from the printing of paper currency to the production of the coins. Initially there will be a large flurry of activity in producing the new coins, but what happens to productivity once we have saturated the Canadian currency with the required number of \$2 coins? Those are simple questions.

With respect to the bill itself there needs to be a long term plan which is not present in this very short bill. All it says is that we are going to make a new \$2 coin. That is basically all it says in

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layman's language. What we really should have is some sort of coherent, long term currency plan Canadians can count on.

(1315)

There is a really serious question we ought to be asking, whether we should keep the penny. The penny costs about 70 per cent more to produce than what it is worth. It costs about 1.7 cents to manufacture a penny. It does not make a great deal of sense to keep manufacturing pennies. Think of the savings we could incur if we stop doing that. We could presumably go for many years utilizing the pennies out there now because their rate of replacement is not great. They are very sturdy coins.

Has there been any study on replacing the \$5 bill with a \$5 coin? If it is so good for the two, could it also be done for the five? Should it be done at the same time? Obviously if we are to make a change, to do it at the same time makes a great deal more sense than making this change now and then five or eight years down the road saying introduce a new \$5 coin requiring all the vendors and all of the businesses once again to adjust.

These are some of the questions I want to have answered before I can support this bill. It could be that we are missing an opportunity of being very efficient if that is the long term direction we are to go. We need to have studies. We need to have answers to those questions.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to address this question. Obviously in my limited knowledge I will not have explored all aspects of it. Undoubtedly there are other things we must also take into account. We will certainly be watching and participating eagerly in the House and in committee, provided we are allowed to vote in our committee and other things.

We will pay close attention in committee and we will be eagerly asking for the answers to these questions. I want to reiterate the bottom line for us is not a saving to government but a saving to the taxpayer. If the taxpayer in total is to land up with a higher expense then we will be opposed to this bill.

I seriously doubt, based on the numbers I gave at the beginning of my intervention, the added costs of making the changes to the commodities sold through vending machines primarily will eat up the pockets of the taxpayers more than what will be saved for those taxpayers through this avenue of government.

I also want to make sure that before we give consent to this bill all of the costs have been anticipated. Too often in government we start on a project and hear the estimates. How often have we heard of overruns? Over and over; it happens with great frequency. We want to make sure there are very precise accounting and estimates of the total anticipated costs to the taxpayers. I want to make sure we have an open and honest discussion.

In my first year and a half in the House there have been times when I have really enjoyed the work. I have felt what I have been contributing has been very helpful to the Canadians I was sent here to represent, broader than the Elk Island constituency, all Canadians from sea to sea.

I hope in this bill, which is such an innocuous bill, we will be able to embark on a debate, a study in committee free from the acrimony and the bull headedness that has been displayed in some of the committees, particularly in the past several days.

It is so important that we as parliamentarians—in the committee we are backbenchers—have, as the Liberal Party promised in its red book, a more meaningful role. That role will have to be found in committee because of the sheer numbers.

(1320)

Not many members have the privilege I have today to make a 40 minute speech. Members on the Liberal side almost never get that opportunity. When a bill is introduced either the minister or the parliamentary secretary takes that opportunity. All of the other backbenchers really do not have a role.

In committee we can have a real role provided it is permitted, encouraged and acknowledged and that there is a genuine and honest recognition that the recommendations of the committee are to be taken seriously. I look forward to working on this bill in the committee. Provided our answers can be forthcoming very quickly I am sure we can come up with a solution to this problem.

It is not a big problem for Canadians. It is a problem of some significance. We can come up with a solution that will be best for all Canadians. I am thinking of those ordinary Canadians who work from day to day struggling to pay their bills, struggling to pay their taxes. Those are the people we want to represent. We want to make sure they get very best possible shake out of this legislation and other legislation like it.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Elk Island finished stating not very many backbenchers have the opportunity to speak for 40 minutes on any bill. That is a very pithy comment.

Many people would have a great deal of difficulty trying to figure how one could speak for 40 minutes on Bill C-82, which is a major struggle. How on earth does one go about speaking for 40 minutes on a debate on the introduction of a \$2 coin?

A few minutes ago I was told we need to keep this debate going for another 10 minutes and do I have something to say about this. I thought sure. The automatic response was who needs a \$2 coin? I have travelled extensively in the United States and I have never seen a \$2 bill. Why replace the \$2 bill? If we do

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not want to have it, we should get rid of it. If we do not need it, we do not need it.

