



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, December 6, 1995**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 6, 1995

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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**The Speaker:** As is our custom, we will be led today in the singing of the national anthem by the hon. member for Kootenay East.

*[Editor's Note: Whereupon members sang the national anthem.]*

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]*

### NATIONAL SAFE DRIVING WEEK

**Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is National Safe Driving Week.

Ten years ago, vehicle collisions killed 4,364 Canadians and injured another 259,200. It was estimated then that approximately 43 per cent of driver fatalities involved the use of alcohol.

By 1994, even with the doubling of vehicles on the road, vehicle collision deaths had fallen by 25 per cent to 3,260 and the number of injured by 5 per cent to 245,000. However, of those collisions, 44 per cent of driver fatalities involved the use of alcohol.

The conclusion is obvious. We have made great strides in reducing the number of Canadians killed and injured on our roads, but impaired driving continues to demand our attention. That is why the theme of this year's national safe driving week is "The Hidden Face of Impaired Driving". Canadians are still having accidents that could have been prevented by not mixing drinking and driving.

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### RENEWAL OF CANADIAN FEDERALISM

**Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal so-called unity package is going to have a negative effect on Canada. This package will divide the country more than it will unite it. The distinct society clause will be seen as giving Quebec special status. By lending the federal govern-

ment's constitutional veto to provincial governments rather than the people, the government will pit one province against the others.

The net effect of the government's package is to increase inequality. Without a doubt, denying all citizens constitutional equality will entrench the notion that all Canadians are unequal.

My constituents in Edmonton—Strathcona and I support the Reform's blue book policy which states clearly our commitment to Canada as one nation and to our vision of Canada as a balanced federation of 10 equal provinces and citizens.

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### SRI LANKA

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Sri Lanka is a country consumed in violence by the ongoing conflict between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Since 1983, 50,000 people have been killed and another 500,000 Tamils have been forced into exile.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated Canada's position: There can be no military solution to the problems in Sri Lanka. Both the minister and the secretary of state have stated on a number of occasions that Canada is willing to become involved in resolving the conflict if asked by both sides.

The situation in Sri Lanka is grave. Innocent people are being subjected to terrible violence, hunger and despair. Amidst this terrible violence, allegations have arisen that aid money is being used to buy military equipment.

I applaud the efforts of the minister and the secretary of state in issuing a standing offer to become involved in resolving this dispute, and encourage them to act to ensure that aid reaches those who need it the most.

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*[Translation]*

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today is a very special day.

Every year for the past six years, December 6 has been a day to reflect on violence against women. Since the day when 14 young women were shot and killed at the École polytechnique in Montreal, Canadians and Quebecers have become less and less tolerant of all forms of violence, particularly violence against women. How can one not be appalled by the fact that three out of

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ten women in Canada have been hit at least once by their spouses?

The Quebec government understands the need to act and it has chosen this day to table its policy on violence against women.

The federal government should follow in its footsteps and deal with the causes of violence, which are mostly psychological distress and despair linked to unemployment, indebtedness and poverty.

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[English]

### PORNOGRAPHY

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the deep concerns of many of my constituents regarding pornography.

The local chapter of the Saint John Catholic Women's League has sent me several little ribbons in recognition of White Ribbons Against Pornography or WRAP week. The CWL took part in WRAP activities from October 22 to 29.

The members of the CWL and their parishioners wore the ribbons, wrote their names on the backs of them and sent them to me to show their opposition to pornography in any form. We need stronger laws to protect us from this destructive menace in our society.

Today we remember the 14 young women who were brutally and tragically murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal five years ago. As we honour their memories let us remember that pornography contributes to the type of violent act that took their lives.

I commend my constituents for their efforts and I wholeheartedly agree with them. I urge the government to stand up for Canadians and pass stronger anti-pornography laws.

\* \* \*

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we remember the tragedy that occurred on December 6, 1989. It has been six years since 14 young women at École Polytechnique in Montreal lost their lives. The pain of that day is still fresh in our minds.

Although much has been done to improve public awareness with respect to violence against women, we have only to read the papers to see that it is still happening every day. One look at the statistics demonstrates that women continue to be the target of violent acts.

Steps have been taken by the Liberal government over the last two years to curb violence against women and to promote women's equality both within Canada and internationally. Within Canada, the federal plan for gender equality was announced while internationally, Canada played a leading role at the United Nations World Conference on Women. However, we still have a long way to go.

Today, on the national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, take a moment to remember the 14 young women who died, as well as countless others who have suffered, both here in Canada and around the world.

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### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the sixth anniversary of the tragic deaths of 14 young women at the École Polytechnique in Montreal.

In honour of this national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, the Government of Canada calls on all Canadians to recognize that violence against women is a violation of women's human rights and has no place in Canadian society.

• (1405)

Unfortunately too many women continue to suffer various forms of abuse at the hands of their partners, acquaintances or strangers. Therefore, eliminating violence remains a priority of the Canadian government.

Since the tragedy in Montreal, the federal government has stepped up its efforts to eliminate violence against women. In fact, Canada is viewed as a world leader in recognizing and addressing the problem through community based action, information exchange and awareness, and shelters for battered women and children.

I call on all Canadians to assume responsibility for the eradication of all forms of violence against women in this country.

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### BILL C-103

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday a Senate committee proposed an amendment to Bill C-103 that would grandfather the Canadian version of *Sports Illustrated*. In so doing, it joined the Reform Party, the task force on the Canadian magazine industry and the current Minister for International Trade in making this recommendation.

Unbelievably the Minister of Canadian Heritage is compromising our international reputation by insisting that *Sports Illustrated* be banned retroactively as of March 1993. If the Senate, a special task force on split runs and the Minister for International Trade all recognize the legitimate rights of *Sports*

*Illustrated* to run a split run in Canada, why does not the Minister of Canadian Heritage?

Maybe the answer is that he clearly does not know what he is doing. Yesterday he said: "What we are trying to do is make sure our Canadian industries remain Canadian, are able to grow and export, because export is part of their ability to mature". But get this: Bill C-103 will impose a Canadian 80 per cent excise tax on our magazine exports. Unbelievable.

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#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, five years ago former NDP MP Dawn Black gained unanimous support in the House of Commons for her bill making December 6 a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women. As we have each year since 1990, today we remember and mourn the lives of the 14 women killed six years ago in Montreal.

Today is not just a day of remembrance but a day of action. In this respect the Liberals have not lived up to their commitments to women. In the past year the federal government has wiped out the Canadian advisory council on the status of women. While the government says it is committed to ending violence against women, it dismantles the very programs that provide vital support to women.

Many such programs are funded through the Canada assistance plan or federal transfer payments to the provinces and territories, payments which are being cut back drastically, threatening the survival of emergency shelters for women, child care and other programs to help women and their families.

The Liberals must show their commitment to women through action, not words.

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#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is a day of national mourning and remembrance for the 14 young women whose lives were cut off in mid-stride six years ago for one reason only: they were women.

As we mourn we should be mindful that over 50 per cent of women in Canada, one in three in B.C., are the object of physical, mental and emotional violence. Battered body and soul, living with chronic helplessness and pain, it is a legacy of bitterness that they pass on to their children, Canada's children.

As parliamentarians, women or men, Liberal, Reform or Bloc, we have a duty to stop this endless nightmare that so many women endure as an excuse for living. The Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for the Status of

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Women have shown clear leadership on this issue but it is not enough.

We must mobilize our communities, the media and businesses. We must make this issue a cause nationale. Violent crimes cost this country over \$4 billion a year in money but the real cost in terms of human life and hope is immeasurable.

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#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we mark December 6 as Canada's national day of remembrance and action on violence against women.

Today we remember, we mourn and we act. We remember the 14 students who tragically lost their lives at École Polytechnique in a senseless act of violence against women. We mourn the loss of 14 of our best and brightest young women and what could have been.

We vow to act with resolve to eliminate abuse against women everywhere. On average, a woman is killed every six days in Canada, often in a home and by someone she knows. The weapon of choice is generally a gun. These are startling, sobering facts, but true.

The government is responding with initiatives, including tougher firearms control, elimination of the extreme drunkenness defence, more effective peace bonds and much more. However, eradication of violence against women requires the full participation of all members of society: government, media, business, communities, individuals and families.

I encourage everyone to join in the partnership to eliminate violence against women. Just do it.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. John English (Kitchener, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, six years ago in a university, a place of learning, a Canadian tragedy occurred. On this day in 1989 a lone male directed his rage at 14 innocent women at École Polytechnique in Montreal.

In a country such as Canada where so many women have experienced some level of injury, physical or sexual, we must make every effort to live up to our reputation as being the best country in the world in which to live by ensuring a society which is safe from ethnic or gender based violence.

We mark this day of remembrance for the victims of the Montreal massacre and to raise Canadians' awareness that violence against women is not only a crime, but an infringement of human rights.

Violence against women reflects not power over others but the fear of cowards.

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[Translation]

#### CANADIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, the government introduced a motion to recognize Quebec as a distinct society.

However, this declaration of love toward Quebecers has turned out to be a complete crock, in light of the incendiary comments made by some Liberal and Reform members of the heritage committee.

What Quebec federalist can believe in the sincerity of Liberal members when they strongly object to Telefilm Canada's subsidies to French-language audiovisual productions, which they see as overly generous in relation to the demographic weight of francophones?

No Quebecer can remain indifferent to these members' shameless blackmail tactics against the Canada Council last week and Telefilm yesterday, if they maintain their policy of subsidizing any artistic project on the basis of creative merit rather than on the basis of Quebec creators' partisan commitment to federalism.

This spectacle is a clear indication that—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry, but your time has expired. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate December 6 which remains in our national conscience for the death of the women students in Montreal. Last year on this day, in response to hyperbole on the government side, I questioned the sincerity of some Liberal members. A year has now passed and it is time to examine the government's record of how little has been accomplished to really change things on behalf of victims.

We now have more gun regulation that will not make the Montreal murders less likely to occur again. Victims still have no comprehensive special standing in the courts and the Criminal Code. We still have section 745 which releases murderers early and my private member's bill for victims is still to be dealt with by the House.

I call on the government, in view of the well-meaning sentiments that are always heard on this day, that by this time next year may we have substantive changes to the law which will bring meaning to the remembrance of this day. May it be said of the House that while being right, we could also do what is right.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, six years ago the unspeakable happened in Montreal. I want to pay special tribute to my former colleagues, Dawn Black and Mary Collins. Five years ago the House, in a rare show of unanimity, passed Ms. Black's private member's bill creating this day in perpetuity as a day of remembrance and action.

I would also like to pay tribute to the hon. member for Saint-Hubert. She is another individual who supports very strongly many of the measures which we fought for across party lines in the House.

Violence against women is a very special horror which this country deals with. It is not one which responds merely to platitudes. It is not one which responds to political responses with respect to social programs or gun—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### MEMBER FOR BONAVENTURE—ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the very loquacious member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine was determined to show that he could take arrogance and absurdity one step further.

Mistaking this place for the defunct youth Parliament of Canada, the gentleman nicknamed "Monsieur 31" confirmed that he had all it takes to hold the part of the leading man in a vaudeville show.

In her editorial, Lise Bissonnette of *Le Devoir* reported that the young MP had launched an all-out attack against the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre, which he accused of being unable to carry out its mandate, adding that his government could easily deal directly with its partners. Ms. Bissonnette ironically described the member's remarks as follows: "As we know, out of the mouth of babes—".

• (1415)

Balzac wrote that power only benefits the powerful. This lesson in humility—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member but his time is up. The hon. member for Outremont.

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#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this day, we are all reminded of the 14 promising young women full of hopes and dreams who were murdered at l'École polytechnique. We are also reminded that violence is a daily reality for thousands of other women.

*Oral Questions*

Each of us has a duty and a responsibility to stop all forms of violence. That is what our government is doing, especially through the Firearms Act that we just passed.

I wish to thank the families of the victims of l'École polytechnique for being so vigilant and courageous in their efforts to create awareness and their support for gun control. I am sure that they are helping to save lives.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, the Minister of Labour announced on all TV and radio stations in Quebec that, as part of its unemployment insurance reforms, the federal government will create a reserve fund to cushion the impact of future economic recessions or slowdowns.

On the other hand, the 1995 budget of the Minister of Finance provides that UI fund surpluses will be used to absorb the federal deficit. That is what it says on pages 89 and 94 of the Budget Plan. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance did not answer our questions. Today, I will put the question to the Prime Minister.

Considering that the statement by the Minister of Labour is a clear and direct contradiction of what is indicated in the government's budget, could the Prime Minister tell us which minister is right?

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

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in that case, I will put the following question to the Prime Minister.

If they are both right, how does this tally with the facts? There are no two ways about it: either the Minister of Labour is right, and a reserve fund will be created to cushion the impact of economic problems, or the budget provisions are no longer accurate. How can the Prime Minister say in all honesty and sincerity that both ministers are right, when they are contradicting each other?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Unemployment Insurance Fund shows a surplus, it is entered as a surplus, and the money is used in the government's current accounts. On the books, however, it is considered as a debt we owe this fund. Instead of borrowing on the market, we use this fund. It is on record as a reserve that will have to be paid back if necessary. However, because we have

worked very hard to reduce unemployment since we formed the government, the Unemployment Insurance Fund has shown an annual surplus because of our good management.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the Prime Minister realizes what he just said. He just explained that the government's deficit for this year will actually be \$5 million more, because the Minister of Finance took the surplus in the Unemployment Insurance Fund, subtracted it from that column, put unemployment insurance revenues into revenue, and then told us: "Here, this is will be my deficit".

Does he realize that with this answer he just confirmed, as the leader of this government, that the deficit of the Minister of Finance will be \$5 million more?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before very clearly, we consider that the funds in question are made up of money that we borrowed. Instead of borrowing from the private sector, we are borrowing from ourselves. However, on the books, as good accountants, we said it was not our money, it was money held in reserve.

Instead of borrowing the money on the market and competing with the private sector, we are using this money, which we know we will have to pay back some day.

• (1420)

However, it is quite probable that in the years to come, since the government is working very hard to create jobs, instead of a deficit the UI Fund will again show a surplus next year.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

The data available in the financial review of the Minister of Finance reveal that 82 per cent of program expenditure reductions proposed by the federal government were in the unemployment insurance program alone.

In this context, how can the Prime Minister refuse to admit that his government's only strategy in fighting the deficit was to cut the benefits to the unemployed?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Parti Québécois government says we cut transfers to the provinces, it is contradicting the member, who has just said that all we cut were the benefits of the unemployed, and not transfers.

But we cut all over, except that we reduced transfers such as those for health and the other programs. We did, however, increase equalization payments. In fact, since we have been in government, transfers to the province of Quebec have remained

*Oral Questions*

at exactly the same level. They are even slightly higher than they were when we came to office.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is avoiding the question. We are saying that, of all the government's program cuts in connection with transfers to the provinces, 82 per cent of the cuts were made to the UI fund. This is what we are saying today. And this is what he is trying to get round.

I would ask him the following question. Does the Prime Minister realize that his approach to reducing the deficit through the unemployment insurance surplus is unconscionable and testifies to his inability to improve the state of public finances other than by imposing a job tax? What his employment insurance amounts to then is a job tax.

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member is engaging in an attempt to misinform Canadians.

Let us go back to last Friday and bring forward two basic facts. It is very important to clear the fog the Bloc Quebecois constantly tries to disseminate.

First, \$800 million of the proposed savings in the system are being recycled into direct employment benefits to get people back to work. Therefore it represents a substantial shift from income benefits to employment benefits and is designed to meet our very different work situation. It allows us to give people a quick, effective way back into the employment market.

The figures the hon. member refers to have absolutely no relevance to the fact that we have said directly the money is being recycled.

Second, we are beginning to reduce the premiums under the system. There will be a \$1.3 billion reduction for businesses and employees so that we can put more money in their pockets and they can create more jobs.

[Editor's Note: Electrical power interruption.]

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

**Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my argument is so powerful that it even affects the electrical system of the House. The problem is that when the Bloc stands to speak, the lights go off totally and everybody is in the dark.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he wants to put his makeshift

unity policy behind him and get on with jobs and the economy. So let us do that.

At present the greatest single impediment to job creation and economic growth in the country is the dead weight of the federal debt of \$570 billion, a debt the government is adding to at the staggering rate of almost \$100 million per day.

The IMF and Canadian business groups have repeatedly called upon the finance minister to get real and revise his weak deficit reduction targets.

Has the Prime Minister specifically instructed the finance minister to come up with a new deficit reduction target, the only one that means anything to the Canadian taxpayer, namely a zero deficit by 1997-98?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are on target with what we said to the Canadian public we would achieve.

We said that we started at 6.2 per cent of GDP and that we would be at 3 per cent after three years. We will be there. We set some realistic goals in a way that we have not stifled growth in Canada. At the same time as we were going through a reduction in the deficit, we saw a reduction in unemployment. The policies are working very well.

Most of the time members of the third party are not asking questions on the economy. Yesterday, for example, they spent the day talking about the coat of arms. Is it extremely important?

On January 15, 1994 the leader of the Reform Party criticized previous opposition parties. He said that anyone could make a jackass of themselves in question period. Yesterday the Reform Party proved that quite well.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the former head of the Economic Council of Canada, John Deutsch, used to have trouble getting Mr. Trudeau to take the debt and deficit seriously. I wonder if Mr. Trudeau passed the virus on to the current Prime Minister.

The only way Mr. Deutsch could get Trudeau to take public finance seriously was to somehow link it to the Quebec or unity issue. Perhaps we can awaken the Prime Minister's interest in the issue by pointing to a recent CROP poll which said that 80 per cent of Quebecers believed the government should come to grips with real deficit reduction. This is something Quebecers have in common with other Canadians.

If the Prime Minister is groping for actions to unite the country, why does he not personally commit his government to balancing the federal budget before the end of his mandate? I ask him not to give us a 3 per cent answer.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we ran in the last campaign we were very careful



*Oral Questions*

to put in writing what we would do. We are meeting our goals. We are respecting the commitments we made and we are on target.

When we introduced the budget last February it was extremely well received by all commentators; we had done the right thing. We are moving in a rational way in the reduction of the deficit. At the same time we are not doing it in a way that is causing social problems in the country.