That is a question that will be answered in committee where wiser minds than mine will be debating this important consideration of the day. With a \$2 coin if we start trying to figure out how much our country will be in debt on a daily basis, it would only be \$60 million \$2 coins rather than 120 million loonies. We could divide it that way and perhaps it does not seem that much.

There are some really important considerations in this bill. For those watching this debate, the country is into debt at \$120 million a day. We have Bill C-68, the firearms bill. We have looming on the horizon the most important question facing our country outside of the debt, our relationship with Quebec and how we will deal with and get past this hurdle. We will get past it and it is my desire we will do it together. Here we are using up the potential of five hours of debating time to talk about the introduction of a \$2 coin. We already have a \$1 coin.

Some hon. members opposite said we are wasting our time. How can we argue with that? Some things do not require the same amount of consideration except if one happens to be in the vending machine business. Everything we do in the House affects someone somewhere. While it may not affect all of us to the same degree all the time, it affects someone substantially some of the time.

(1325)

If I were in the vending machine business now and a member of Parliament asked what I thought of the debate on the \$2 coin, I would say it could very well be the difference between my staying in business or going out of business. Think of the huge cost to the vending machine business with the introduction of the loonie a few years ago. It important we in the House have some consideration of the effects of what we do on others outside the House.

We all recall what happened with the introduction of the loonie. What happened to the cost of newspapers from vending machines? By and large there was an increase from \$75 cents to a loonie. The vending industry raised prices from 25 cents to 50 cents to 75 cents to a loonie. It was not taking advantage of a situation. If it has to make mechanical changes it might as well make them to last.

What will happen if we introduce a doubloonie, a \$2 coin? A vast number of ideas have come forward about what to call the new coin. Ideas came from the west saying we should put a picture of a deer on either side and call it the two buck coin. Another member said we could put a picture of the leader of the Reform Party on one side, the Leader of the Opposition on the other and say flip a coin.

There is a substantial cost, particularly to the vending machine business. As we make decisions and changes for the

nation, things that seem pretty simple and straightforward very often have a result that extends far beyond what we are doing here.

I have two \$2 bills in my pocket and a loonie. One thing brought to my attention the other day was if we get rid of the \$2 bill, what will happen to the amount of change we carry in our pockets. I have a loonie and some quarters. I am trying to stretch this out. I suppose we are looking at effects this will have down the road, beyond the vending machine industry and beyond inflation. I suppose to some people the amount of coins they would have to carry in their pocket would be something of a consideration. Without a \$2 bill and because we do not have a \$1 bill, we would have to carry around a whole lot more loonies or doubloonies.

Mr. Abbott: It would make the tailors happy.

Mr. McClelland: While it might upset the vending industry, it would certainly make the tailoring industry happy since people would be walking around with holes in their pockets or their purses. However, it would be something of a problem.

As the debate winds to a conclusion I hope some of these points will be considered. In my opinion we do not need another coin. If we are to get rid of the \$2 bill, let us get rid of it and make do with our happy little loonies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 1.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

ADM AGRI-INDUSTRIES LTD. OPERATIONS ACT

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul, Lib.) moved that Bill C-313, an act to provide for the resumption and continuance of the operations at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd., be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce Bill C-313 in the House today. However, I regret the fact that this legislation is necessary to put an end to the dispute at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd. The events leading up to Bill C-313 are as follows: a labour dispute between ADM Agri-Industries Ltd. and the National Syndicate of Employees of Ogilvie Flour Mills Company Ltd. has affected about 150 employees involved in production.

The parties started negotiations on the renewal of the collective agreement that expired on January 31, 1992. A conciliator and then a mediator were appointed to help the parties settle their differences. Unfortunately, very little progress was made.

The union called a legal general strike on June 6, 1994. This strike, which has been going on for 11 months, has not prevented the employer from continuing operations, since the employer hired replacement workers, which has undermined the bargaining position of ADM's regular employees.

Bill C-313 proposes final offer selection as a way to settle the dispute. Within 30 days after being appointed, or within such greater period as will be specified by the Minister, the arbitrator shall, first of all, determine the matters on which the employer and the union were in agreement at cut-off time; second, determine the matters remaining in dispute at cut-off time; third, select, in order to resolve the matters remaining in dispute, either the final offer submitted by the employer or the final offer submitted by the union; fourth, determine a back to work protocol.

Meanwhile, employees would go back to work in accordance with the provisions of the protocol. The bill would contain provisions obliging the parties to abide by the back to work protocol and resume operations. The bill's enforcement provisions include fines in the case of an individual who contravenes a provision of this legislation. Bill C-313 is not anti-scab legislation.

The purpose of this bill is to deal with a specific situation that currently exists at ADM. Many of my constituents have worked for ADM for more than 20 years. Today, they are out of work and have little hope of getting back their jobs. They want to go back to work, and they want to negotiate. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I said the employees' union wants to negotiate.

On April 26, following promises from the company that it would go back to the bargaining table and because there was some hope of obtaining a negotiated agreement, the National Syndicate of Employees of Ogilvie Flour Mills Company Ltd. sent me a fax in which they asked me to withdraw this bill.

(1335)

On May 1, the union met with the company, and by May 2, before the bill could even be withdrawn, yet again, the union sent me another fax saying: "Since our letter of April 26, we have been to two mediation sessions with Warren Edmunston and Rock St-Hilaire. The attitude of ADM Ltd. at those sessions, despite the fact that the strike has dragged on for 11 months now, has made us reconsider our position regarding the bill that you tabled. Effectively, on the critical issues, ADM's vice-president has said that there was no reason for compromise".

"Do you know what that means? That means that there is no reason for them to compromise. Needless to say, the hope of reaching a negotiated settlement has never been so dim".

"That is why we are now asking you to bring Bill C-313 before the tripartite committee of the House of Commons. Of course, when the time comes, we would like to be heard with

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regard to this bill, because we could suggest a few amendments".

"Nevertheless, in principle, the bill is an acceptable mid term solution and will at least guarantee that the workers at the Ogilvie flour mill will have a decent future and that they can return to work their pride intact".

"It is certain that a negotiated settlement would be the preferred solution. However, this cannot end up being a settling of accounts in which one party squarely comes out the winner. That is why we believe that this bill could very well be the preferred solution to the stalemate in which we dread we will find ourselves".

"I hope to hear from you soon and would like to thank you for the interest you have shown in the workers I represent".

The letter was signed Claude Tremblay, president of the National Syndicate of Employees of Ogilvie Flour Mills Co. Ltd.

I am convinced that it was very difficult for them to reverse their decision about having the bill withdrawn. As some of you already know, ADM Ltd.'s factory at Candiac and the union came to an agreement very quickly. There is, however, a major difference between the Candiac factory and the one in Montreal, located in my riding. The difference is as follows: the Candiac plant processes flour and is under the control of the provincial government. It is covered by anti-strikebreaking legislation, and the union could have halted ADM's activities there.

In Montreal, however, the ADM mills come under federal legislation, which permits the hiring of replacement workers. As we say, "the company has the big end of the stick". It can say to the union, through its vice-president: "We have no reasons for compromise".

This is no way to treat people. Faithful employees, who have given twenty years of service or more to this company are now, after an eleven month strike, in debt, without hope and unable to feed their family.

Workers have pride too and are happy to earn their living. As the Prime Minister put it in one his speeches, a father is proud to earn a living in order to be able to put food on the table for his children. When they came to see me at my office, they were not looking for handouts. They simply wanted to be able to bargain in good faith and to return to their jobs, which have been given to replacement workers.

As we know, whenever a company has the upper hand, it is forever critical of the people who have given their life for it. People may have worked 30 years of their life for a company and have it say today: "No, not a chance. You will be out in the street with no chance of renegotiating your seniority". The employees of ADM are not asking for a salary increase; they earn between \$17 and \$19 an hour. They are proud of what they earn. All they want is recognition of their seniority. The owner, Dwayne

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Andrew, a multimillionaire, does not want to negotiate with ADM.

(1340)

I therefore request the unanimous consent of this House to move:

That Bill C-313 be declared a votable item, pursuant to Standing Order 93.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion of our colleague for Verdun—Saint-Paul?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead has the floor.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-313, which was tabled in this House by the hon. member for Verdun—Saint-Paul, who is a government member.

One can see that, while Ogilvie's may be experiencing problems, this is also the case on the other side of this House. Indeed, there seems to be a disagreement regarding the taking of a vote on this bill. Some day, we may find out exactly why. In the meantime, I want to make some comments on the legislation as such. I will take a few moments to relate the chronology of this dispute at Ogilvie Mills Ltd., which is located in Montreal, in the riding of Verdun—Saint-Paul.