That is why we are a party of the centre. We are not doctrinaire. We will not eliminate medicare just to have a balanced budget. We will make sure we have policies that respect the individual and at the same time offer solid administration.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister likes to dwell on the past. I am wondering whether he remembers a time in 1978 when Mr. Trudeau went to an economic summit in West Germany and was somehow briefly converted to deficit reduction. He came back and went on TV. Does the Prime Minister remember this? He announced \$2 billion in spending cuts without even telling his finance minister, who is now the Prime Minister.

Could the Prime Minister take a short trip, perhaps to Queen's Park; take a few lessons on budget balancing from Mr. Harris; get on TV and commit himself to spending cuts that will balance the federal budget?

Eight of eleven senior governments in Canada are now committed to deficit elimination. Will the Prime Minister make the Government of Canada the ninth by committing to balance the federal budget by 1997-98?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Reform Party is making too many trips to Queen's Park. He will lose the only Ontario member he has in this House very quickly if he does not change his travelling plans.

We have a good plan for reduction of the deficit. At the same time we are making sure the economy is working well. We will have managed to take the deficit from 6.2 per cent to 3 per cent in three years, as we said we would. It will be reduced gradually and eventually we will have a balanced budget.

• (1430)

However, we are not like their friend in the United States by the name of Gingrich who is talking about balancing the books in 2002. We do not talk like that; in Canada we do it.

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[Translation]

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

A little more than a month after the Quebec referendum, the unemployment insurance reform tabled by the government calls for both the maintenance of national standards and the implementation of five new manpower programs as demanded by Quebec.

In light of the maintenance of national standards and the introduction of new programs, will the Prime Minister admit that the proposed reform does not in any way reflect the distinct and unique character of the people of Quebec?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the reform has been well received all over the country. I have figures in front of me showing that 66 per cent of people in Quebec feel it is a well balanced reform which respects the regions.

But an unemployed person is an unemployed person. What does he or she need from government? Good programs. Language has nothing to do with it. The unemployment insurance system takes money from those parts of Canada where people have the good fortune of having jobs and shares it with others who, in other areas, do not enjoy that privilege. It has nothing to do with language and culture; it has everything to do with respect of the individual, and all citizens of Canada are treated equally.

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it has been made very clear that this reform targets Quebec and the maritimes. It is a far cry from what the Prime Minister said.

How can the Prime Minister claim that his motion on the distinct character of Quebec holds any meaning when, the first chance he gets, he makes a total mockery of a unanimous request from the Quebec National Assembly by treating Quebec like any other province, subjecting it to the same national standards when it comes to manpower?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have done what we said we would do, namely withdraw from manpower training and make these funds available to those individuals who are our clients, the unemployed. We want to make sure that the money they contributed in while working gets back to them instead of going to others.

As for the question of a distinct society, I note, once again and for the third time, that the members of the Parti Québécois and of the Bloc Québécois will again vote, in their great hypocrisy—

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

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, they will again vote against the distinct society, because they criticize us and when the time comes to vote in the House, they vote against—

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

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** Dear colleagues, I would ask you all to be a little more careful in your choice of words during question period. As we know, words that stir up one side are usually replied to in kind.

• (1435)

[English]

I ask all hon. members to please be very careful in their choice of words. Naturally we would not allow some terms to be used against individual members but when they are used in a general way they have been acceptable in the House.

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**UNDERGROUNDECONOMY**

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of National Revenue and taxation bragged about raising \$1.1 billion out of the underground economy.

If he were truly serious about attacking the underground economy why were Revenue Canada auditors instructed not to audit visible minorities?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the basis of the hon. member's question is false.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, if that is truly his answer, if he really believes it is false, then this gentleman is not doing his work.

A report was done by Ernst Young on the underground economy. A lot of field auditors were interviewed, reviewed and visited. They were asked what was going on. Six, seven or eight case reports were done. The study and some off the record remarks by auditors confirmed they were instructed not to audit certain visible minorities "due to potentially explosive political repercussions".

Further, the minister should know that 90 per cent of liquor smuggling in Ontario comes across one certain spot near Cornwall.

I again ask the minister what steps he is taking to ensure his auditors apply the rules of the Income Tax Act to everyone equally regardless of race.

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Typically, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about off the record information.

We in Revenue Canada have a number of situations which can be difficult. One example is the transport of grains across the border to the United States where our customs officers are told not to stand in the way of a speeding truck. No, they take the licence number and we arrest the truck later. That is the type of situation we have there which of course the Reform Party, which approves of running the border, thinks is a good thing.

With respect to other situations in which there could be risk to our officials, we instruct them not to take unnecessary risks. We

instruct them to proceed with their work. We certainly do not instruct them, as the hon. member has claimed, to avoid any visible minorities.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. By lowering the maximum insurable earnings, the government is making its most significant tax reduction, that is \$900 million, in the interest of high income earners, while at the same time reducing the benefits paid to seasonal workers and collecting premiums from workers who hold precarious jobs.

Will the minister admit that, contrary to his claim that this reform is fair, the new proposed system is regressive and unfair, in that it gives some of the benefits taken away from the poor to those who have stable and well paid jobs?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a habit of being able to understand only half the equation.

The other half of the equation is that higher income earners will therefore have fewer benefits because they pay less of a premium. The reason is the maximum insurable earning has gone up to 40 per cent higher than the average industrial wage. The recommendation of both the seasonal task force and the House of Commons is that it should be frozen or brought down because it far exceeded what was required and therefore much higher payments were going out to those at higher income levels. That is the reason we brought in the reform. It was to be fair.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the other half of the equation is that the minister is taking money from people who were not contributing before. Will the minister recognize that it is unfair to have high income earners pay lower UI premiums, while people who work part time less than ten hours per week will now have to pay premiums, even though they will not be eligible to collect UI benefits?

• (1440)

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this poor member has it so totally wrong. It is incredible how mistaken he really is. The reality is we have extended coverage to part time workers.

More workers at part time levels will now have the opportunity to be extended. If they are not eligible we offer a full rebate of their premiums up to \$2,000. Obviously this member cannot read.

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday the minister of human resources announced two mega training programs, one for \$800 million and the other for \$300 million.

Federal training programs have proven a colossal failure. The auditor general says regional development programs do not create jobs, except of course for federal bureaucrats.

Why is the minister throwing over a billion dollars into more wasteful training programs when the auditor general says the programs will not create jobs?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first let me make a correction in the statement of the hon. member. The employment measures are not just for training. They are directed specifically at a number of tools to help people get back into the workforce.

Self-employment is a good example. Over the past two years in a number of test projects across the country we have been able to take people on the unemployment insurance system and help them start their own business, thereby creating a job for themselves and a job for another person. Sixty thousand jobs have been created by one of the tools we included in that package.

Another tool is the use of a wage supplement which again helps small business people to create tools. We have evaluated specifically that in these measures we can add up to 15 additional weeks of work and, more important, up to \$5,000 additional income for the people who use these proposals under our measures. That seems to me an awfully good investment.

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about test projects. I am talking about creating sustainable long term jobs, and not with these billion dollar boondoggle projects.

In his last report the auditor general said there is absolutely no evidence that training is accompanied by new jobs. The \$1.1 billion needed for these wasteful programs will come at the expense of part time workers.

When the auditor general has said these training programs will fail, why is the government hammering part timers to the tune of a billion dollars to pour into its bottomless pit of so-called job creation, mega training programs?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote an authority whom the hon. member might accept as even more valid than the auditor general: the member for Calgary Southeast herself.

### *Oral Questions*

She wrote to me on April 10 saying the community of Calgary Southeast has a proposed training centre. It is well known that this area is Calgary's home to many who are unemployed, struggling and lacking in ability.

I encourage her to consider supporting this training project and help in the revitalization of Calgary Southeast. It seems to me the member for Calgary Southeast wanted training programs for members of her riding. Why does she not want them for the rest of Canadians?

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, government members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage maintained that there was no such thing as a Quebec culture, that there was only a single and broad Canadian culture. At the same time, they were sharply criticizing Telefilm Canada for funding sovereigntist Quebec artists.

• (1445)

Does the Prime Minister agree with the members of his caucus, who say there is only one culture in Canada and that Telefilm Canada must now fund artists according to their political opinion?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a French culture in Canada, which is Canadian. It is in Quebec primarily, but I think the culture of the Acadians and Antonine Maillet forms part of the French culture, and this culture is not necessarily Quebec culture.

So, when we talk about a Canadian culture, it may be of French or English expression. This morning I spent time with Canadian natives who were having ceremonies. They too have a culture, which is entirely their own but Canadian at the same time because it covers all of Canada. There are people of this culture in British Columbia, in Quebec and in the maritimes.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the cat is finally out of the bag. The Prime Minister, a Quebecer, has just denied his own culture. Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that his fine speeches in recent weeks on the distinct nature of Quebec society were nothing more than pure hypocrisy, since he did not manage even to convince—

**The Speaker:** My dear colleagues, I would ask you once again not to use words that incite on both sides. I would again ask the hon. member to carefully choose and use her words, as I have before. I would ask you not to use the word "hypocrite". Now, if the hon. member would put her question.

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, I will phrase my question using the same word the Prime Minister used. Will he acknowledge, since he has not even managed to convince the members of his own caucus that Quebecers are a people, that there is a distinct culture and that the federal government must not lose sight of this in implementing its programs?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I return to my argument. French culture is not found only in Quebec. English culture is also found in Quebec. Gabrielle Roy came from St. Boniface, Manitoba, and she is considered one of French Canadian literature's finest. Her works continue to be used today in schools in Quebec. That is just to show the quality. I think that the member for Québec—Est, who was born in Penetanguishene, learned French culture and the French language in Ontario, and he is not any less French, because he is with the Bloc today.

• (1450)

What I am saying, and I have a number of examples, is that French culture may be found throughout Canada, and that English culture may be found in Quebec. We cannot say that Quebec is strictly French, because all sorts of people live in Quebec. There are a lot of proud francophones living outside Quebec.

\* \* \*

**GUN CONTROL**

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The passage of Bill C-68 marked an historical moment for Canada and for the families of the 14 École polytechnique victims.

[*English*]

Bill C-68 is the greatest memorial the government could have erected to the young women and their families. In the spirit of this national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, what specifically does the minister feel Bill C-68 will accomplish?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by pointing out the important contribution made by those who lost family members in the Montreal tragedy six years ago today.

[*English*]

If it were not for the commitment and the hard work and perseverance of the families of those victims, this important matter would not have found its way to the top of the national agenda. We are in their debt for the work they did to ensure the passage of the bill.

In specific response to the question put by the hon. member, whose own work was so important in this regard, may I emphasize that every year in Canada some 13,000 orders are made in the courts of the country prohibiting people from having firearms because they have shown a propensity for violence. Too often that violence occurs in the context of the home. By a margin of two to one, when men kill women in the home the weapon of choice is a firearm, and 80 per cent of the time it is a rifle or a shotgun. It is almost always legally owned.

The registration system that is provided for in this bill will permit police to enforce those orders to remove firearms and save lives. That is only one of the ways this bill will help in the effort we must make continuously to deal with violence by men against women.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Mr. Cliff Breitreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today the results of the Alberta plebiscite on producer exports for wheat and barley were released. Sixty-six per cent of barley producers and 62 per cent of wheat producers, a good strong majority, voted for choice and options to export these grains outside Canadian Wheat Board jurisdiction.

Will the agriculture minister respect farmers' choice and options to export their own wheat and barley?

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the members opposite in the industry to keep the results of the plebiscite that was announced today in perspective.

As far as the results, that plebiscite gives us the opinions of a number of producers on an issue in one province. It is a wide-ranging issue that affects all of western Canada. The number of producers who expressed their view are just a little over 10 per cent of all the grain producers with permit books in western Canada.

**Mr. Cliff Breitreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister and the Prime Minister seem to forget that a promise made is a debt unpaid.

Two years ago both the minister and the Prime Minister promised prairie farmers a producer plebiscite on grain marketing. It only took a few weeks for the Prime Minister to make good on commitments to the separatists in Quebec and now this

government is ramrodding Quebec appeasement legislation through the House. Are prairie farmers second class citizens to the separatists in Quebec?

Will the Prime Minister fulfil his own promise today and commit his agriculture minister to hold a prairie-wide binding referendum on grain marketing?

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that before he makes a statement on what the Prime Minister said, he should have his facts straight. I do not recall the hon. member being present when the Prime Minister made that statement. I was.

• (1455)

The Prime Minister at that time said the minister is following through on that. The minister has put in place a process called the western grain marketing panel to consult with members, participants, and all stakeholders in the western grain industry before the consideration of any changes, if there were ever to be changes, to the western grain marketing system.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the secretary of state for the status of women.

In the speech she gave at the 4th world conference on women, the hon. secretary of state demanded equal rights for all women. At the same time, she presented to the whole world the famous plan for equality between the sexes concocted by her government to achieve this noble objective.

Since it is acknowledged that the campaign against violence can only succeed if women achieve economic equality, can the secretary of state tell us if her government has taken its famous plan for equality between the sexes into account in its UI reform?

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yes, we have certainly conducted an in depth analysis of all the data affecting the lives of women and men to determine the impact of all the actions taken by the Minister of Human Resources Development in this regard.

I must also tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we considered the fact that, in the end, taking every hour worked into account is a winning proposition for women. I am proud of what we have done.

#### Oral Questions

Furthermore, our government's decisions affecting poor families and children are an important part of our initiatives. We should all be proud and give the right information on what our party has done in this regard.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Since we know that 70 per cent of part time workers are women and that the UI reform will have a very negative impact on them, will the secretary of state admit that her famous plan for equality between the sexes simply does not work and is a total failure?

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker, I do not acknowledge these facts, which are neither current nor true. Our minister has responded to this line of inquiry several times by showing how women in part time and seasonal jobs will fare better in relation to the number of hours worked both for the well-being of their society and for their own families.

I think my colleague would be well-advised to look at the data more closely; she would be very happy with the results.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### MAGAZINE PUBLISHING

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday a Senate committee proposed an amendment to Bill C-103 that would grandfather the split edition of *Sports Illustrated* Canada. This is one of the amendments the Reform Party proposed. It was also a recommendation of the task force on magazine publishing.

Here is something interesting. The Minister for International Trade wrote a letter to the Minister of Canadian Heritage in January 1994 suggesting the same thing. Does this indicate a split in the cabinet over the split runs?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course there is cabinet solidarity on the subject. What the Minister for International Trade wrote in a letter to me dated January 27 was a report of the conversation he had with his American counterpart, Mickey Kantor. It is quite natural for the Minister for International Trade to report to the Minister of Canadian Heritage on the views expressed in the United States.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, careful reading of the letter clearly shows that the Minister for International Trade was making a recommendation to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, which he chose to ignore.

*Point of Order*

• (1500)

The most disturbing aspect of the bill is that the Canadian government has now decided to place a tax on any future Canadian split runs into the United States. If the bill becomes law, a Canadian magazine that wants to export a very similar magazine to the United States will be subject to an 80 per cent excise tax imposed on it by its own Canadian government.

How in the world could the heritage minister have created such a bone headed law that punishes Canadian industry?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the policy on split runs has been in effect for something like 30 years. It has helped the Canadian magazine industry which has contributed to our understanding of ourselves as Canadians. It contributes to our identity. It contributes to national unity, a fact that our colleagues in the Reform totally ignore because they are not interested in Canadian unity.

\* \* \*

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, two economic studies were released yesterday by the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in my riding. They put the annual calculable cost of this violence at over \$4.2 billion, with health related costs alone at \$1.5 billion annually.

I ask the Secretary of State for the Status of Women how knowledge about the cost of violence against women will affect government action on this very important issue.

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset I recognize and thank the member for London West and particularly Dr. Greaves from the Centre for Violence Against Women which undertook this study at the behest of Status of Women Canada.

The question of the pervasive nature of violence against women and children and its negative impact in a social, economic, health and criminal sense is very serious. There is no doubt the issues described in the study are vital and important to us all.

I will study the findings. I will recommend certain actions to the Minister of Justice and to the Minister of Health, notwithstanding which I would suggest to all members of the House, to all levels of government and to societies and municipalities that the problem is beyond just this government which has done a very good job through the Minister of Justice with respect to the criminal element.

The social and economic aspects still need to be addressed. Until the economic interests of women are looked into, we will have ongoing violence against women and children.

**BANKING**

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is with regard to the embarrassingly high bank profits that have been announced in the last few days.

As a result of the UI changes almost \$1 billion was taken out of the pockets of working Canadians and small business operators. With obscenely high bank profits being registered, what steps will the Prime Minister take to make sure they too pay their share of the deficit?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, like other corporate citizens they are paying taxes on their profits. In the last budget the Minister of Finance imposed a special \$100 million tax on the profits of banks. They pay more than the normal share, but the Minister of Finance will look into the situation. It is a sign in some ways that the economy is performing better than before.

I hope they will pay a lot of tax out of these profits as we need the money to create jobs in Canada.

**The Speaker:** I have an announcement to make before dealing with a few points of order. During question period the lights went off and on. I want members to know, so that when they return to their offices they will know what is going on, that there is a general power failure in parts of downtown Ottawa. The emergency generator at the House is now in operation. We are recording the television signal but nothing is being distributed until power is restored.

• (1505)

Our computer system was cut and needs to be restarted, which takes approximately an hour. Therefore the blues from question period will be delayed.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek unanimous consent of the House to observe one minute of silence in memory of the 14 young Canadian women who were murdered six years ago this day in Montreal, on December 6, 1989.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the suggestion. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence.*]

## COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my point of order arises from an answer the customs

and revenue minister gave. He said that the Reform Party encouraged farmers to illegally run the U.S. border.

The Reform Party has never encouraged farmers to run the border with their grain. The customs and revenue—

**The Speaker:** I think the hon. member has a point of clarification. It is not a point of order but a point of debate. I thank him for raising it.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### 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 16 petitions.

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[Translation]

### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is a day of remembrance.

Today, we reflect on the tragic December 6, 1989 when 14 women died in the prime of their lives. Today, we also want to reflect on the thousands of women who face violence as a daily reality.

It was also 25 years ago tomorrow that the royal commission on the status of women tabled its report in this House.