The collective agreement in effect at Ogilvie's expired in January 1992, and the company was sold in June of that year by its owners, Labatt, to an American multinational, Archers Daniel Midland.

After the change of ownership, bargaining became very difficult. The new employer behaved somewhat as if it were in a banana republic, brazenly trying to impose its rules and not caring one bit about our traditional ways of bargaining. It showed contempt towards the men and women who work for Ogilvie's. Consequently, on June 6, 1994, the workers voted 97 per cent in favour of a strike.

Why did they make that decision? Contrary to what several may think, particularly on the management side, people who hold a regular, well paid job allowing them a decent quality of life never decide gladly to do without their income and to go on strike. Such a decision is never made for the fun of it but, rather, for serious reasons.

This was the case at Ogilvie's, since the demands made by the new management were utterly excessive in the eyes of any objective observer.

(1345)

Since then, for close to a year now, the employees have been out on the street, without any hope for a settlement, since the company, taking advantage of the fact that it is federally incorporated and that there is no federal anti-scab legislation, has hired substitute workers and is operating as if nothing had happened, while the real employees, those who worked for the flour mill for over 20 years, are still out on the street and might stay there for quite a while yet.

My colleague for Verdun—Saint-Paul insisted earlier on the fact that this private member's bill is not an anti-scab bill. He is right this bill has nothing in common with an anti-scab bill, but this shows the lack of responsibility on the part of the government which, despite the official opposition's repeated requests over the years and especially recently, has refused to pass anti-scab legislation in this House, which, I am convinced, would have led to a quicker settlement.

Across Canada, 75 per cent of employees working for provincially incorporated companies are protected by anti-scab legislation. This means that, in all the companies governed by provincial laws, in Quebec, Ontario or British Columbia, employees can go through the collective bargaining process, then go out on strike in a civilized and orderly manner, thus establishing a real balance of power. The federal government still refuses to pass such legislation which, as I said, would certainly have solved the problem in this particular case.

I only have a few minutes left, but I want to stress that point, because it is not the first time that we are confronted with this kind of situation, which is likely to occur again many times in the future. The government must realize anti-scab legislation is a necessity. Members opposite seem to want to make absolutely sure that this legislation is not passed in this House, so as not to apply to federally registered companies.

The official opposition supports Bill C-313, which deals with what is called the final offer selection. This is better than nothing. It is reluctantly that the official opposition supports such a measure since, in the context of labour negotiations, the final offer is truly a last resort. Such a solution is often used when every other avenue has been explored, and when workers are at the end of their rope. I know that Ogilvie workers and their representatives hope, after a work stoppage of almost a year, to see such provisions come into effect.

(1350)

Again, as far as the official opposition is concerned, we unanimously support this approach. We would have liked a vote on this bill, which would have given every member of this House an opportunity to express his or her views by voting for or against it. We already know, however, that there are deep divisions on this issue within the government majority, within the Liberal Party. That is regrettable since, as I said earlier, we

are discussing the fate of men and women who have been on the street without any income for nearly a year. They have children to support, mortgages and rents to pay. An agreement must be negotiated as soon as possible.

I hope that, once this bill is passed, once these employees have gone back to work, they can resume their activities in acceptable conditions, in a climate that is not too hostile.

In conclusion, I hope that the government will think about, really think about, introducing in this House an anti-scab bill that would benefit all workers subject to the Canada Labour Code.

[English]

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on the bill sponsored by the hon. member for Verdun—Saint—Paul.

The bill proposes that the government implement final offer selection as a mechanism for resolving the year long labour dispute at ADM Agri—Industries, otherwise known as Ogilvie Flour Mills.

I was a bit surprised that a member from the government side would sponsor the bill. When the hon. member for Lethbridge was seeking support for his final offer arbitration in Bill C-262, which called for basically the same as the bill today only it applied to grain handling disputes, government members did not want any part of it.

If the hon. member from Verdun and perhaps the rest of his caucus truly believed in the concept they would have spoken in support of Bill C-262 at the time it was debated in the House.

How can he promote final offer selection or arbitration in one case and oppose it in others? Since flour mill workers are grouped into the same category as grain elevator operators they fall under federal jurisdiction. If the hon. member and his colleagues were really concerned about the workers at Ogilvie Mills, they would have got the ball rolling on March 20 by supporting the bill of the member for Lethbridge on final offer arbitration in grain handling disputes.