[English]

The report was a landmark study of the status of women in Canada. It contained 167 recommendations ranging from equalizing women's opportunity in the workplace to recognizing the equal contributions of both partners in the division of family assets upon marriage breakdown. Most of its recommendations have now been implemented. For example, sex discrimination is now prohibited under all of Canada's labour laws. Minimum wages are the same for both men and women. Maternity leave and parental leave benefits can be claimed.

• (1510)

The royal commission, however, did not identify violence as a major issue, but its members had a vision about what it would take to achieve equality. They predicted that as we uncovered the root causes and consequences of women's unequal status new issues would emerge that would need addressing, and they

### *Routine Proceedings*

were right. In the last 25 years we have uncovered a close relationship between a woman's lack of equality and her vulnerability to violence, and we have brought it out of the shadows.

At the fourth United Nations world conference on women in Beijing, Canada made a commitment to implement the conference's platform for action, a powerful global agenda for the advancement of women. Among the 12 main themes it contains a plan of action to address violence against women. The global platform reaffirms that violence against women is not a private concern and that states must exercise diligence to ensure that violence is not occurring in homes, in schools, in the workplace or on our streets.

[Translation]

Another commitment is the federal plan for gender equality, released in August. The plan is a framework for federal action to bring about equality for women in Canada.

We created the plan in conjunction with our preparations for the Beijing conference, and it includes several commitments to address violence against women.

There have been significant changes since the royal commission report. At that time, only one woman was a member of the House of Commons, Grace MacInnis.

[English]

There are now 54 women in the House. Whatever our political persuasion, we share a debt of gratitude to the royal commission, for without its vision the road here would have been longer and harder. Women's voices are now heard in the Chamber. Violence against women is now openly discussed. Women and men are working together to find solutions. I am confident that together we can find solutions at all levels of society.

Today in particular I to commend the House for its support of the historic legislation on firearms control. The weapon used at l'École polytechnique will soon be banned.

All of us want to make the country safer for women. We will succeed with the help of our partners, the men in the House and the men of the country, the NGOs, individuals, labour, business and other levels of government.

In memory of the women who died six years ago, let us pledge to continue our campaign against violence to prevent such tragedies and to give women and girls their rightful place in society.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of emotion that, like all the hon. members of this House, I wish to pay tribute today to the 14 young women who were gunned down by an assassin six years ago. We join their families and friends in remembering them and thinking about the impact that their death will have on our society.

*Routine Proceedings*

As the hon. secretary of state for the status of women mentioned, the tragedy that took place at l'École polytechnique prompted us, collectively, to reflect on the steps we should take to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. This is a joint undertaking in which each of us must take part. The lives of our daughters, sisters, colleagues, friends and fellow citizens and their safety are at stake.

The second part of my remarks is intended not to be critical but rather to be constructive. I believe that, as parliamentarians, we must speak candidly about our concerns to further the common cause of equality for women. As the secretary of state for the status of women quite rightly pointed out, 25 years ago, the royal commission on the status of women came to the conclusion that violence against women can only be curbed by ensuring equal rights for women.

• (1515)

I am pleased to see that just today the Quebec government has taken some very concrete steps regarding conjugal violence. Today, the Government of Quebec tabled in the National Assembly its action plan on conjugal violence. It is important to turn our attention to this plan for a moment.

First of all, I should point out that six ministers have co-operated in developing a structured and integrated action plan: the ministers of justice, health and social services, public security, and education, the minister responsible for family affairs and, finally, the minister responsible for the status of women.

Many actions are planned, but I will just list a few. In all cases, during the inquiry on the provisional release of the accused, the attorney general's prosecutors will be required to ask the court to set as a condition for release that the accused surrender his weapons to the police.

Second, victims will be informed quickly and automatically of the provisional release of the accused and of the conditions set by the court. They will also be informed of a release under a temporary absence or parole program.

Third, a prevention campaign on violence against women will be launched. Moreover, the Quebec police information centre will record all cases of spousal abuse, as well as all conditions for release. Firearms will be confiscated immediately when a spouse is arrested. In the education sector, the emphasis will be put on the prevention of spousal abuse and screening for children who witness such violence. This is what we call action.

Again, these are only a few of the measures included in the Quebec action program. On behalf of my colleagues, of women

who are victims of spousal abuse, and of Quebecers, I congratulate the Quebec government on this major initiative.

While Quebec is taking action in its fields of jurisdiction, what does the federal government do?

**Mrs. Finestone:** We implemented laws to take similar action.

**Mrs. Gagnon:** There is some and, in fact, quite a bit of inertia at the federal level. Let us start with the achievements of the government, as mentioned by the secretary of state for the status of women. I must say that I have some sympathy for the hon. member who must work with a government that shelved the issue of women as soon as it took office.

**An hon. member:** You know that is not true.

**Mrs. Gagnon:** So, this government approves a plan to promote equality between men and women. Mr. Speaker, could they please let me finish? The government pledges to implement the program for action approved at the 4th world conference on women. It passes a bill on gun control. That is nice, but that is also very little after two years in office.

Let us now look at what the government did not do. Let us look at the missed opportunities. There are quite a few. The government did not amend the Criminal Code to specifically prohibit female genital mutilation. That is also a form of violence. It does not happen here, but it is a form of violence. It also takes place in Canada. The government did not protest to Chinese authorities when, just last week, the situation of orphan baby girls became public. That is also a form of violence against women. These women are seen as expendable.

The government did not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to protect homosexuals against discrimination. That is also another form of violence. The government did not put its reform projects through the prism of its plan to promote equality for women, thus forcing many women to live in poverty. That is another form of violence, and we are still a long way from achieving equality between the two sexes.

In conclusion, I ask the government to truly follow the spirit and the letter of the recommendations made 25 years ago already. I ask the government to implement, in its own fields of jurisdiction, true measures to promote equality between men and women, so that some day we can say that the tragedy which occurred at Polytechnique was a terrible but isolated incident.

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I think all members of this House share in the painful memory of the tragic event that happened six years ago, in 1989, when we lost 14 of our young women at l'École polytechnique in Montreal. They fell victim to a senseless crime.



• (1520)

[*English*]

We all believe the rights of victims of crime must be placed before the rights of criminals in society. Today we feel those sentiments most deeply.

Exactly one year ago today in the House of Commons we held an emergency debate on violence against women. I appreciate the noble sentiments that continue to be espoused by those who speak on this and similar issues, for I too share those ideals. However, I am greatly concerned that in the intervening years since that emergency debate very little has been done to improve the situation.

I am concerned that the House does only lip service to addressing the issue of violence against women, children and men. Remember, we must not limit our focus to eradicating violence against women. We must enlarge our scope and become active pacifists to wipe out senseless violence in society. We must rally to this sentiment and demonstrate to the world that Canada is a leader in its efforts to reduce crime, to safeguard its citizens and to champion the rights of victims.

To do this we must get at the root of the problem, not just smooth over the symptoms. Gun control will not in and of itself solve the problems of violence in society.

I believe that until the government of the day can identify the root causes of crime, until it can identify the reasons for domestic violence and violence against women, we will continue waking every day to face the personal tragedies brought on by crime.

Today the government must take a more positive step in the area of violence against women and demonstrate its commitment to rooting out the problems the minister has alluded to.

In its press release of November 27 of this year Status of Women Canada called violence against women a violation of women's human rights. I agree with this statement and I believe the government should enforce its sentiments.

The government sent many people at great taxpayer expense to the women's conference in China. I challenge that conference site on the basis of China's terrible record of human rights abuse, especially to women, children and political dissidents. At that conference our government confirmed that eliminating violence remains a priority. It should be, and according to the secretary of state it is, a global goal not limited to Canada.

Today is a serious day for us all, a day for us to remember, a day for us to help the healing. It is a day when we should all commit to moving forward. We must foster attitudes which promote peace and tolerance and express zero tolerance for the violation of human rights and zero tolerance for violence against women.

*Routine Proceedings*

Echoing sentiments of the Secretary of State for the Status of Women, I pledge and let us all pledge in memory of the women who died six years ago to continue vigorously our campaign against violence to prevent such tragedies.

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I request the consent of the House to speak briefly on this subject on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House on this important day. I rise on behalf of all New Democrats on this national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, December 6.

Today is the anniversary of the 1989 Montreal massacre at l'École Polytechnique. Fourteen women died on this day, a great tragedy. Today we reflect on, remember, mourn and call for further action to address and prevent violence against women.

• (1525)

On this day I also remember the work of my former colleague, a New Democratic member of Parliament from British Columbia, Dawn Black, whose efforts during the previous Parliament led to the establishment of this national day of remembrance and action. I think of her dedication to the House and to the issue of violence against women when I think of the motion today.

I also remember and sympathize with the families of the 14 women who died simply because they were women. Those families live with the effects of this great tragedy in ways many of us will never fully understand.

Violence cannot be condoned, but it cannot be treated only with punishment. We must understand violence and treat the causes as well as the criminals. A plan of action must be recognized every day of the year, in every part of the country and in all our actions. We must deal with the economic and social roots of the circumstances which lead to violence against women. We must deal with economic and social legislation in the House. We have to keep in mind the possible human consequences of that legislation every day of our lives. We are confronted daily with decisions we can make in the House which may affect people in ways which could lead to violence and we must address those matters.

Today is the day on which we reflect on, remember and mourn that which has been done to women. We must address the need to work further on this important issue. I trust all members of the House will heed the call for action on this important day.

**Mrs. Wayne:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I also would like the opportunity to speak on this subject.

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, today on the national day of remembrance and action to end violence against women I rise to extend the sympathies of my party to victims of violence across the country.

Six years ago 14 young women were brutally murdered at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal. That act of violence reverberated across the country. Its pure senselessness shocked us profoundly. It made us question the direction Canadian society was taking. It prompted the federal government to take action to deal with this issue at home and internationally.

As a society we must be committed to stopping violence against women both in and outside the home. We have to address the root causes of violence. As members of the House we must pass laws which will do that. Progress is being made on this front, but only continuing efforts involving each and every one of us on both sides of the House will change the attitudes which perpetuate violence.

To the families of the 14 young women whose lives were so brutally cut short six years ago today and to all those who have suffered because of violence, they are in our thoughts and in our prayers. It is not enough to have a policy of zero tolerance against violence. As legislators we must take concrete action so that women, indeed all Canadians, can lead their lives free from the fear of violence. We must try to find out what has happened in our society and what has changed in our society which brings about these brutal acts.

\* \* \*

• (1530)

[Translation]

#### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report from the Canadian section of the International Assembly of French Speaking Parliamentarians, together with the financial report concerning the twelfth session of the AIPLF Regional Assembly of America, held in Quebec City, July 12 to 14, 1995.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

##### HEALTH

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of reference received from the

House dated November 8, 1995, I have the honour to report on behalf of the chairman, the hon. member for Burin—St. George's, Bill C-95, an act to establish the Department of Health and to amend and repeal certain acts, with amendments.

[Translation]

Your committee referred the bill to a subcommittee. According to the standing committee's resolution dated November 7, 1995, and in anticipation of the order of the House, the report from the subcommittee was deemed adopted as the seventh report from the standing committee during yesterday's meeting.

[English]

Copies of the relevant minutes of proceedings and evidence of the subcommittee and the standing committee are also tabled.

##### HEALTH

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1) and 108(2), on behalf of the chair, the hon. member for Burin—St. George's, I have the honour to present the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Health entitled "A Study of National AIDS Strategy: Report of the Subcommittee on HIV-AIDS".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, we are asking for a government response to our report.

[Translation]

That sub-committee was created by the Standing Committee on Health in 1994. Its precise terms of reference were to study the spread of HIV, the prevention and the treatment of AIDS and the support for HIV carriers and AIDS sufferers, and to focus particularly on the role of poverty and discrimination in that situation.

The sub-committee has now completed the first phase of its work, that is a thorough review of the National AIDS Strategy. It held hearings from December 1994 to May 1995.

The report touches briefly on the epidemiology of HIV in Canada and around the world. It deals with the various elements of the strategy, the orientation, the coordination, the partnerships, the budget, community action, education and prevention, care and treatment, and finally, research. It contains several recommendations suggesting that the federal government increases its efforts in the fight against the AIDS epidemic.

[English]

Copies of the relevant minutes of proceedings of the subcommittee and the standing committee are also tabled.

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

## SRI LANKA

**Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition from 110 British Columbians, many of them from my riding of Vancouver East.

The petitioners draw the attention of Parliament to the continuing military offence in Sri Lanka and the arrest in Toronto of Mr. Manickavasagam Suresh.

The petitioners call on Parliament to ensure Canadian neutrality so that the national conflict in Sri Lanka is not jeopardized; to intervene immediately and release Mr. Suresh; to take action to lift economic embargo and press censorship in the north and east of Sri Lanka; to allow freedom of movement of the civilians in the north and east of Sri Lanka without fear, intimidation, and terror; and to resolve the conflict between the Tamil people and the Sri Lankan government through peaceful negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, the representative of the Tamil people.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today on behalf of the residents of Simcoe Centre.

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

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition involves section 718.2 of the Criminal Code.

The petitioners are concerned that naming some groups in legislation will exclude other groups from protection and that sentencing based on the concept of hatred is very subjective and will undermine our justice system.

• (1535)

## MILITIA

**Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting a petition asking the government to respect and maintain the historic significance of militia units in Canada. This particular petition comes from Brockville and of course they are referring specifically to the famed and historic Brockville Rifles.

Their feeling is that in the haste to streamline the role of Canada's forces, the militia will be looked upon as an easy target and something that can be done without much significance. However, I want to remind the government that very often in small communities that is the only federal presence that exists. Therefore, I would like to see it maintained and restructured or the role redefined. The petitioners understand that change is likely to happen, but they are not prepared to see it happen in such a way that there will no longer be reserves. It is a pleasure to present this petition.

The second petition I have contains 2,500 names and concerns the same topic of maintaining the Brockville Rifles, but it is lacking a little in form. I am using this method in bringing this concern to the public.

## BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

**Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions from constituents of Trinity—Spadina. The petitioners would like to see Parliament ban the use of BST in Canada and not accept dairy products from countries where BST is used to treat cattle.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 32(2)(b), because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 20 minutes.

## Government Orders

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## RECOGNITION OF QUEBEC AS A DISTINCT SOCIETY

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to government business Motion No. 26, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 391)

## YEAS

## Members

Alcock	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)	Bakopanos
Barnes	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bethel
Bevilacqua	Bhaduria
Blondin—Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Comuzzi
Cowling	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Discepolo
Dromisky	Duhamel
Dupuy	Easter
Eggleton	English
Finestone	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Fry	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gerrard	Godfrey
Graham	Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)
Grose	Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Irwin
Jackson	Jordan

Keyes	Kirkby
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	Lincoln
Loney	MacDonald
Maclaren	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKinnon
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)	McWhinney
Miffin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Nault
Nunziata	O'Brien
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Payne
Peric	Peters
Peterson	Phinney
Pillitteri	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Ringuette—Maltais	Robillard
Rock	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Serré	Shepherd
Sheridan	Simmons
Skoke	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Verran
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Wood
Young	Zed—146

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bachand
Bélisle	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Blaikie	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Bridgman
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud—Est)	Caron
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Cummins
Daviault	Deshaies
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Duncan
Epp	Fillion
Forseth	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Godin
Gouk	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Hanrahan	Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hart
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Jacob
Jennings	Johnston
Kerpan	Lalonde
Landry	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Manning
Marchand	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud—Ouest)
Ménard	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Nunez

Penson  
Plamondon  
Ringma  
Sauvageau  
Scott (Skeena)  
Solberg  
Speaker  
Stinson  
Taylor  
Tremblay (Rosemont)  
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)  
Williams—93

Picard (Drummond)  
Riis  
Rocheleau  
Schmidt  
Silye  
Solomon  
St-Laurent  
Strahl  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)  
Venne  
White (North Vancouver)

#### PAIRED MEMBERS

Bouchard  
Canuel  
Culbert  
de Savoye  
Dingwall  
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)  
Mercier  
Paré  
Robichaud

Brien  
Copp  
Dalphond—Guiral  
Debien  
Fewchuk  
Marleau  
Ouellet  
Pomerleau  
Robillard

• (1620)

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We just had a very important vote in the House of Commons. I do not know where the member for Sherbrooke is. I wonder if possibly we could—

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

\* \* \*

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

That, on Thursday, December 7, 1995, if any division is demanded with regard to any business pursuant to Standing Order 81, the said division shall be deferred until 6.30 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 1995; and

On Friday, December 8, 1995, notwithstanding the Order made Thursday, November 30, 1995, the putting of the question on any motion relating to the Business of Supply pursuant to Standing Order 81 shall be deferred until 6.30 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 1995.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that there is unanimous consent to agree to the following motion. I move:

That, during the debate on Government Business No 26 today, there shall be no quorum calls nor dilatory motions accepted by the Chair, and that at the expiry of the debate, the question then before the House shall be deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and accordingly deferred to 6.30 p.m. Monday, December 11, 1995.

#### Government Orders

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

[English]

#### RECOGNITION OF QUEBEC AS A DISTINCT SOCIETY

The House resumed from November 29 consideration of the motion.

• (1625)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Mr. Manning moves the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by adding immediately after the word “accordingly” the following:

“5. Nothing in this resolution shall:

(i) confer or be interpreted as conferring upon the legislature or government of Quebec, any new legislative or executive powers, proprietary rights, status, or any other rights or privileges not conferred on the legislature or government of any province;

(ii) diminish or be interpreted as diminishing in any way the rights and freedoms of any resident of Quebec;

(iii) deny or be interpreted as denying that Canada constitutes one nation”.

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, a point of order. I wish to invoke Standing Order 43(2). Liberal members will be sharing their time 10 minutes and 10 minutes for the rest of this debate.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I had prepared a speech, but I am going to have to leave half of it out, because something happened during question period which I find extremely important. But first, I would like to let you know that all Bloc members will speak for 10 minutes only.

Last Wednesday, when he tabled his motion, the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

—Quebec is a distinct society within Canada. As a Quebecer and a francophone, I understand and share the desire of my fellow Quebecers to have our difference recognized.

He was talking to the motion he had tabled in the House. The motion reads as follows:

That

Whereas the people of Quebec have expressed the desire for recognition of Quebec’s distinct society;

(1) the House recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada;

(2) the House recognize that Quebec’s distinct society includes its French-speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition;

This afternoon, during question period, I asked the Prime Minister if he was in agreement with his colleagues on the heritage committee who, for the past two weeks, have been coming strongly against the distinct society and Quebec culture. I asked the Prime minister if he believed that his colleagues had the right to state that there was only one culture in Canada, and

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that, from now on, Telefilm Canada should fund artists on the basis of their political obedience.

The Prime Minister rose in this House and said that in Canada, there was only one culture, a Canadian one, whether French or English. It would appear that, two weeks after tabling in the House a motion saying that we are distinct because of our unique culture, the Prime Minister has not understood his own motion, probably because it was written by a member of his staff. If our culture is unique, it is the Quebec culture since we are in Quebec, and that is what we are requesting.

Our culture is unique because it is French, because among other things our majority is French-speaking. But, today, the Prime Minister said: "No. There is only one culture and it is Canadian." You cannot have it both ways, either the Prime Minister does not understand the meaning of the motion or he understands very well and, for the first time this afternoon, when he rose in the House, he recognized that Quebec is not a people, that there is only one people and it is Canadian, English Canadian preferably. However, he allows us the privilege of expressing the English culture in French. This is the gist of what he said this afternoon.

Yet, when we passed the bill which created the Department of Canadian Heritage we asked that the government be responsible and acknowledge that there was a distinct society in Quebec. We repeated our request, we proposed amendments to recognize Quebec culture, but the Liberal government trivialized Quebec. It made its culture part of the Canadian melting pot, excluding it from its bill on culture and denying Quebec its very distinct existence, its fundamental right to express its difference.

• (1630)

During the last two weeks, the Liberal Party's representatives on the Heritage Standing Committee practically had allergic reactions every time they heard or met witnesses who financed artists or films.

Today, the Quebec people want to be recognized as a people and want the powers which go with it. On October 30, 49.5 per cent of Quebecers voted for a country of their own; the federal government is offering us an empty shell, which has only some value as a symbol, and we realized today that it is not even worth the paper it was written on two weeks ago.

Quebecers are a people. As early as 1766, the English government of Murray said that Quebecers, who were then called Canadians, were a brave and courageous people.

In 1791, the Constitutional Act divided Canada's territory into two colonies, in order to recognize the existence of two peoples on its territory. At that time, these two peoples were called the Canadian people, but they lived in Quebec, hence today's Quebecers, and the British people.

In 1839, Lord Durham, whom we cannot suspect of being a Quebec nationalist or of having a separatist frame of mind, came to the following conclusion in his report on the state of the colony, and I quote: "Problems in Lower Canada are not political or administrative in nature, but are the result of the forced co-existence of two distinct nations in the same state."

In 1905, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, an inveterate Liberal, said and I quote: "Every time I go back to my province, I am sad to see there is a feeling that Canada is not for all Canadians. We must come to the conclusion that Quebec is our only homeland."

In 1965, the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, whose work Prime Minister Trudeau hastened to wreck, released a preliminary report in which it noted that Canada was going through the most serious crisis in its history. The commission exposed in these terms the misunderstanding on which the Canadian crisis was based and is still based, and I quote: "[—] English people, many of whom were showing good will [—] did not understand [—] the profound leanings of so many Quebecers towards an increased autonomy and their growing belief that Quebec would become a distinct nation ruling its economic and social institutions."

Because English Canada still does not understand Quebec, the constitutional future is doomed and we will never be recognized as a people. According to the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, an essential requirement for Canada's survival is a real association that can only exist between equal partners.

In fact, this motion is totally in line with what Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon told the *Toronto Star* on April 27, and I quote:

[*English*]

"Quebec has to make its decision based on what I believe is the greatest country in the world and not look for us to change our country in order to make it more acceptable for them".

[*Translation*]

In fact, the Premier of Manitoba is telling us to either take Canada as it is or leave. That is why the Bloc Québécois is fundamentally opposed to the motion before us today, and our voting against it will surprise no one in Quebec. Quebec is no longer content with crumbs. Quebecers have risen, they are standing up with their heads held high. They are asserting themselves as a people who want to be recognized as such and they want to negotiate as equals.

In the wake of the Meech failure, Robert Bourassa said, and I quote: “Quebec is, today and forever, a distinct society that is free and capable of controlling its own destiny and development”.

• (1635)

At his party’s March 1991 convention, he convinced his colleagues to adopt the Allaire resolution, which read as follows: “The failure of the Meech Lake accord is a historic event. This failure has made it imperative for Canada to change. Above all, the Meech Lake accord failure occurred at a time in history when Quebec society has reached a level of maturity, openness and development allowing it to feel fully in control of its future. Undoubtedly, Quebec now has the means and resources needed to exercise its choices”.

Quebecers know that the Prime Minister’s proposal is empty. Today, they understand that the Prime Minister is incapable of quoting a single Quebec author. His references are strictly Canadian. Quebec will accept nothing less than to be recognized as a people with all the powers that this entails.

**Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. members of the Bloc Québécois are once more forgetting that the people of Quebec have reaffirmed their sense of belonging to this country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I am sorry to interrupt, but the table advises me that there will be no questions and comments since we are debating a special motion. The hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe will be sharing the member’s speaking time.

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak today on the Prime Minister’s motion to outline Quebec’s traditional demands and show that this motion of the Liberal Party of Canada is nothing more than a charade to water down the aspirations of the people of Quebec.

My remarks will be broken down into three parts, covering the last three decades. What happened during each of these three decades?

Thirty years ago, during the quiet revolution, a clear movement in favour of Quebec becoming a sovereign state and assuming sole responsibility over its social and economic policies developed in Quebec. This prompted the Quebec government to undertake discussions on the patriation of the Constitution, that is to say on a new division of powers and on an amending formula that would be acceptable to Quebec.

In 1964, the Fulton–Favreau formula restricted the federal government’s capability to act unilaterally, by requiring a majority of two thirds of the provinces to make substantive

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changes to federal institutions. This gave rise to widespread protest in Quebec.

In fact, the Fulton–Favreau formula was putting off negotiations on the substantive issue, namely the division of powers, to deal only with the technical aspect of the matter: the patriation of the Constitution.

The Quebec government then specified that any agreement concerning the patriation of the Constitution would be subject to a positive and satisfactory redistribution of powers. From then on, this will become a traditional demand. A new Constitution was to give the Government of Quebec the broadest powers possible on the basis of affirming the two–nation status of Canada in the country’s social, political and economic structures.

But Pierre Trudeau and the Liberal Party of Canada did not agree. Trudeau objected to policies based on Quebec as a nation. As part of the patriation process, they were intent on doing away with the Quebec rhetoric based on the concept of collective rights and with the fact that the French Canadian nation was becoming identified with the Quebec government.

At this stage of the negotiations to patriate the Canadian Constitution, the political thinking of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau is clear: Canadian federalism cannot, without jeopardizing its integrity, tolerate any constitutional asymmetry in the distribution and use of legislative powers.

Moreover, in Mr. Trudeau’s mind, there are essentially only citizens and their individual freedoms vis-à-vis the state. Consequently, the Quebec society must blend with the rest of Canada.

• (1640)

The Victoria charter marks the beginning of a second decade of negotiations and discussions to patriate the Constitution. The charter recognizes Quebec’s jurisdiction over social policies, but seeks to impose national standards. In a letter to the Prime Minister, in which he states his refusal to accept the Victoria charter, then Quebec premier Robert Bourassa writes: “Canadian federalism must be decentralized to reflect the diversity of the regions, and to allow the Quebec government to preserve the cultural future of its majority”.

In March 1976, Pierre Trudeau, who was still Prime Minister, writes in a letter addressed to all provincial premiers that if there is no unanimity, the federal government will have no choice but to decide whether or not to recommend to Parliament the patriation of the 1867 Constitutional Act.

The third decade of discussions and negotiations on the patriation of the BNA Act starts with the failure of the Quebec government to obtain a mandate to negotiate sovereignty–association with the rest of Canada, a concept which implies the national recognition of Quebecers, as well as a major redistribu-

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tion of constitutional powers, in favour of Quebec. As early as 1981, and in spite of having been re-elected, the Parti Québécois finds itself in an extremely vulnerable position vis-à-vis the federal government. A scathing answer came from the Liberal Party then in power in Ottawa. The Canadian Prime Minister took advantage of Quebec's vulnerability and proceeded with unilateral patriation of the Constitution.

On December 1, 1981, Quebec's legislature adopted a resolution opposing unilateral patriation of the Constitution. Thus, Quebec reaffirmed its will to entrench in the new Constitution the fundamental equality of the two founding peoples and as a natural consequence of its distinct society status, its extended and exclusive jurisdictions.

The "Canada Act", or the Constitution Act of 1982, was the temporary conclusion of a process which had been going on for over 20 years. The charter of rights and freedoms, enshrined in the new Constitution, is the very basis of the principle of a Canadian nation. It gives the central power unprecedented political influence, an unparalleled power of centralization.

We all know what happened next: the day Pierre Trudeau decided to unilaterally patriate the Constitution, the Liberal Party of Canada lost Quebec; since the 1984 election, it never could obtain more than a third of Quebecer's votes. From then on, it spoke mainly for Canada. The Conservative Party came to power in Ottawa and undertook to have the newly patriated Constitution signed by Quebec. More consultations were held between the premiers, which led to the Meech Lake accord in June 1987. A strong basis for negotiation was then laid out between Canada and Quebec since that accord has forced the courts, from the Supreme Court on down, to interpret the whole Constitution, including the charter of rights and freedoms, in light of the traditional claims of Quebec.

Once again, however, the Liberal Party of Canada was not prepared to accept that and did everything in its power to scuttle the 1987 accord. The current Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party made every effort, with the assistance of the hon. member for Sherbrooke, to water down the recognition of the distinct nature of Quebec. In English Canada, where the Meech Lake accord gave rise to much opposition, his voice was heard as being extremely effective in ruining any political basis needed for the accord to succeed.

The current Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party then reiterated his party's position: Canadian federalism cannot accept constitutional asymmetry without being substantially weakened, Quebec cannot be regarded as a nation and only individual rights are recognized by the charter of rights and freedoms, which is the only instrument for interpreting the Constitution and the status of the Quebec state.

• (1645)

Last week in the House, the leader of the Bloc Québécois described the rapprochement that was made in the late 80s between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party of Canada, a rapprochement which led to the Charest report, where the interpretative clause granted to Quebec in view of its distinct nature, as a state representing a nation, was formally denied.

The beginning of the third decade of talks and negotiations about the status of the province of Quebec in the Canadian Confederation, pursuant to a Constitution which Quebec never agreed on, is marked again by a toughening of Quebec's position. Since it obviously could not expect anything from English Canada, the Quebec government, largely supported by the voters, now favoured a clearly sovereignist option, as shown, first, by the emergence of the Bloc Québécois and the mass election of its members in Ottawa; second, by the almost total disappearance of the Conservative Party; third, by the failure of the Charlottetown accord; and lastly, by the election of the Parti Québécois in Quebec.

From then on Quebec would no longer get involved in endless and useless rounds of negotiations. The results of the second referendum on the sovereignty issue held in the province of Quebec occurred half-way through this third decade, recognizing the dazzling progress made by the sovereignty option in Quebec since the failure of Meech. Quebec is now heading towards its political sovereignty and nothing can make it go backwards. Certainly not this silly resolution which the Prime Minister of Canada introduced last week to urge the House of Commons to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. This is only a token recognition.

This very day, in the House of Commons, during question period, the Prime Minister himself denied the existence of a Quebec culture although his own resolution aims at recognizing it. He stated that there is only one culture in Canada, and that is the Canadian culture. We will vote against this resolution, which is as hypocritical as it can get.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the members of the House of Commons in the debate on the motion to recognize Quebec as a distinct society within Canada. In order to properly understand the true scope of what the Government of Canada is doing by proposing this resolution, it must be interpreted in the light of the October 30 vote.

Quebecers had two very clear things to tell us: they want to be recognized within Canada for what they are: a people with a French-speaking majority and a different and distinct culture. They also want to see profound changes made to the way the Canadian federation operates.



Of course, our government needs to respond to economic imperatives and to the necessity of ensuring the continuation of our social programs, and this requires new partnerships with the provinces. We must, however, also acknowledge the reality of Quebec's malaise, a malaise directly linked to the wounds of the past, the most severe of these being the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his reply to the Prime Minister's speech, has given us his version of the recent history of our country and the path it took through the constitutional to-ing and fro-ing. Allow me then to give you my version, that of a Quebecer with a totally different perspective. I was there when the Meech Lake Accord failed.

• (1650)

Unlike the Parti Québécois and a number of the Bloc members who voted against Meech, what I wanted, along with most of my fellow citizens, was for there to be recognition that Quebec is distinct, different, and it was my impression at the time that this country did not accept me for who and what I was.

[English]

However, I understood that it was not the country that was refusing to recognize me. It was not my fellow citizens who were not willing to recognize me. It was rather the very process of constitutional negotiations and of agreement ratification that led us to this dead end. This is why I wondered, is it necessary to break up my country just because we have difficulty agreeing on the process to be used?

The answer is clear to me. I believe it is possible to pursue the discussion and continue to build this prosperous country in an atmosphere of respect and generosity.

[Translation]

Like the majority of Quebecers, it is my firm belief that it is possible for us to reconcile two realities: our identity as Quebecers, of which we are extremely proud, and our identity as part of Canada.

I have always believed that these two realities are in no way mutually exclusive and that they do not in any way justify the destruction of a country built up by the generations before us with such effort and determination. That is what I defended then as a member of the Liberal government in Quebec, and that is what I defend now as a member of this Liberal government in Ottawa.

During the referendum campaign, the Prime Minister of Canada made commitments he is meeting today by recognizing that Quebec is a distinct society. To do so is to recognize history, our common history. To do so is to remember the origins of the Canada of 1867 which opted for a federal system designed to reconcile Quebec's right to be a distinct and provincial auto-

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my with the need to work together to build this vast country of ours that is Canada.

In a speech to the Quebec Legislative Assembly on November 24, 1871, Sir Wilfrid Laurier said, and I quote: "It is a historical fact that the federal system was adopted only to maintain the exceptional and unique position of the province of Quebec on the American continent".

Do not get me wrong. I am simply stressing that unlike those who believe that separation is the only way for Quebec to take its place within Canada, I am convinced we can deal with this matter in a different way, without breaking up the country.

The Leader of the Opposition may argue that distinct society is no longer an issue in Quebec but the fact remains that Quebecers earnestly want their distinctiveness to be recognized. This government understands that. Of course, some people would have preferred to see this recognition immediately entrenched in the Constitution, because the logical corollary of this recognition is its inclusion in the basic law of our country.

We would have preferred to do so now. However, the PQ government and the leader of the Bloc Québécois have already closed the door on any discussion. Nevertheless, by rejecting the proposal for Quebec's separation on October 30, Quebecers clearly gave their provincial government a mandate to work together with the Canadian government to find practical solutions and help Quebec develop its potential within the Canadian federation.

• (1655)

The government of Canada understood the message and presented, in an initial gesture of openness, the motion we are debating today in the House of Commons. We have met our commitment. The ball is now in the court of the Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois. By their stubborn refusal to consider any options for change, they are saying no to Quebecers. Make no mistake: whether the option selected to describe distinct society is Meech 1, Meech 2, Meech 3, Charlottetown 1, Charlottetown 2 or Charlottetown 3, the response of the leader of the Bloc Québécois was very clear: "I am a sovereigntist and I will never sign an agreement with the Canadian government".

The Leader of the Opposition often says Quebecers look to the past to justify their choice. I say to him today that Quebecers will also remember that the Bloc Québécois and its leader refused to vote for the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society in this House.

To recognize Quebec as a distinct society within Canada is a step in the right direction, as our federalist partners from Quebec acknowledged. It will provide the foundation for new, constructive relations with all our fellow Canadians. For once, the Parliament of Canada will be united. And when we have

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passed this motion, Parliament will have to consider the distinct identity of Quebec. For the first time, elected representatives of all Canadians will make a solemn and meaningful gesture towards the people of Quebec. As a Quebecer, I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the distinct identity of the people of Quebec, and I am proud to be a member of this government which will continue to work towards including this recognition of the Canadian Constitution.

Because the interests of Quebec and the interests of Canada as a whole are involved, I will vote in favour of this motion.

**Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this historic debate on the Prime Minister's motion to recognize Quebec as a distinct society by its language, its culture and its civil law tradition.

The motion we are now debating is one of three initiatives for change announced by the Prime Minister last week and which act on the commitments made during the referendum campaign in Quebec. In addition to recognizing Quebec as a distinct society within Canada, the federal government will henceforth grant a regional veto on all constitutional changes and pull out of manpower training.

These initiatives result from promises that the Prime Minister made to his fellow Quebecers during the referendum campaign, and particularly the great Montreal rally which brought together more than 150,000 people, including 500 from my riding of Simcoe-North and the neighbouring riding.

It is important to note that these initiatives are not the only measures the government has taken in response to Quebec's referendum, but they surely are an important step. Moreover, they are further proof that when the Prime Minister makes a promise to Canadians, he keeps his word.

During the referendum campaign, everybody was talking about the need for change, everybody said that, in the future, things should be done differently if our country were to remain united. However, I have the impression that the change the vast majority of politicians were referring to did not reflect what Quebecers want.

• (1700)

Indeed, when I was going from door to door during the referendum campaign, time and time again people told me that they wanted jobs, economic stability, a better future for their children, a good social climate, and so on. I can assure the House that the numerous Quebecers I met attach little importance to constitutional changes and to the squabbles that go with it.

In this regard, Quebecers are not very different from all other citizens of Canada. People from my riding of Simcoe-North express the same concerns. That is why I say that the commitment to change to which we should give a lot of importance is

the one the Canadian people, including Quebecers, want. This is why I am proud to be part of a government which, for two years now, has been tackling the real problems of the Canadian people, which are job creation and economic growth.

That being said, the proposals put forward by the Prime Minister are not without sound basis and legitimacy. The motion on distinct society is important because it recognizes an obvious historic fact and reassures Quebecers as to their place in our country. In fact, the concept of distinct society is not new, neither historically, nor constitutionally.

[English]

According to Professor Ramsay Cook, francophones in British North America and Canada developed early on a consciousness of their distinctiveness, both individually and collectively. The most obvious badge of that distinctiveness was language, while the civil code provided a legal foundation for difference.