We know the government runs hot and cold. The fact the member could not get unanimous consent for his bill is a perfect example as far as final offer arbitration is concerned. They did not like Bill C-262 and they came out in force to ensure that it did not survive.

The Minister of Human Resources Development in a news release announcing that royal assent had been given to the West Coast Ports Operations Act was quoted as saying:

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The imposition of the final offer selection procedure in this particular legislation should encourage the two sides to demonstrate a strong sense of rationality in deciding on the positions they place before the arbitrator.

That is what we said in Bill C-262, that it was a tool that could be used by either side in a dispute.

The transport committee in its recently released national marine strategy recommended a final offer selection mechanism for settlement of all disputes between pilots and their customers. It seems to work in some areas. As the mover of the bill mentioned, it is not something union people are objecting to. There seems to be growing popularity for the concept of final offer arbitration.

The committee also recommended that the new Marine Transportation Act should provide for final offer selection for the settlement of all disputes between the new not for profit Seaway Corporation and its employees. The chairman of the committee spoke on final offer arbitration during the debate on Bill C-262. He spoke at length about the need to maintain essential services. He also said:

Employees either have the right to strike or not.

(1355)

He went on to say:

We have to roll with the change. I do not feel the way to begin a positive and co-operative renewal of labour relations is by introducing legislation which begins to erode what labour considers a basic right.

We are getting mixed signals from the government.

Last week in the human resources development committee I had an opportunity to ask the Minister of Labour if she would consider implementing final offer arbitration as a solution to ending disputes involving essential services. She conceded that it might be an interesting concept but that it would be difficult to use as a method of settling disputes, especially complicated disputes like this one. I got the distinct feeling that she would not support that sort of move. I am not surprised my hon. friend could not get unanimous consent to make his motion votable.

Obviously he has one other colleague in his caucus that feels the same as he does. The member for Vaudreuil introduced exactly the same bill but it has apparently been withdrawn. I am sure they both thought there would be no repercussions since the government employed final offer selection as a way out of its problems with the west coast ports.

My friend from Verdun—Saint—Paul is probably thankful in some ways that it is not votable because if it were he would have to vote in favour of it and we have seen the government sometimes punish people who vote for their constituents.

The Reform Party believes in the bargaining process. We do not want to interfere in the process of two parties coming to an

Routine Proceedings

agreement. We see final offer arbitration as tool that is useful to both labour and management. Certainly my friend across the way has alluded to having support of the union in this case.

We on this side are concerned about the impacts that strikes and lockouts have on workers, employers and Canadians who most often have to bear the brunt of the costs and inconveniences when the services of monopolistic industries are withdrawn. When all efforts to solve the disputes through the regular collective bargaining process have been exhausted, final offer arbitration should be available to all parties.

The recent strikes in the railway helped to underline the weakness inherent in the Canada Labour Code from preventing a shutdown to essential services. The federal government has a responsibility in this area to act in the best interest of Canadians. Transportation and communication services are essential to the daily movement of people, goods and services.

Canada's competitive advantage is determined by the efficiency and reliability of the transportation and communication network that it relies on. We cannot afford any major shutdowns in the network that links the country together. A case in point was the recent railway strike that is estimated to have cost the Canadian economy in the neighbourhood of \$3 billion.

Final offer arbitration is the most effective and impartial means of obtaining a solution to the concerns of labour and management where an impasse occurs that inflicts significant damage on Canadians. It requires both parties to negotiate in good faith and quickly, while keeping in mind their overall interest as an organization.

There is nothing to prevent both sides from achieving their deal providing they are being fair, open and expedient with each other. Tremendous pressure is put on both sides to reach an agreement if the arbitrator is in a position to adopt all of one or all of the other side's proposals.

The threat of arbitration should be enough for both sides to reach agreement if the arbitrator is in a position to adopt either side's proposals. The threat of arbitration should be enough for both sides if they want to reach an agreement.

(1400)

In cases where fundamental issues are at stake, such as employment security, an agreement may never occur through the collective bargaining process. A strike or lockout only makes matters worse and nobody wins in those situations. The best solution is for someone respected by both sides to make a decision on the fairness of one proposal and for the process to be viewed as legitimate by both sides.