The idea of distinctiveness is even recognized implicitly in the British North America Act of 1867. The mere fact of creating the province of Quebec was the beginning of acknowledging a distinct society within Canada. There are also explicit recognitions of this fact in the Constitution. For example, section 94 recognizes the civil law of Quebec as distinct. Section 133 made Quebec, alone among the original provinces, bilingual, and by doing so made French for the first time an official language of Canada.

The motion put forth by the Prime Minister is yet another explicit means to acknowledge Quebec's distinctiveness. Even though the distinct society resolution we are debating is not a constitutional resolution, it is important that it is a solemn commitment that sets out how the federal government, the only government in Canada that speaks for all Canadians, will conduct its affairs. In effect, it will indicate to all citizens and all federal government authorities that it is the will of the House of Commons that the distinct character of Quebec society be recognized once again within the Canadian federation.

I also want to assure all Canadians that the expression distinct society is not exhaustive by any means. Even though the motion simply notes that the distinct society includes some specific elements of Quebec, it does not exclude others. It does not exclude the fact that Quebec is a pluralistic and democratic society, that all its citizens are equal before the law, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or the Canadian Constitution.

This motion and the other measures announced by the Prime Minister are a significant first step in delivering on the promises he made during the referendum campaign. They are also an important bridge to the first ministers conference on the amending formula that is scheduled to take place in April 1997. Once these negotiations start we will have benefited from the

practical application of the distinct society motion and the veto bill.

The Prime Minister made it quite clear that these measures can some day be entrenched in the Constitution if it is the desire of the province of Quebec and other provinces to do so. However, the Government of Quebec has stated categorically that it does not want to participate in any constitutional discussions. Until this unreasonable position of the Parti Québécois government changes, we will not be able to incorporate these measures into the Constitution.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

I am convinced that the vast majority of Quebecers will view these initiatives in a favourable light. They will see that the Prime Minister is serious about making the changes they want.

Obviously, members of the Bloc Québécois and of the Parti Québécois will oppose these changes. The reason is simple: they are separatists. They have no intention of improving Confederation. Their only goal is to destroy Canada. As Jacques Parizeau said during the referendum campaign: "We do not want a distinct society, we want a country."

In spite of the intransigence of the Bloc Québécois and of the Parti Québécois, we will not let them prevent the adoption of these changes that are not of a constitutional nature, changes that the people of Quebec and the rest of Canada want.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Simcoe Centre.

I am pleased and I am also saddened to rise today and speak to government Motion No. 26, which seeks to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. It also gives me great pleasure to stand before my colleagues in the House today as a loyal Canadian and state why I am opposed to this motion.

Speaking here today, I hope to make clear my opposition to this motion from a historical, legal, and personal point of view. Along with Bill C-110, this motion constitutes the other half of the Liberal initiative to appease Quebec separatists in the wake of the disastrous handling of the October 30 referendum by the Liberal government. From a historical perspective, I must again note the saying, which has often been quoted in the House, that those who do not learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them. It would appear that history is not a subject the framers of this motion are even remotely acquainted with.

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For the benefit of those Liberal members who were not present in the Chamber last week for the debate on Bill C-110, I will say it again. If this motion were some grade B horror movie it would be dubbed "Son of Meech". This motion, or is it a rerun of a motion picture, is a doomed rehash of the Meech and Charlottetown packages which were ultimately rejected by Canadians. If they could be given a say on this motion it would be rejected outright as well.

I was not present during the Meech and Charlottetown debates, so I have waited several years to speak on this issue, but my remarks are as relevant now as they would have been in 1987 or 1992. This is when attempts similar to the one before us were made by the former Tory government.

Yes, Madam Speaker, and members on both sides of the House, "je me souviens". I remember the failures of those initiatives, even though the members across the way clearly do not. I also remember that a former prime minister and a government bloated with arrogance yet painfully thin on solution proposed essentially the same thing. I also remember what became of that government just one year later.

It is because people remember and have learned from history that I say confidently that this motion is unacceptable to Canadians.

From a legal point of view, this motion raises more questions than it answers. That would not necessarily be such a problem except that the Prime Minister will not answer any questions in regard to the meaning of that phrase distinct society. What does that mean?

• (1710)

This lack of openness by the Prime Minister only adds to the confusion. For example, does the motion confer additional powers on Quebec or not? If, as I suspect, it does or will with the passage of time give powers to Quebec that are not given to the other provinces, then clearly it must be opposed.

Also, is this motion the precursor for an attempt by the Prime Minister to entrench the notion of distinct society in the Constitution? If it is, as I suspect is the case, and the Prime Minister wishes to do so at the scheduled review of the Constitution in 1997, should Canadians not know this now? Let us have the government be forthright.

By extension, any entrenchment of distinct society as an interpretive clause in the Constitution will be unacceptable to Canadians for the same reasons it was back in 1992. Also, does the notion of distinct society in any way detract from the principle that all Canadians are equal? Here again the government will give us nothing but vagaries.

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By way of personal remarks I would like to share with members on both sides of the House the contents of a very insightful letter I recently received. The letter is from François Labrecque, a longtime resident of Quebec. I had the honour of meeting him while I was in Quebec City recently, and he wrote to me with his thoughts on this distinct society issue. He writes quite intuitively: "I am not sure the concept of distinct society should be presented as is. Instead of thinking of powers and rights with regard to distinct society, we should think in terms of responsibilities of individuals, groups, responsibilities of the people themselves and of their provinces to ensure that the distinct character is preserved".

He concludes in part that the Liberal Party approach is to provide distinct society status for Quebec and nothing for the other regions and provinces, which provokes negative sentiment in the rest of Canada and is clearly a divisive element.

This is a Quebecer I am quoting, who clearly understands the shortcomings of any distinct society proposal. Reformers would agree with his position.

For the benefit of those Liberal members who require further insight, no Canadian doubts that the language and culture of Quebec make it distinct. The language is dynamic, the culture is vibrant. These two characteristics alone will ensure its survival. That is why attempts to legalize or enshrine the concept in the Constitution are so insulting and offensive to many Quebecois.

The Liberals are asking Quebecers to adopt some siege mentality that claims their language and culture is weak and dying. Fortunately, Quebecers themselves know the exact opposite to be true and realize that assuming responsibilities in key areas will allow Quebec's distinctiveness to be maintained.

From a personal point of view, I watched as the Prime Minister tabled this motion in the House last week on November 27. At the time I could not help but feel that my birthright as a Canadian was being sold for the sake of a deal. I cannot understand how a government that professes to be so dedicated to the concept of equality can advocate something that so detracts from this principle. Then again after seeing Bill C-64, the government's racial quota bill, I should not really be all that surprised.

• (1715)

I ask members of the House to contemplate the concept of equality as they consider the consequences the motion will have on the equality rights of all Canadians.

I cannot support the government's motion to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. There is no safeguard to ensure that the motion will not be used to further the goal of Quebec nationalists. There is no assurance the motion will not be used to confer additional powers on the legislature of Quebec. It offers no

guarantee that individual rights will not be made subservient to collective rights. It affords no protection to the minority population of the province.

The leader of the Reform Party has put forward an amendment that would address many of the concerns I have raised. It is my hope that when it is put to a vote members opposite will support it. To do otherwise and to adopt the government's motion as it would be to characterize some Canadians as distinct and some as second class citizens.

Unless the amended motion is adopted by the House I serve notice of my intent to vote against the motion as put forward by the government.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak against the motion to recognize Quebec as a distinct society. We are talking about a promise or a commitment and I will talk about some promises and commitments that have been made.

I will start with a promise that was made in the eleventh hour. It is a reluctant promise. It is a promise that was made in panic and desperation. It is a promise that had to be made because the government was out of touch with the people of Quebec. It is a promise that was made with no reflection on the past or no vision of the future. It is a promise that is out of touch with Canadians as a whole. As a matter of fact 55 per cent of Canadians outside Quebec oppose the recognition of a distinct society.

We are trying to bring in a promise the Canadian people already rejected at the front door. I am talking about Meech Lake and Charlottetown. The Canadian people had a say and they rejected the concept of a distinct society. Yet here we are trying to bring it in through the back door, top down, with no consultation. The government has imposed closure to push it through. The attitude is that it knows best what the people of Canada want. This is a Quebec promise, not a Canada promise.

In October 1993 there was a cry for change in the country from both inside and outside Quebec. The message I heard in October 1993 was that Canadians were worried. They were concerned. The response of the government since the election has been don't worry, be happy. After two years of blissful ignorance and a do nothing approach we almost lost the country on Monday night, October 30.

It is interesting that during the referendum the separatists had 30 days to spread their unchallenged version. The destroyers of Canada were given 30 days to get their message out. The government brings in closure so that we who want to speak for Canada, to get the Canada agenda out, are given 30 hours. We have 30 hours to debate what is probably one of the most significant motions before the House in the two years we have been here.

So much for open government. So much for government responding to the voters. We should not be surprised. This is the government that actually had to appoint candidates because it did not have confidence in the Canadian voters to select the right candidates. This is the government that shows its so-called true concern for the democratic process. This is the government that has shown its arrogance time and time again in the two years we have been here, with the rebuke of government members who stood to speak against gun control.

• (1720)

We were dealing with a promise of desperation. Let us now deal with some promises or commitments that have been made to the Canadian people. What about the promise of jobs, jobs, jobs? Two years ago we heard about jobs, jobs, jobs, and today we have an unemployment rate of 9.4 per cent. In the month of November, 44,000 jobs were lost in Canada. Where are those jobs? What happened to the much heralded infrastructure program that was to kickstart the economy and create jobs? It was another failure. All it did was put us \$6 billion deeper in debt with no jobs. Now we have a cabinet committee looking at the job creation problem.

It is also interesting that the only jobs we have right now are because of free trade. This is a government that opposed free trade, but it is a pleasure to stand today and recognize the jobs that free trade created.

What about the promises of dealing with the deficit? Nothing has been done in two years in spite of warnings from Moody's and the IMF. Government members were shooting the messenger when Moody's warned the finance minister that he was not going far enough in dealing with the deficit. We have since learned that the IMF has issued the same warning to the government, that it has not been serious in attacking the deficit and that Canada is in great jeopardy.

What about tax relief? Smokers are the only ones I know that received any tax relief from the government because it gave in to the smugglers. Canadians as a whole have not had any tax relief. Canadians who drive cars are paying additional taxes which they can ill afford, although there was a commitment to tax relief.

The statement in the red book on criminal justice was that fighting crime and violence required tough measures. We have not seen tough measures. Tough measures are lacking. We still have section 745 of the Criminal Code that allows those convicted of first degree murder back on the streets after 15 years and we still have no victims' rights.

The government has not addressed the issue of political reform. We all experienced the level of cynicism and mistrust out there between the voters and the politicians. It still has not addressed the problem. It has done nothing about recall. As a matter of fact a private member's bill on recall was defeated in

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the House. The government does not believe in referenda, in letting Canadians have a say on major issues that affect their lives.

The GST was to be replaced. In two years it has done nothing about the GST. The Deputy Prime Minister was to resign if the issue was not dealt with in two years. The last time I looked she was still in the House of Commons.

I am highlighting these promises because they were made to all Canadians. If these promises had been kept, they would have gone a long way to addressing the unity crisis we face in the country. The people of Quebec are just as concerned as the people of Ontario and the people of B.C. about the fact that we have a government that is not getting its spending under control, that is not dealing with the criminal justice system, that does not respond to victims and that is not responding to elected politicians who represent the people in their ridings.

We could see the people of Quebec during the referendum looking at Ottawa and asking: "Could it be any worse if we went on our own?" They were looking at a federal government that is failing to deal with the major problems of the country. It is conceivable some of them could very well have said to themselves: "Why not leave? What we are looking at in Ottawa is a situation that is taking us deeper and deeper into debt. There is no indication they have learned from the past and will do anything about it".

It is evident we have not learned anything from the past. I recall the *b* and *b* commission that originated back in 1965. It was to deal with the greatest crisis in the country. I supported that in 1965 because I thought it would address the unity problems we were having and would bring the country together.

After 30 years it has been an utter and complete failure. All the government has to do now is look across the aisle and staring it in the face are 53 members of Parliament elected from Quebec to tear the country apart, living testimonial to the failed policies of the past, the status quo.

There is no question we must change. That was the message in October 1993. I am proud to say Reformers put forward 20 positive proposals for change that had strong support both inside and outside Quebec.

• (1725)

The 20 proposals for change did not require opening up the Constitution. They could have been done by a willing government. We saw it as a win-win situation. It was to go a long way to keeping our country united. It was to go a long way to addressing our overspending because many of the changes dealt with a realignment of powers, decentralization, eliminating duplication and bringing governments closer to the people they were serving.

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We also missed the message in the Spicer commission report. The Spicer commission criss-crossed Canada and spoke to over 400,000 Canadians, 300,000 elementary and secondary school students. In the report there was strong support for equality of provinces and of people. There was also strong support for the recognition of Quebec's differences, but there was little support for two-tier citizenship. That is what the bill is dealing with.

During our break in November I held a series of town hall meetings across my riding. I wanted to get the feel of the people about the situation we would be dealing with, the possibility of another referendum or the possibility of recognizing Quebec as a distinct society.

I supplied the people at the meetings with a questionnaire. At the end of the meeting I asked them to answer this question: Would you support distinct society status for the province of Quebec if it meant granting special powers not available to the other provinces? Ninety-eight per cent of those who responded to the questionnaire said no to any special status in recognizing the province of Quebec.

It is time the government stood up to the separatists and called their bluff. It is time to stand up for Canada and speak for Canada as a whole.

This country is a great country. It can only continue to be a great country if it is based on equal provinces and equal citizens. I call on all members of the government to oppose recognition of one province. Otherwise they are destroying our great country, the country our children and grandchildren are looking forward to.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is there unanimous consent to call it 5.30 p.m. and proceed to Private Members' Business?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

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

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

### POLITICAL PARTY FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre, Lib.):** moves:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reviewing and reforming funding for political parties.

He said: Madam Speaker, the present system of financial contributions to political parties contains deficiencies that must be dealt with. All too often, we hear people say that large

companies run the country and that they are the ones who can benefit the most from their financial support for political parties. This is a commonly held view.

As we know, such a notion is very harmful to democracy and that is why I believe it is necessary to consider possible changes.

According to data obtained for the four last years, including the election campaign of 1993, the existing system costs the state some 30 millions dollars annually. Of course, I have all this information at hand.

Since taxpayers have to pay for the system one way or another, we propose the following solution: the state should contribute one dollar for every individual. This way, democracy would be better served.

This solution has many advantages. I will give you a few examples. Such a system would be the most democratic form of funding for political parties. Of course, every one would be equal. Members of Parliament would no longer have to collect funds for general elections. As we all know, this requires a lot of time and effort, and political parties themselves have to spend money to organize public fundraising.

The cost to the state would actually be lower, because the figures I quoted were very conservative. I have indeed demonstrated that the government would pay less in such a system.

This will put to rest the public perception that this is a slush fund, because it is not good for the public to believe such a thing. Politicians or parliamentarians would not owe anyone anything.

Time has come to review the system to ensure the proper functioning of democracy, so that we can, once and for all, be free to do our job without having our hands tied.

[English]

The democratic principle demands that every citizen be accorded complete equality by the process which selects the people's representatives. Canada's present electoral system violates this principle in a fundamental way, for it is privately financed.

When private interests are involved in party financing the political process deteriorates into a mere approximation of democracy. The participation of corporations, unions and private individuals in the political process obviously is inevitable and indispensable in many ways but should in no way include the financing of political parties.

In my view the repair of this structural failure is of paramount importance. Any country which claims serious adherence to democratic ideals should publicly finance its political parties by a mechanism which directly relates their financial support to their political support.

After looking at this present system and then at individual financing options I present an inexpensive and flexible public financing mechanism. Here are at least three objectives. The

present financing of political parties makes a mockery of the cornerstone of our democracy that every citizen should be accorded complete equality by the process which selects the people's representatives. It allows private organizations which have no right to vote at all to indirectly cast hundreds of ballots by financial support to a particular political party.

It restricts flexibility on policy issues since political parties must give greater consideration to the largest supporters. This is incompatible with the concept of a truly representative democracy. Political parties should be solely responsible to their members and obviously to the public.

Shareholders of corporations and members of unions do not necessarily support donations made on their behalf. Party financing by private organizations is a clear distortion of the democratic process. However, in a free and democratic society private individuals should have the right to contribute their own personal funds to the party of their choice.

That sounds logical. Nevertheless there are at least three fundamental objections to this option. It would require political parties to spend a greatly increased and inordinate amount of their time in fundraising. This is an inappropriate role for the people's representatives and also is inefficient.

The proper function of a political party is to structure policy, not fundraising. It does not address the primary inequity. Any privately financed democracy, whether financed by private organizations or by private individuals, will have its fundamentally democratic factor distorted. This situation is abnormal and unacceptable in our system. It simply cannot be protected from abuse.

In the United States it is common practice for every member of a corporation's top management to simultaneously contribute to a party or candidate the maximum donation allowed by an individual, thereby in effect making a corporate donation.

• (1735)

The argument for individual financing is an incorrect generalization of the principle that in a free and democratic society each individual should have the right to support the party of his or her choice. This right is inalienable but should not extend to the use of personal wealth. The right to support the party of our choice includes the right to vote for the party of our choice and to work for the party of our choice. However, merely signing a cheque seems too easy and unfair to those who do not have any great amount of money to contribute.

The mechanism is very simple. I will outline a simple, flexible and inexpensive democratic public financing mechanism that will certainly make the system much more fair and equitable.

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We would eliminate all private financing of political parties; establish a party financing fund by an annual allocation of \$1 per voter from general revenues; distribute a portion of the fund among the registered political parties proportional to popular vote; distribute the other portion of the fund among the registered political parties in existence.

The cost is negligible. One dollar per voter per year is a small amount for the support of a democratic election. Furthermore, the annual cost to the treasury would actually be less than what it is today, less than the \$30 million that it costs. The method of the distribution is flexible and democratic.

The distribution of the first part of the fund by proportional vote directly ties financial support to political support, ensuring that parties with greater political support receive greater financial support.

The distribution of the second part of the fund equally provides a counterbalance that moderates the effect of large majorities, ensuring that parties with less support receive sufficient funds to effectively communicate the policies to the citizenry.

[*Translation*]

In closing, some obvious conclusions come to mind. Public funding is the only truly democratic way of financing political parties. At present, political party funding is a mix of personal tax credits, corporate tax deductions and contributions made by the government to each candidate who gets at least 15 per cent of the vote in an election.

Public financing will force political parties to account for the use made of their funds. Political party funding will spare the political parties the need to raise funds, which is very time and energy consuming. This way, political parties can devote their time to developing policies. Finally, it will greatly improve the way the public perceives politicians, political parties and politics.

This is basically what I had to say about the need to make changes in our political system with respect to funding of political parties. If any other member wishes to comment on this, I will welcome their comments, and if they have questions to put to me, I will gladly answer them.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the hon. member's motion. At the same time, I regret having to do so because if this hon. member of the government feels the need to table such a motion, it is because his own government has failed to honour its red book commitments, the commitments it made in the last election campaign.

There is no cause for alarm, however. If the hon. member looks carefully at the government's record of the past two years,

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he will see that it has broken all its commitments, whether they have to do with social programs, defence policy or the red book.

• (1740)

The fact that a Liberal backbencher has to remind his own government that it had promised to thoroughly review political party funding shows how lightly this government takes its election commitments.

In the matter under consideration, the red book promises to restore voters' confidence, promote integrity in political institutions, and limit conflicts of interest and influence peddling through an in-depth review of political party funding.

This wish is reflected in the motion. Except that, in March 1994, I launched a debate that made it to third reading, a private member's motion saying that political parties ought to be funded by the public, that they should only be funded by people who have the right to vote, which would exclude institutions, corporations, unions, non-profit and for-profit associations.

Although this would be a guarantee of democracy and openness, the vast majority of the hon. member's fellow Liberals voted against it, because their party is no different from the one it replaced. As they say in Quebec, they must look after their buddies after the election. They must return the favour to the big engineering and architectural firms, to the big banking institutions for funding them and helping them get elected.

In this respect as in many others, the government has refused to honour its commitments by enacting bills or amending existing legislation.

The motion before us is nothing but wishful thinking. What is wishful thinking? Decisions that have not been implemented in practice. The hon. member's motion is nothing but wishful thinking. He knows full well that his government is not interested in changing the system, because, like the Conservative government, it is financed to a very large extent by multinationals and private interests.

His motion should have proposed a concrete measure, instead of saying "the government should consider the advisability of reviewing and reforming funding for political parties". It should have said: "We will change this or that to the funding of political parties, for example by authorizing public financing, that is by allowing contributions only from those who have the right to vote. That would have been a concrete measure, instead of merely expressing an interest to reconsider the existing system. The member acts exactly like the Conservative government did when it tried to distance itself from its 1988 election commitment.

At the time, Prime Minister Mulroney pledged, one week before the election, to implement public financing for political

parties. I remember seeing a front page article in *La Presse*. But what did he do after that? He set up a committee, the Lortie commission, which cost \$20 million and produced a report with recommendations that were taken into consideration neither by the Conservative, nor by the Liberal governments.

If you want the true solution to the problem of political party funding, look at how things are done in Quebec. But let us be honest and recognize that some steps were made in the last 20 years, such as the granting of a tax credit. Twenty years ago, 95 per cent of the financing came from companies. The tax credit currently granted to corporations and to individuals has resulted in a 40 per cent drop in contributions made by corporations. This is a first step. Some provinces also took action to limit interference in the government machinery associated with political contributions. All political parties talk about bringing in reforms, but no one takes concrete action. The Liberal party reminds us of those old parties.

• (1745)

Let us not forget also that putting the funding of political parties in order is in line with the Criminal Code. Section 121 of the Criminal Code clearly states that it is an offence to attempt to obtain a special privilege in return for a financial contribution. A good many departments must be nervous about certain contributions.

Reforming political fundraising is not only in keeping with the Criminal Code, it also reflects the public's desire for openness and transparency. Voters now want the people they elect to Ottawa to know whom they are there to serve. They want their elected representatives there to serve the common good and not the interests of a privileged few. They want the individual who has contributed \$20 to be shown as much respect by elected members as the company that contributed \$50,000.

They also want funds to be collected according to clearly defined standards and used to serve all, not a privileged few. This is a way to perpetuate our democracy in the face of huge multinationals and rich backers of political parties.

By putting grassroots fundraising at the service of democracy and the political parties, we put the focus on the voter. We also force the parties to come closer to the voters and to care about their needs, since they are the ones who will be providing our funds.

More value will be assigned to membership in a political party. It also develops a feeling of pride in belonging to a political party they help to finance. It also increases the democratic vigour of a society and forces the party to decentralize its decision making. As we come closer to achieving grassroots financing, democracy as it is experienced in Quebec and Canada becomes a great and noble undertaking that starts reflecting the true meaning of democracy and openness.



*Private Members' Business*

To conclude, I think the following puts it in a nutshell: tell me by whom you are financed and I will tell you whom you serve. That is more or less what we can learn from this discussion on the motion before the House today.

I also wish to pay tribute to the hon. member who within his own party, had the courage to realize the extent to which his party and the traditional party system are at the beck and call of certain corporations and privileged contributors instead of being there to serve all citizens.

His suggestion that \$1 be contributed per voter to the existing parties, a proposal inspired by a professor from New Brunswick, is admirable but would prevent the creation of new political parties. For instance, could the Reform Party or the Bloc Québécois, two parties that appeared on the political scene at the last election, have been born without this contribution?

My point is that, by helping to maintain existing parties, government financing might prevent other ideas, structures and political groups from developing. So feelings are mixed about this suggestion that raises many concerns.

Nevertheless, I hope that discussing these issues may help the Liberal Party understand that, even within its own ranks, some drastic changes are in order. And they will have to come in the form of grassroots financing of political parties.

[English]

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, when I look at Motion No. 367 I could certainly agree in a general sense with the thrust of the motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reviewing and reforming funding for political parties.

• (1750)

The only problem I have with the wording is it is a little vague. It says "consider the advisability of". It is a pity the member had not worded his motion "that in the opinion of this House the government should review and reform funding for political parties". That would have been a lot clearer and a bit more forceful in its thrust.

I see that the motion is non-votable and it reminds me that this one hour of debate is fairly meaningless. I wish for the hon. member's sake that it could be a votable motion so that at least members could express their opinions on this issue.

I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to make this motion votable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. White (North Vancouver):** Madam Speaker, this is absolutely amazing. The member's own colleagues are denying him the right to have a votable motion. The member spent some time talking about the importance of democracy in political parties and he cannot even get the consent of his colleagues to allow a vote on that motion in the House. It is certainly a symptom of the way the government runs its affairs.

In a general sense I agree with the motion. I would like to read the Reform Party policy on funding of political parties. The blue book policy which was developed and passed by our members it says: "The Reform Party opposes any assistance to political parties and political lobbies from public funds, including any refund of candidate or party expenses, government advertising during the electoral period, the renting of parliamentary staff for reimbursement, tax credits for contributions to federal political parties and the transfer of tax credits to leadership campaigns, to nomination campaigns or to parties at the provincial or municipal level".

It can be seen that we have a rather comprehensive policy. It stems from the way that we had to build our party.

I heard the hon. member from the Bloc talking about the difficulty of building a new party. We had to build our party from the ground up, from nothing, with not a single cent. I was there almost from the beginning, from late 1987. In fact, one of the people who is now on my executive committee in the riding association was one of the original signatories to the charter of the Reform Party.

We had to raise money by having bake sales, by having garage sales, by walking door to door asking for \$10 here and \$1 there. It was worth it. It is tremendously fulfilling to be able to build a party that way. If something is not worth working for, it is not worth having.

In that respect I disagree with the member's position that the state should fund parties because it is unfair to people who cannot afford to contribute. If it is not worth working for, it is not worth having.

Even though the Reform Party and even the Bloc started from way behind with tremendous disadvantages, it is tremendously fulfilling to be able to build a party from the ground up.

The hon. member stated that the present system is unfair to people who cannot afford to contribute. No, it is not. People who cannot afford to contribute can work as volunteers and help. Perhaps they can even be fund raisers. I do not think the present system is unfair at all.

Although the hon. member for Gatineau has a formula which he claims would be democratic and fair, when I look at his formula I see that there is a component that would give an equal amount of money to each party but then there is a component that gives some money based on the share of the vote in the previous election. Obviously that is an unfair advantage to the

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party that is in power. That is not reflected in a democratic way of the support levels at the time of the next election. That is a major flaw in the approach that has been proposed by the member from Gatineau. All that does is give the government side an advantage so it can spin its propaganda and cover up its lack of interest in the political will of the people between elections.

• (1755)

The government very clearly demonstrates it has no interest in the people's opinions between elections. I do not think it is going to take this member's motion seriously because it is simply not interested in getting the public involved.

It was obvious when members opposite refused to make this motion votable that they were not interested in democracy at all. If they were interested in democracy, they would take notice of people and their opinions on the Young Offenders Act. They have done nothing to make it more effective.

If you ask people anywhere in the country if their streets are safer than they were two years ago when the government was elected, they say no. All the polls indicate that people sense that things are much more dangerous than they were then.

On Indian land claims, the government does not give a darn what B.C. MPs have stated about what is happening in B.C. They simply do not care what the people of B.C. think. We could talk about the employment equity bill and the way that was forced through the House and the lack of democracy in the way the government works.

Frankly, I often tell my constituents that if members came here just once a year for 15 minutes, put all the bills for the year on the table and took one vote, the outcome would be exactly the same. This is a place of parties, rather than—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Could I ask the hon. member about the relevance of his comments to the private member's bill.

**Mr. White (North Vancouver):** Madam Speaker, what I am trying to relate it to is the fact that the member opposite wants to institute some sort of democratic support of parties. I am trying to point out that the government side is not interested in anything democratic. Its members will not vote for the motion. They will not allow it to be voted on because they are not interested in democracy. They want to pursue their political agenda, their party agenda.

If Madam Speaker would feel more comfortable with my getting more closely aligned to the motion, I am certainly prepared to do so.

I support the idea that the government should review and reform the funding for political parties, but not along the lines suggested by the member. I would rather see the House get involved in the Reform Party proposal, which is to make the support of political parties depend entirely on the money they can raise from the people they purport to represent.

After all, political parties are nothing more than special interest groups. At the moment, political parties are special interest groups that have a special advantage because the donations they receive are tax deductible with a premium. They are much better than the tax deductibility for any other type of charity or special interest.

The politicians of the past have chosen to give themselves an advantage over everybody else who has to raise money from the public. Members of the Reform Party feel that the political parties should have to raise their money from the people they purport to represent and that the money should not be tax deductible. It should be truly money that is given in support of that party.

As I said earlier, if it is not worth working for something, it is not worth having. It is certainly worth working to build a political party.

Reform also disagrees with the idea that these election rebates go back to candidates and parties. All it does is perpetuate the public paying for special interest groups that they may not have any interest in supporting whatsoever. Clearly this is anti-democratic, not democratic, as the member would like us to believe.

In summing up, I would like to repeat one more time the Reform Party's position on this type of motion. I will read that policy one more time.

The Reform Party opposes any assistance to political parties and political lobbies from public funds, including any refund of candidate or party expenses, government advertising during the electoral period, the renting of parliamentary staff for reimbursement, tax credits for contributions to federal political parties and the transfer of tax credits to leadership campaigns, to nomination campaigns or to parties at the provincial or municipal levels.

• (1800)

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre for bringing this motion before the House for debate. It is a useful topic for debate and I am glad we have this opportunity for discussion.

However, listening to the hon. member for North Vancouver, it was one of the most extraordinary things I have heard in a while. He came out with this policy of the Reform Party which is

another case of do as I say but not as I do policies Reform spouts so often in the House.

We all know that during the last election the members of the Reform Party scooped their hands into the public till. Although they abhor the idea of public financing of elections, they all applied for the rebate they were entitled to get from the federal government. Then their party applied for its 22.5 per cent reimbursement which it is entitled to get from the federal treasury. The members had no reluctance about going after that money to the best of my recollection.

Now they say their policy is they will not take that kind of money. Yet according to the rumours I hear they have fundraisers from time to time. They issue tax receipts for those fundraisers the way other parties do even though they say their policy is they do not do that.

They say that is their policy but they do exactly the opposite. They do as much as any other party does to take advantage of the laws of Canada that give political parties advantage. Frankly, they ought to do that but not if they are saying their policy is different. It is what I would call hypocrisy, but I think it unparliamentary for me to say that a member of the House is hypocritical or a hypocrite. I would not do that. However, the Reform Party policy is very hypocritical on this matter.

Those members use the money in the most unorthodox ways like paying suit allowances of \$30,000 a year to their leader so he can be properly dressed while he gives up the publicly paid car.

**Mr. White (North Vancouver):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to know what this has to do with the motion before the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I am sure the hon. parliamentary secretary is getting to the point. We will not have to wait much longer.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, indeed we will not because I am talking about electoral financing, which is what the motion concerns. The hon. member may have missed the point since he got on about young offenders and so on. I am trying to address my remarks to the subject matter of the motion which is, after all, electoral financing, but that may have escaped him. His remarks seemed to be all over the place.

The other thing he should know is his colleague and our very good friend, the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest, introduced a bill dealing with electoral financing which is currently being studied by the procedure and House affairs committee which I have the honour to chair. I know the bill is going to come up next Tuesday. It is going back on the agenda for consideration in the committee.

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Does this bill abolish public financing of parties? No, it does not. It eliminates funding for parties that get less than a certain percentage of the vote but it will continue it for everybody else. I believe there has been some agreement reached between the hon. member and members of the other parties which improves the situation somewhat. However, I do not know what the final result is and I would not presume to discuss the final details of the bill not knowing them.

I think the hon. member for North Vancouver ought to be aware that the policy of his party which he spouted with such apparent sincerity is being ignored quite blissfully by the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest in the bill he has presented to Parliament and which now he is pressing my committee to report back to the House on so he can pass it.

I hope the hon. member for North Vancouver is here in the House to support his colleague's bill when it comes to a vote. It is a votable item and he will have that privilege. I am looking forward to seeing what he says because here he reads the policy on the one hand and he will get a chance to vote for the policy by voting against his friend's bill. We will see what happens then.

The Liberals on my committee are supporting the bill as are the members of the Bloc Québécois. They have good sense. The hon. member for North Vancouver would do well to learn from his colleague, the member for Edmonton Southwest, and scrap the ridiculous policy he says his party members have voted in. I find it quite extraordinary. Let me turn to the motion before the House.

• (1805 )

The Canada Elections Act provides for the reimbursement of a portion of election expenses incurred by registered political parties. Specifically, a registered party is entitled to a reimbursement of 22.5 per cent of the expenses declared in its return provided it spends at least 10 per cent of the election limit.

Some of us have criticized this because we feel it encourages parties to spend money in order to collect the reimbursement. If they do not spend up to 10 per cent of the expenditure limit they do not get any reimbursement. Therefore they must spend like crazy to get there. It can be a fairly substantial limit, as hon. members know. They then get back 22.5 per cent of their expenses so that once they hit the limit it is basically a 75 cent dollar they have put out.

There is no limit on the amount that can be contributed to a registered political party but there is a limit on the amount that can be spent.

The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing recommended that registered parties receive at least 1 per cent of the votes cast in an election before they are entitled to any reimbursement and then receive 60 cents per vote received for a maximum of 50 per cent of election expenses. They could not get more than 50 per cent of their expenses back under this system.

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In the last Parliament we had a special committee on electoral reform which considered the matter but did not agree with the Lortie recommendation. I was a member of that committee. I believe I am the only one left in the House. The others have moved on to other things.

We reviewed the report and recommended that the 10 per cent expenditure requirement be applied to a party's direct election expenses and that the rate of reimbursement be increased to 25 per cent of direct expenses, a very modest change from the present law.

I do not mind saying the reason we could not agree on anything else was that we ran into a stone wall with the Conservative majority, which saw that its electoral chances were failing. Those members realized that if they went to a 60 cent per vote arrangement, as recommended by the Lortie commission, they would get very little money if their vote fell out the bottom, as the polls at that time indicated they would. That is exactly what happened. Had we had that rule in place the Conservative Party would have been worse than bankrupt. It is in trouble now but it would have been much worse; the rule significantly helped it in the last election.

The hon. member for Edmonton Southwest has proposed a bill that would eliminate reimbursement for parties that gain less than 2 per cent of the national vote. He is going to change that because he has received agreement from the other parties to make changes. I do not know what the changes are so I do not want to go on about his bill.

Now we have a proposal from the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre. I am sure the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest, being a generous spirited individual, has looked at other possibilities. I know he has because he has had suggestions made to him in the course of the committee proceedings where he had the advantage of hearing from other members. He said that all makes sense, let us make some more changes. He is making more changes and I commend him for that. I am looking forward to seeing the bill in its possibly final form when it rolls out of the committee possibly next week. If that happens we will all have the benefit of that and perhaps it will make the motion of the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre unnecessary.

However, we are dealing with his motion today. It is not a votable motion despite the efforts of the hon. member for North Vancouver and so we will have to deal with it as it stands. We will have a discussion about it and then go on to something else.

The hon. members opposite, although genuine in their desire for reform, do not agree on how they should go about it. They are making efforts to raise the level of debate by discussing these things and I respect that, particularly by the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest. It looks to me as though he has a speech coming up and I am looking forward to hearing his remarks.

The point is how to solve this problem. I do not know the answer but I do think the Lortie commission report is worth looking at again. The point of it was to ensure parties get reimbursed based on the number of votes they receive. Another possibility is to have a pot such as that suggested by the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre and have a fixed amount of money available in accordance with the limits on election spending and then divide the fixed amount among the parties that participate in the election based on the number of votes they receive.

I believe there is general agreement that no party should get more than 50 per cent of its expenses reimbursed so that it would prevent some party that won more than half of the vote from getting more than half the money available. That strikes me as fair and reasonable.

However, I do not think that is what has been put forward today and we need to look at that kind of proposal in greater detail. We need to look at it with respect to the charter of rights and freedoms because, as we know, there have been challenges to the expenditure limits on parties and on others, third parties in particular not participating in elections.