Section 57 of the Canada Labour Code contains a provision for final settlement by an arbitrator for disputes that occur during the life of a collective agreement. The parliamentary secretary from York North referred to this provision on March 2 when he said: "Our system of compulsory collective agreement settlement through arbitration or some other peaceful means contributes to a high degree of stability in our industrial relations system". The message government is sending on this issue is one of confusion. Government is for it in some instances and not for it in other instances.

I am certainly not trying to circumvent the collective agreement process. I do want to ensure that in areas of essential services Canadian people are protected from costly disruptive work stoppages that could affect their safety and their livelihood. We need an amendment to the Canada Labour Code which would expand the provisions contained in section 27 to include final offer arbitration in work stoppages in essential services as soon as the existing agreements expire.

The Ogilvie workers and their employers have been involved in a bitter labour dispute as has been mentioned, for almost a year. Those people would certainly like to get back to work. It is unfortunate that this bill is not a votable one. If it were, I would be suggesting to our caucus that we should support it.

I encourage the government to come forth with legislation considerably similar to this that would work as a long term solution and not a piecemeal approach to the problems.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I hesitate to interrupt private members' hour with House business but I think you will find that there is now unanimous consent for one of the motions I moved earlier. I move:

That, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Gaspé, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Summerside, Barrington, Sydney, St-George and Petty Harbour from June 5 to June 10, 1995 in order to study the restructuring of the fisheries industry, and that a staff of five do accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

ADM AGRI-INDUSTRIES LTD. OPERATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-313, an act to provide for the resumption and continuance of the operations at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd., be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on Bill C-313 which is an act to provide for the resumption and continuance of operations at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd.

In short, the bill uses final offer selection as a dispute settlement mechanism. It would empower the minister to appoint an arbitrator to select the final offer submitted either by the employer or the union. In effect, the bill calls upon the federal government to impose a settlement process on the two parties.

On the face of it, the proposal sounds reasonable. However, I am a firm believer in the free collective bargaining process and the long term interest of collective bargaining would not be served otherwise. Having said that, I want to express to the member for Verdun—Saint-Paul that I share his concerns about the dispute.

On June 6, less than a month from now, the strike will be a year old. Surely in today's highly competitive economic environment it is reasonable to expect the parties to a labour management dispute to reconcile their differences in far less time.

It is noteworthy that one of the parties, the employer, is owned by Archer Daniels Midland, a very large U.S. based transnational corporation. To be frank, I wonder how aware the employer is that the industrial relations culture in this country is different from the industrial relations culture that exists south of the border.

(1405)

Without overstating the differences between the two countries, I think it is fair to say that generally, employers and managers in this country possess a greater willingness and ability to work with labour unions. They tend to avoid the kind of power bargaining that seems to predominate in the U.S.

Dr. Pradeep Kumar, associate director of the Industrial Relations Centre at Queens University, pointed out in his study of industrial relations in Canada and the United States that: "While U.S. employers have become increasingly hostile to unions, practising a wide range of union substitution and union avoidance activities in pursuit of lower cost and greater flexibil-

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ity in compensation and work arrangements, Canadian managers appear to have shown greater willingness to work together with unions to facilitate adjustment and adaptation to changing markets and technology. The growing U.S. trend toward a union free environment is less evident in Canada".

Dr. Kumar goes on to say: "Unlike U.S. employers who have vigorously demanded concessions and forced unions into submission using their enhanced bargaining strength, Canadian managers, while jealously guarding their right to manage the workplace free of influence of organized labour whenever feasible, have been more accommodating and receptive to union goals and objectives and have attempted to find consensus on areas of mutual concern".

Also, I think Canadian unions rely more and place a higher value on the collective bargaining process. They certainly enjoy greater public support as evidenced by the fact that the percentage of unionized workers in the U.S. is about half of what it is in Canada.

Professor Kumar and others have also noted that Canadian labour legislation differs markedly from U.S. legislation in many respects.

For example, Canadian collective bargaining legislation provides a relatively simple procedure by which trade unions can acquire collective bargaining rights. In most Canadian jurisdictions a union can be certified without a vote upon evidence that 51 to 60 per cent of employees in the bargaining unit wish to be represented by the union. In the U.S. all applications for certification are contested, requiring a vote to establish that a union represent a majority of employees.

No Canadian jurisdiction has right to work laws, but 21 states in the United States of America have such legislation. Canadian labour legislation permits all forms of union security, closed shop as well as union shop. Dues check off is a common provision.