All those issues will concern the procedure and House affairs committee as it undertakes the review of the Canada Elections Act, which I hope it will be doing soon. No doubt at that time it will consider the very worthwhile proposal put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would, first off, like to pay tribute to the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre for tabling this motion. Although very timid for a party like the Bloc Québécois, the motion is revolutionary for the Liberal Party of Canada.

For the benefit of those watching us, I will take the liberty of rereading the motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of reviewing and reforming funding for political parties.

It is very little. In fact, it is almost lip service. However, when I looked in the May 6, 1994, issue of *Hansard*, I found words, in the context of a similar debate, that were quite surprising coming from a federal Liberal. I will quote some of them.

He said: "I maintain, and I am not the only one, that the way political parties are funded leaves much to be desired". A certain former prime minister currently under investigation is suing the Government of Canada. If we had a good policy on funding political parties in this country, I am sure this sort of situation would not arise.

For over two years now, Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting in your company in this place. The people in my riding claim my salary is high. But, for me to become a millionaire in politics, someone will have to augment my monthly income.

And yet, I know people who have done nothing but politics and who are said to be millionaires tens of times over. They probably know how to manage their pay better than I do.

I would, however, like to quote in passing a few extracts from the speech by my colleague for Gatineau—La Lièvre. I remind you that he went to the right school, my colleague for Gatineau—La Lièvre, because he sat in Quebec's National Assembly. He said:

No companies, no legal, architectural or engineering firms. We all know the gamut of contributors to party funds. There is no need to elaborate. I do not think that large contributions are made out of love for democracy. We must absolutely look at this issue. I say this as the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre.

The text I have just quoted is on page 4019 of the *House of Commons Debates* for May 6, 1994.

Clearly the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre knows what he is talking about, because I took the liberty of checking with the office of the returning officer to see how the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre financed his electoral campaign in 1993. These figures are official, and anyone can go and check them with Elections Canada. In this member's case, individual contributions totalled \$15,168, which represents 55 per cent of his financing, and corporate contributions amounted to \$12,311, or 44 per cent.

• (1815)

I also took the liberty of checking in the riding of Saint-Maurice, the Prime Minister's riding. Individual contributions accounted for only 25 per cent, whereas corporate contributions accounted for 33 per cent. One union contributed \$5,500, and, obviously, funds were transferred to him from his party, given that he was in their good graces.

Obviously, when we know who is funding the party in power, we can think about their intentions. On October 3, 1994, the Quebec City paper *Le Soleil* ran a headline to the effect that the Liberal and Conservative parties could thank major corporations for funding the political parties. I will give you a few examples. Listen carefully, Mr. Speaker, I think this is worthwhile.

The largest contribution was to the Conservative Party in the amount of \$216,000. It was made by a company recorded only as T'ANG Management Limited. Give me one good reason why this company gave \$216,000 to the Conservative Party, led by Ms. Campbell. Give me one single reason. The member for

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Gatineau—La Lièvre said in May 1994 that it certainly was not out of love for democracy.

If it is not out of love for democracy, does it fly in the face of this democracy? In the red book, the party opposite me made the commitment to change the way political parties were funded. Brian Mulroney decided to do the same thing a week before the 1988 elections. He did nothing.

In the Conservative Party, there was a member as courageous as the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre, François Gérin, the former member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead. Not only did he advocate that political parties should be funded exclusively by voters, he applied this principle, rejecting any contribution from law, engineering or architectural firms, businesses, large or small, or unions. Unfortunately the member for Gatineau—La Lièvre did not do the same in 1993 since he accepted quite generous contributions from corporations of his riding and elsewhere.

This morning, the Royal Bank of Canada announced net profits of \$1.3 billion. Why do banks make that much money? Because they have connections in government. By feeding Grits and Tories alike, they are not taking any chance. They are sure to be on the right side and to have favourable laws. For instance, the Royal Bank of Canada gave \$88,700 to the Liberal Party and \$85,300 to the Conservatives in 1993. Banks are not taking any chance.

Do you think that this party is serious about modernizing political funding? What was this same party doing just six weeks ago in Quebec? It flouted Quebec democracy by throwing money left and right three days before the referendum to arrange a big love-in. This nearly reached the no side's spending limit. Unfortunately it will not be accounted for. All they will get is a \$10,000 fine.

• (1820)

They paid the salary of civil servants and teachers for that day. They closed schools and offices to allow civil servants in Hull and Ottawa to go to Montreal so they could show their affection, which lasted for an hour or so. Democracy was not respected in Quebec on that day. Some no side posters were even put up illegally.

The Reform Party is not without guilt either. It will be remembered that, in 1993, they accepted \$25,000 from the Canadian Pacific and \$10,000 from John Labatt. Naturally the sums were more modest but the corporations knew that the Reform Party had no chance whatsoever of coming to power. The Liberals had a heyday and they welcomed the opportunity. I hope the Prime Minister will not be prosecuted or come under investigation 4, 5, 6 or 10 years from now. If we believe in democracy, we must make a certain effort.

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[English]

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in respecting the tradition of the House, I will make my comments very brief, to give the member an opportunity to wind up, if that is the pleasure of the House.

I want to say a few words to this motion. As the House knows and as has been made very clear by the member for Kingston and the Islands, I have a bill before committee that speaks also to election financing. I commend my hon. colleague opposite for bringing this question to the House.

I am not speaking in favour of this motion. It does not provide the respect to emerging parties that it should. That has already been covered by others. It does not pay respect to new ideas and to parties that may never in fact elect anybody but do bring new and fresh ideas into the body politic of Canada. That is extremely important to our political discourse as a nation. And this bill does not respect performance. In my view, it is absolutely essential that performance be respected and rewarded. No matter what their historical significance, parties that do not resonate with the people should not be rewarded.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands went to great lengths to point out the contradiction in my presenting a bill to the House that would affect election financing that does not speak directly to the party policy. I want to make it clear, so that everyone understands, that my bill is incremental. The notion and the reason behind my bill is that it will save the taxpayers of Canada \$1 million or so. In my books, saving \$1 million or so is particularly important. In particular, the measures in that bill would ensure that political parties are rewarded only if they have resonance within the body politic of Canada, and that political parties are not rewarded merely because they have the resources to spend money.

I have listened to the debate this afternoon. I think this debate is particularly important. When I started to investigate election financing I noticed that if we measured the number of books they would be approximately eight or nine inches high. These are all books about election financing in Canada.

The point the hon. member from the Bloc raised about making sure the political process in Canada is kept as free as is humanly possible from any taint of scandal or influence peddling is one of the reasons I have come around to the view that there is much we can learn from the way the province of Quebec handles financial donations in that province.

I thank the House very much for the opportunity to speak. Once again I congratulate my hon. colleague opposite for bringing this very important debate to the House.

● (1825)

I concur with my hon. friend from North Vancouver who lamented that this was not a votable bill so we could see where all the dogs lie on this particular issue.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I understand that the hon. member for Gatineau—La lièvre has already spoken to the motion.

**Mr. Assad:** How much time do we have left, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** There are still a few minutes left. Under the right of reply, I am prepared to give the floor to the hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre. However, I must inform the House that he will be the last member to speak to the motion.

Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Assad:** How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Usually, under such circumstances, the House agrees to allow about two minutes for the member to close the debate.

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, I will not have enough time to rebut some of the objections raised during the debate on this motion.

My research shows that there are much fewer flaws in this proposal than in the present system. This, I hope, will be the subject of another debate, at some other time.

I would have liked my colleagues in this House to realize that this is not a “revolutionary” idea, contrary to what one of my colleagues from the Bloc quebecois said. I believe it to be plain common sense.

It is indeed an idea I have been promoting for many years, even at the National Assembly, when I had the honour of serving my fellow citizens at the provincial level. I raised the issue of funding for political parties in 1974. This is not something I became concerned about last week.

I have observed the trend and the many scandals concerning political fundraising.

The idea I am presenting today is very simple. I am asking for a debate, not only among members of this House, who can settle the issue, but also in the public at large.

You know, I did just that. I asked several people: “Do you believe that the current way of funding political parties is democratic and fair or that there are slush funds?” Most people answered: “Do you think we are nitwits? We do not believe that the system is fair and equitable. Far from it.”

If you ask ten people, at least nine will tell you that the system is rotten to the core. So, time has come to examine the way political parties are funded. We do not have to adopt the exact system I am proposing. A University of New Brunswick professor wrote a doctorate paper on the subject. I consulted him and exchanged information with him. His studies demonstrated that the most democratic way is to let the public at large fund political parties.

That is not complicated; perhaps it is even too simple. As is too often the case when an idea is too simple, it is difficult to get it accepted.

To conclude, this is a start. We must hope that other groups that care about our society will realize that the funding of political parties is fundamental in a democracy, and that big multinationals or people with a lot of money cannot be allowed to be the main backers of political parties. This is paramount in our democracy.

• (1830)

Let us hope then that this is a start, because the data that I have gathered clearly show that this would be the most equitable system, one which would not cost more to the state, not a cent more than it is costing today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96, this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### RECOGNITION OF QUEBEC AS A DISTINCT SOCIETY

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

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

Canada has always been a nation of ordeals and of triumphs. This country was tied together with the railroad when some said it could not be done. It answered the call of peace and freedom in both world wars when some said that our country was too small to make a difference.

We have held together a nation of difficult climate with unbelievable vastness and extreme beauty. I am confident that

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we can turn the ordeal of the 1995 referendum into another triumph for our country.

This motion reminds us that it is the responsibility of the people elected to this national assembly to do what is right for Canada. The people of Guelph—Wellington know that this sometimes means that we recognize the obvious.

On October 27, 1995 residents of Guelph—Wellington joined the Canadian family in Montreal in a crusade for Canada. This crusade did not end when the buses returned. It did not end on referendum day when my constituents completed their prayers at Dublin Street United Church in Guelph. It did not end when the signatures dried on the petitions of love and affection signed by the students of the Wellington County Separate School Board. This crusade has not ended in the hearts of the people of Guelph—Wellington and all across Canada.

Their crusade is about promises to be kept, relationships to be strengthened and a nation that continues to be built. We owe it to the people who boarded buses at 3 a.m. on October 27. We owe it to the people who voted no on October 30 and we owe it to every Canadian who loves this country and feels an attachment to its support and support this motion.

The people of Guelph—Wellington are discouraged by members of political parties that believe they were elected to celebrate division and welcome the negative. They know that the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party were not at the rally on October 27. They are aware that while one party works toward separation, the other is anxious to demand that the terms of the break-up of this country be staked out, almost like vultures.

Never before has the difference between the government and the opposition parties been clearer. The Liberal government reminds Canadians that there is a lot to be thankful for. The Bloc and Reform Party find much to complain about every day. We are the crusaders. They are the destroyers.

We seek to unite but they seek to divide. The Prime Minister said in the House on November 29 that the spirit of co-operation and partnership that inspires us should motivate us to continue building this great country in an atmosphere of generosity and respect. What the Prime Minister is proposing is both reasonable and prudent. In voting in favour of this motion, we are representing the best interests of all Canadians in the context of all that is good for Canada.

The people of Guelph—Wellington are proud of their past and they know that we can acknowledge Quebec's distinctiveness because they are confident of our future. They look to the members of the House to build bridges, not to create gulfs.

We can give regional vetoes without destroying the fabric of our nation. We need not be afraid. The history of the community that I represent is a strong one because we have been successful

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when we all work together. There is no question the referendum was a difficult experience for the people of Guelph—Wellington and for all people across Canada. In the process, our patience has been strained, but our determination to make this country work has not weakened.

• (1835)

My constituents are telling me to rise above the leaders of division and speak directly to the people of Canada, the Canadian family that lives in Quebec, in British Columbia and every community across Canada. They believe that the options presented by the Prime Minister are better than those offered by the Bloc and by the Reform Party. We have a vision of unity and we have a vision of peace.

We want the government to continue on its agenda of jobs and growth. They know that a united Canada means more employment, economic stability and a stronger country for their children and their grandchildren. Their message to me is to get on with it and keep the promises made to Quebecers before the referendum. Ignore those who want to destroy Canada. They want their affection for Quebec to be heard and they want Quebecers to know that we have all succeeded in Confederation, every one of us.

The central question that must be answered is: How can we turn the ordeal of October 30 into a triumph for all Canadians? I do not believe this can be done by being closed, intolerant and narrow. We should always remember those who prayed, wrote, called, marched and rallied for our country during the days prior to the referendum. Triumph calls for inner strength. It calls us to put away our differences. It rises above fear and it rises above frustration.

We are the only elected body that can speak for all Canadians. This country was not built because our leaders reminded us of what is wrong. Canada is the best country in the world. Our Prime Minister can rise with pride to tell us that he is a proud Canadian and a proud Quebecer.

I am proud of my community of Guelph—Wellington. I have said here before that I believe it is the best community in Canada. In Guelph—Wellington, we are crusaders for this nation. We see the rally in Montreal as the beginning, not an end. We see this motion as another step in nation building. We are proud of our community and proud of our province, but we are first and foremost Canadians.

It was a Quebecer, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who said that the 20th century belongs to Canada. It was another Quebecer, our Prime Minister, who said on October 27 that with this motion and other actions by the government, the country will enter the 21st century strong and united.

Guelph—Wellington residents want nothing more than a united and a strong Canada. They helped build our nation. They

have love for family and community. They work hard and they want us to do what is right for Canada. They are Canadians first.

This motion is about change, change not for the sake of change, but change for the betterment of Canada. The people of Guelph—Wellington are confident Canadians. They know we can recognize the obvious, we can give regional vetoes and we can be centralized government without losing our nation. They know that the negative political parties will vote against this motion, but they also know that Canada will not be defeated. Canada has had its share of ordeals, but we have always triumphed.

As they left their buses in Montreal on October 27, the people from my riding were handed a message from Quebecers. I hope members of the Bloc are listening to this. This is the message that my people were handed on October 27 from Quebecers. It says: "Quebecers would like to thank you for your support, your love and your encouragement. We appreciate this unselfish act and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. God bless this country and all its citizens. We thank you."

I have read and re-read this message many times. This motion is for the author of that message and for everyone who believes in Canada.

• (1840)

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and honour to speak on behalf of the constituents of Hamilton West to this extremely important motion tabled by the right hon. Prime Minister.

During and after the Quebec referendum the Prime Minister assured us that he would adequately address the clear demand for meaningful change within the federation. The Prime Minister is keeping his word to the people of Canada.

Like many of my colleagues on this side of the House, I am joining this debate in the Canadian spirit of conciliation, compromise and goodwill. At a time when various groups throughout the world are killing one another as a result of neo-nationalism, how typically Canadian for the federal government to address hard core neo-nationalist angst within the relatively calm and cool context of parliamentary debate.

The day before yesterday during debate on government Motion No. 27, we debated the recent Dayton peace agreement and Canadian support for the international community's continued efforts to bring enduring peace and security to the Balkans through participation in a multinational military implementation force under NATO command.

The significance of these two motions should not be lost on the members of the House. How typically Canadian for us to be so devoted to the maintenance of peace and security throughout the war torn regions of the world as to help other nations reach a lasting peace with one another. With respect to the current debate, how typically Canadian for us to set an example for the



entire world by choosing conciliation instead of conflict, diplomacy instead of rebellion, peace instead of war.

I am not aware of any other nation in the world with the same degree of potentially conflicting differences from east to west in terms of culture, language, geography, economics and political outlook as Canada, whose citizens despite these differences are not embroiled in a bloody civil war or otherwise killing one another for the sake of these differences.

Canada by its very nature stands out as a beacon of hope in the world where the concept of peaceful co-existence is overshadowed by seemingly irreconcilable conflict between factions. It is therefore not only timely but also typically Canadian for the Prime Minister to extend an olive branch to the people of the province of Quebec in the wake of the October 30 referendum.

The results of the recent Quebec referendum remind us that we cannot take Canada for granted, that diversity must be respected. Consequently, the government has acted swiftly to initiate a process that in the words of the right hon. Prime Minister "will ensure the unity and evolution of Canada in order to respond to the aspirations of all Canadians".

I think that is worth restating. The government aspires to respond to the aspirations of all Canadians from sea to sea to sea. Some less diplomatic than I have suggested the members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the so-called dark prince of separatism, have been so consumed by their own thirst for power that they have lost sight of their primary responsibility to protect the economic, social and political security of the people of Quebec.

Others more cynical than I believe the desire of the Leader of the Opposition to focus 20:20 hindsight on the constitutional failures of his former political bedfellows is an indication of his unwillingness to set aside his uncontrollable, self-serving political ambition and focus on the long term future of the people of Quebec. Personally I feel that the marathon speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition has been somewhat misunderstood.

Clearly we can all understand how easily one can become confused by the constantly changing political agenda of the former Conservative Party federalist turned separatist, now would-be premier of Quebec.

• (1845)

I would like to cut through all of this confusion for a moment and focus on the unity motion. The unity motion is a solemn declaration that sets out how the Government of Canada will conduct its affairs with respect to Quebec in particular and Canada in general. Passage of this motion will indicate to all Canadians and all federal government authorities that it is the will of the House of Commons to recognize the distinct charac-

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ter of Quebec society within the framework of the Canadian federation.

I know what it is like to serve in the opposition. Unfortunately exaggerated and unwarranted attacks on forthright government initiatives are key elements of the often underwhelming opposition art form. If we rise above the separatist bantering of members opposite we see a government, in fact an entire nation of people united by their genuine concern for the long term future of the citizens of Quebec within the federation. How typically Canadian to labour to keep our country together.

Let us not forget the tens of thousands of letters and phone calls and rally goers from Hamilton, Dundas, Ancaster, Flamboro, Burlington and from right across Canada who so passionately showed their support and concern for the people of Quebec before, during and most important, after the October 30 referendum. Let us not forget the evolution of federalism that has allowed Quebec and the other provinces to enjoy increased powers and gradual decentralization with respect to the unique character of each and every province within the framework of a strong and flexible federalist system.

In the case of Quebec we recognize and respect its distinct character, its French speaking majority, its unique culture, its civil law tradition, the fact that Quebec is different, not superior. How typically Canadian that the federal government continues to recognize and respect the rights and concerns of minority groups within Quebec as well.