Most Canadian jurisdictions have successor right provisions, providing that where a business is sold the successor employer acquires all the rights, privileges and obligations of the predecessor. The successor is bound by any collective agreement in force. In the U.S. the effective change in ownership on the union and the collective agreement is uncertain, depending on various factors.

A number of Canadian jurisdictions provide for advance notice and consultation on technological change. This provision is not found in the U.S. legislation.

First contract arbitration is available in the federal jurisdiction, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. There is no such provision in the United States.

The use of replacement workers during a strike is prohibited in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. In the U.S. if

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employees choose to go on strike, their employer can immediately and permanently replace them.

As Paul Weiler, professor of labour law at Harvard University put it: "For employees who may have spent 20 years with the company building up a stake of experience and seniority that can rarely be duplicated elsewhere, the stark reality is that if they do go on strike, they can be replaced by the company with people who in less than 20 minutes on the job gain permanent priority over the striking veterans".

Labour standards and occupational safety and health legislation in the United States is also very different from such legislation here in Canada. For example, U.S. legislation, unlike Canadian legislation, does not require the establishment of a joint health and safety committee, nor does it contain a right to refuse unsafe work. The right to refuse unsafe work by health and safety committees exists in every single jurisdiction in Canada.

(1410)

While all Canadian jurisdictions have mandatory maternity and paternity leave provisions, with the right to return to former jobs and the continuation of benefits, very few jurisdictions in the United States require employers to provide pregnancy leave.

There are no individual standards for notice of termination or any severance pay legislation in the United States. In Canada, on the other hand, all jurisdictions require an employer to give notification to an individual being terminated, and Ontario and the federal jurisdiction provide for mandatory severance pay.

In Canada most jurisdictions require advance notice of plant closures involving 50 or more workers. Recent U.S. law sets minimum notice requirements for plant closures and mass lay-offs by employers of more than 100 employees, but there is no provision for consultation with the unions similar to that found in many Canadian jurisdictions.

My point is to show that the industrial relations climate or culture in Canada differs in significant ways from that in the United States.

In the dispute we are talking about today we have a relatively new employer, perhaps used to another way of doing things and having attitudes and assumptions not yet aligned with the Canadian attitudes and assumptions, and perhaps too ready to adopt a hard bargaining strategy. In this dispute the employer has chosen to use replacement workers, a decision which, not surprisingly, has greatly angered the workers. In their view, the use of replacement workers is the reason the dispute has lasted so long.

As members of the House know, the federal government has been examining the Canada Labour Code very intensively. It has been consulting with representatives from business, labour, and other interested parties. One of the issues being studied is

whether the federal government ought to follow the examples set by Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia in their legislation to prohibit or restrict the use of replacement workers. Those who favour restrictions on the use of replacements argue that when an employer continues to operate during a strike the collective bargaining process is frustrated and the employer's incentive to negotiate is removed, work stoppages are lengthened, and picket line violence is often inevitable.

It is also argued that the use of replacements serves as a disincentive for employees to join unions. Workers who know they can be replaced easily during a strike will wonder about union effectiveness and will be less likely to opt for unionization.

Those who oppose restrictions on the use of replacement workers say that such a move would tilt the balance of power toward labour, inevitably resulting in higher labour costs. They claim that it would deter new investment. The point is also made that most federally regulated industries are infrastructure industries. If they are completely shut down the entire economy would suffer.

The issue is complex and divisive. The arguments on both sides are persuasive. Also persuasive is the fact that 75 per cent of the workforce under provincial jurisdiction is governed by legislation prohibiting the use of replacement workers.

I will end my remarks by reiterating that I cannot support this bill because I believe firmly in free collective bargaining. The state has no business intervening in what are essentially private disputes.

At the same time, I have concerns about the heavy handed and less than accommodating attitude of the company. Like many others, I wonder whether the impasse would have lasted so long had there been restrictions on the use of replacement workers in the Canada Labour Code.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The hon. member for Verdun—Saint-Paul, on a point of order.

Mr. Lavigne (verdun—Saint-Paul): Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-313, an act to provide for the resumption and continuance of the operations at ADM Agri-Industries Ltd., be not now read the second time but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the terms of the motion of the hon. member requesting that the bill be dropped and the subject matter referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

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Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Since no more members wish to speak and the motion is not a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business

has now expired and the item is dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 96.

[*English*]

It being 2.15 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, May 29, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2.17 p.m.)

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