On behalf of the constituents of Hamilton West I want to say how proud we are of the right hon. Prime Minister's efforts to keep our federation alive. I am proud that the federal government has chosen to address the very real concerns raised by the people of Quebec in a diplomatic and conciliatory fashion.

If this is what it takes to ensure Canada's pre-eminent position in the world as a peace loving federation, if this is what we must do in order to remain the greatest country in the world in which to live, then in my support for this motion I am proud to be typically Canadian.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this opportunity to participate in the debate on the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society, even if all that was tabled before this House was only a motion, is important to me personally, as a Quebec nationalist and as a member of the Bloc Québécois in this 35th Parliament.

Before starting my remarks, I must say that it is rather late, in 1995, almost 1996, to realize that Quebec is different from Ontario, from the west and from the maritimes.

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• (1850)

I remember, of course, the great declaration of love tens of thousands of Canadians outside Quebec made on October 30. I clearly remember New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna coming and telling us that he loved us, while at the same time he toured industries on the periphery of his province, saying: "Come and do business with us; we love our Quebec friends". He was trying to steal our industries away from us. Love, yes, but as long as it is profitable. The Canadian federation has been extremely profitable to Ontario in particular for several centuries now.

By putting forward these proposals for change, including the one dealing with recognizing Quebec as a distinct society, the Prime Minister of Canada acts on the promise he made himself to trap the leader of the Bloc Québécois before he leaves. The Prime Minister said: "I dream of the day when I will rise in this House to vote for Quebec's recognition as a distinct society and smile as I watch the Leader of the Opposition vote against it".

This is the Prime Minister speaking, a member from Quebec, the hon. member for Saint-Maurice, who, unfortunately, does not travel to Quebec often enough and, as a result, is literally out of touch with the francophone public opinion in Quebec. Twenty days before the referendum, like Claude Garcia, he was telling everybody: "We are going to crush the Quebecers and have a 65 per cent victory". Can you see how out of touch from his home province this man is?

That was a petty thing to say, a much too petty strategy, but it is true to form for the Prime Minister and member for Saint-Maurice.

This motion recognizing Quebec as a distinct society is not the result of a sensible reflection with the interest of the country or the betterment of the Canadian and Quebec society in mind, let alone a major change to save the country.

No, the Prime Minister's reflection was not based on these noble intentions, but rather on the desire to get back at the Leader of the Opposition and to discredit him.

Revenge and discredit are inappropriate guides at a time when the survival of two nations is at stake. But neither the people of Canada nor the people of Quebec are fooled by the Prime Minister's scheme or by the Deputy Prime Minister's crocodile tears.

The people understand that this distinct society proposal that was cobbled together even before the committee had tabled its recommendations and that has been revealed as phoney, this motion that recognizes Quebec's distinct society in such a superficial way is outdated and is no longer an issue in Quebec for both sovereignists and federalists who want serious changes.

Again, this shows how the Prime Minister is totally out of touch with Quebec reality. His fanaticism prevents him from understanding the message sent to him on October 30 by the people of Quebec.

• (1855)

In this regard, even partisan federalist newspapers are criticizing the Prime Minister. In the November 29 edition of *La Presse*, for example, Alain Dubuc writes: "The Chrétien government's first timid effort mostly shows that it has great difficulty in understanding what is happening in Quebec and Canada and, above all, in accepting changes that we see as inevitable".

They all agree that recognizing Quebec as a distinct society only through a declaration in the House of Commons does not resolve the underlying problem. Even its eventual entrenchment in the Constitution no longer satisfies the aspirations of Quebecers.

The Liberal government has missed the boat and neither the Leader of the Opposition nor the members of the Bloc Québécois will be embarrassed to vote against this motion. On the contrary, adopting this motion would be a major setback in Quebec's path to recognition as a people.

As Gérald Larose used to say, we do not want to be bothered with distinct society any more. What we want now is to be a normal, quiet people.

Quebec is sick of these meaningless slogans, of being a society at the mercy of Ottawa's and English Canada's whims, of listening to a Prime Minister who denies ever having said what he said, both before and after having said it.

If the official opposition accepted this motion, Quebec would be seriously weakened since, as everyone acknowledges, Ottawa's distinct society proposal does not go as far as the Meech Lake accord and the Charlottetown accord, which both Quebec and the rest of Canada rejected.

The Prime Minister's motion to have the House recognize Quebec's distinctiveness cannot in any way be considered a response to the demand for change expressed by Quebecers in the October 30 referendum. We must keep in mind that, a little over a month ago, 50 per cent of Quebecers voted in favour of Quebec's sovereignty, while the other 50 per cent voted for a major renewal of Canadian federalism.

The motion before us falls short of Quebecers' aspirations. It is unacceptable, for both sovereignists and federalists.

Once again, the Prime Minister of Canada has made the wrong decision, as all Quebecers and Canadians know. That is why I think that the Prime Minister will not find it so funny on election day.

In closing, one can laugh at a people some of the time, but not all of the time.

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**Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's motion on distinct society takes me back to 1992, the year of the Charlottetown accord. That is also when I decided to dedicate the rest of my career to standing up for Quebec's interests here in Ottawa, as eight other Bloc members were already doing, seated at the back of the House, isolated, but undeniably efficient.

When offers are made to me, I usually examine them. I never dismiss anything out of hand, without giving it at least some thought.

• (1900)

Of course, Quebecers have the same attitude. Thus, having heard and read the Prime Minister's motion, I can say that it is the greatest dilatory tactic I have seen in my political life. The Prime Minister botched his work. The referendum results made him panic.

During the week preceding the referendum, he felt that he had to promise some changes, and this is what we have now: an empty shell, a black hole, a total blank. Distinct society my foot. This carbon copy of the Charlottetown proposals, which were rejected by both Quebec and Canada, as we recall, does not recognize the people of Quebec in any way. Where on earth does the Prime Minister live to think that Quebec is now prepared to accept less than Meech 1 and 2, less than Charlottetown, if that were possible?

The motion says that we speak French in Quebec and that we have a civil law tradition. How nice. This resolution is nothing but wishful thinking. The 1982 patriation of the Constitution was a denial of the existence of the Quebec nation. Since then, there has been only one nation: the Canadian nation. Thankfully, no Quebec government, not even the Liberals, put up with that rebuff. Meech 1 was entrenched in the Constitution. Some legal and political aspects in that accord allowed Quebec to keep its head high.

The current Prime Minister, along with his friends, managed to render that agreement meaningless. Quebec rejected a proposal, as did English Canada, but not for the same reasons, of course. How can the leader of the government dare take a step backward and seriously think that his resolution meets Quebec's historical and legitimate aspirations?

His ally in the no camp during the last referendum, the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, Daniel Johnson, demanded that Quebec's distinct nature be entrenched in the Constitution. The Prime Minister knows full well that his motion is meaningless. He only introduced it to be able to say that he is fulfilling the promises for change he made at the last minute, when the yes side seemed dangerously close to winning.

As we saw in 1992, with the referendum on the Charlottetown accord, it is no longer enough to say, affirm, or wish that Quebec be recognized as a distinct society. At the time, the distinct society clause only had a symbolic value, so much so that most

French-speaking observers in Quebec were convinced that this concept no longer had the same meaning as it did in the Meech Lake accord. It was so watered down that even Clyde Wells felt there was no risk of seeing this clause serve as a stepping stone towards the affirmation of a special status for Quebec. Yet, this is what the Prime Minister is proposing.

As a member representing a Quebec riding, I cannot support a motion which proposes much less than even the minimal claims made by Quebec over the years. Any Quebec member who does is in fact saying that, as far as he is concerned, Quebec does not exist as a nation. There are only people who speak French in a given region of Canada, period.

We all know that this resolution is just that: a mere resolution. With all due respect to this House, this resolution has no legal effect, even if it is supported by a majority of elected representatives. It merely reflects the will expressed by parliamentarians, and it would not be binding on any court in Canada. It is meaningless.

In his attempt to propose changes to Quebecers, the Prime Minister also included manpower training, as well as a veto power. Let me briefly say that, as regards manpower training, I am still looking for the change. Actually, there is one change. We now know that, when the Prime Minister talks about decentralization, it means that the federal government keeps control over the distribution of money.

The federal government prevents Quebec from implementing a true manpower training policy. Yet, everyone in Quebec agrees that all powers related to that sector should be delegated to the province.

• (1905)

It seldom happens that everybody agrees on one thing, in Quebec or elsewhere. As for the veto, let us not delude ourselves, what is being proposed amounts to providing for regional referendums whose terms and questions would be developed in Ottawa, where Quebec representatives are in minority as you know. Flexible federalism means that Ottawa makes the decisions and the provinces have to live with them.

Three weeks ago, I heard the Prime Minister say that he was a Prime Minister from a Quebec riding, a francophone and a Quebecer, and that his government should be trusted.

Personally, I was willing to trust him to some extent. I told myself: "Listen, mistakes have been made; he made mistakes in 1982. But sometimes, a guy who has made a mistake can get back on his feet. I will therefore go half way and trust him".

In the motion he put forward, Motion No. 26, I thought I would find a recognition of Quebec as a distinct society, and that this recognition would also be enshrined in the Constitution. That was not the case. A few moments ago, I heard a member opposite say that we wanted separation and so forth. I will tell you that my father is a well known businessman in Quebec and in Canada. He has traded in all ten provinces of Canada. When

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my father returned from the west, the first question I used to ask him was: "Dad, how did it go out west?" And his answer would be: "Jean, it has been very hard, very difficult. I have the feeling that the west will separate before Quebec does".

When we look around in this House, we see that Quebec has rejected this proposal from the Prime Minister, Mr. Chrétien, who represents the constituents from Saint-Maurice, and that even the English Canadians who make up the third party, the Reform Party, said no to this proposal. Something must be wrong when both French speaking and English speaking Canadians agree to reject a proposal.

So, we have to recognize what Quebecers have been asking for for the last 25 years. It is not asking too much to want to be recognized as a distinct society. The federal government has done it for the Indians, why can it not do it for Quebecers? They gave the Indians some land. We are not asking for land, we already have some. We only want to be recognized.

Frankly, I must say that, after fighting for 25 years, Quebecers, the French speaking citizens of Quebec, really thought this time would be it. However, the Prime Minister told us: "Dear friends, wait until 1997, wait until April of 1997, when we will reopen the Constitution". I have to tell you in all honesty that, as a politician, when I decided to come to Ottawa, I told myself: "The only way to succeed is to be on the spot, to go to Ottawa and mingle with my English speaking friends". Because I must say in all honesty that the people from western Canada are my friends.

It is not because we have a different point of view that we cannot get along with people from western Canada or the maritimes. Of course not. What is important is to be on the same wavelength and to get support for a society, for a people—the men and women of Quebec who want to be recognized some day.

I trusted the Prime Minister. I am a bit disappointed, because I would have liked for the notion to say that our distinct society will be enshrined in the Constitution. It was not asking too much, as I said earlier, but it was not done.

This was his last chance. I remind the House that three days before the referendum, thousands of English speaking Canadians came to Montreal. I was proud, because these people came to visit our region. To say they love us is one thing, but to prove it is another matter.

So, as far as I am concerned, I would like all this to be enshrined in the Constitution and I will continue to reflect on this issue.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speak-

er, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in what can only be regarded as a historic debate.

• (1910)

I would like to talk about a couple of things that are important with respect to the national unity of our country. These are things members opposite perhaps failed to mention when they talked about what they perceived to be the wrongs or the injustices suffered by their fellow citizens in various parts of the country. I say various parts of the country because this is not a case of complaints only from one province. We hear it from many provinces. We hear it from the provincial premiers when they complain about some of the changes the government is proposing in the amending formula. I know that bill is not before the House tonight, but it is part of the package of reforms the government has introduced, which I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss.

Although members do not mention it often, always in back of their speeches is the famous battle that occurred in Canada on the Plains of Abraham. I am not going to go through that. There was a second battle, which I think is virtually of equal importance for the future of the country and which is never mentioned. I want to remind hon. members about this story because it is of tremendous significance for Canada.

The battle happened 220 years ago this year. There was a revolution that started in the United States. The American Revolutionary Continental Congress decided to send a force to invade Canada and take over the colony of Quebec, which was then part of the British Empire, having been captured 15 years previously in the famous battle I mentioned earlier.

The Americans dispatched General Montgomery to capture the province of Quebec, or what was then the colony of Quebec. Starting in September he moved up the Richelieu River and captured Fort Saint-Jean and Fort Chambly before October 18, 1775. He subsequently attacked Montreal, where the British governor, Sir Guy Carleton, was stationed.

Governor Carleton realized the defence of Montreal was hopeless, given that he was outnumbered substantially by the American force. He had only 800 British regulars with him to defend the entire colony. He left Montreal by ship and sailed for Quebec on November 11, 1775, and immediately began fortifications of the city of Quebec.

General Montgomery took Montreal on November 13, stationed 500 of his troops there, and then moved on to Quebec City with about 300 men. He gathered with him various people from the countryside, des habitants pour l'aider avec son attaque sur la ville de Québec.

It is estimated he had between 1,600 and 1,800 men outside Quebec when he started his siege on December 5, 1775. The governor, Sir Guy Carleton, was in a heavily fortified position with apparently adequate food, but of course the city of Quebec

was pounded by a bombardment launched by Montgomery and his forces as they besieged the city.

As winter continued to move in to the area and made things colder and more difficult for Montgomery's troops, he realized that in order to maintain his position he had to take the city and get the battle over with reasonably quickly. He launched an attack on the city of Quebec on December 31, 1775 in the early hours of the morning. It was dark. There were a lot of shots exchanged and ultimately Montgomery was killed in the streets of Quebec. The battle was lost for the Americans. The siege continued until the spring, but a British ship arrived, lifted the siege, and the Americans had to retreat.

That battle was won because the residents of the city of Quebec helped the British governor. They sided with the British governor, the recent conqueror, in order to preserve what they thought was a better way of life under the British crown as an independent part of North America and not as part of the United States. In a way, they were the first United Empire Loyalists, because they made that very significant decision. If they had not made that decision and had sided with the Americans and rebelled against the British force, as they could easily have done, no doubt Quebec would have fallen and no doubt we would have been part of the United States as a result of the revolutionary war.

• (1915)

The men and women who made that decision were residents of the city and of the surrounding countryside. In my view they were the first great nation builders of Canada. We never hear mention of them whenever a member of the Bloc Québécois or any separatist is busy talking about Canadian unity.

It is a battle that holds tremendous significance. In my visit to Quebec I saw the place in the street where Montgomery was killed. I believe there is a plaque in the street where this happened.

Some of ancient buildings in Quebec bore marks for a long time of the bombardment they suffered from the Americans in that war 220 years ago at the end of this month, the anniversary date of the attack on Quebec led by Montgomery.

This was a very significant event in Canada's history which saved Quebec, basically the only part of Canada that was then of any significance as a British possession that operated as part of a group of colonies that began to grow and prosper, all of them not prospering quite so well but at least growing in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and ultimately in Upper Canada, in Ontario.

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By 1840 we had the Union Act of 1840 that put the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada together under a single administration, at least legislatively.

Subsequent to that the debates took place in respect of the union of the Canadian provinces. It is to those debates that I want to turn because I want to quote some nation builders. That is what we are engaged in here in a very modest way today.

It is important to bear in mind some of the words some of these people spoke. I turn first to the remarks of the hon. Sir John A. Macdonald. He was not a knight at that time. He was the attorney general for the western part of the province of Canada and at that time the member for Kingston.

He was one of the senior Fathers of Confederation. I quote what he said in respect of Confederation at that time. This is in the Confederation debates in 1865, talking about the union of Upper and Lower Canada:

It was felt that a dissolution of the union would have destroyed all the credit that we had gained by being a united province, and would have left us two weak and ineffective governments, instead of one powerful and united people.

Those words apply precisely to the situation we faced in pre-referendum Canada a few weeks ago. I submit those words are of importance now just as they were then. He went on to say:

The Lower Canadians would not have worked cheerfully under such a change of system—

He was talking about a different system than the one I was reading about before—

—but would have ceased to be what they are now—a nationality, with representatives in Parliament, governed by general principles, and dividing according to their political opinions—and would have been in great danger of becoming a faction, forgetful of national obligations, and only actuated by a desire to defend their own sectional interests, their own laws, and their own institutions.

He was speaking of having a unitary government where there would not be a federal division of powers as we now have where different parts of the country have the right to decide certain things.

We have a situation in which both the opposition parties are claiming the federal government should give up powers and where the federal government has acknowledged that is so and has chosen to do that.

I refer to Sir John's conclusion:

In conclusion, I would again implore the House not to let this opportunity to pass. It is an opportunity that may never recur. At the risk of repeating myself, I would say, it was only by a happy concurrence of circumstances, that we were enabled to bring this great question to its present position. If we do not take advantage of the time, if we show ourselves unequal to the occasion, it may never return, and we shall hereafter bitterly and unavailingly regret having failed to embrace the happy opportunity now offered of founding a great nation.

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I quote another one, Sir George-Étienne Cartier, Macdonald's great partner in putting Canada together. He said, and these words apply today as much as they did then, in the same debates in 1865:

The question for us to ask ourselves is this: Shall we be content to remain separate—shall we be content to maintain a mere provincial existence, when, by combining together, we could become a great nation? It had never yet been the good fortune of any group of communities to secure national greatness with such facility. In past ages, warriors have struggled for years for the addition to their country of a single province.

• (1920)

Here we had the great willingness on the part of all these people to unite and form this great country we now enjoy.

I quote another great nation builder, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of the great prime ministers of our country. He said, from page 1842 of *Hansard*, on March 13, 1900:

If there is anything to which I have given my political life, it is to try to promote unity, harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country. My friends can desert me, they can remove their confidence from me, they can withdraw the trust which they have placed in my hands; but never shall I deviate from that line of policy. Whatever may be the consequences, whether loss of prestige, loss of popularity, or loss of power, I feel that I am in the right, and I know that a time will come when every man, my hon. friend himself included, will render me full justice on that score.

As our forebearers did, we can do no less but to engage in the nation building which they did in this great and vast country of ours.

**Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a Canadian and I am proud to be part of a country that includes the province of Quebec. I am proud to be part of a country that not only recognizes diversity but respects and cherishes it.

What a boring country it would be if we were all the same. Our differences keep us vital and dynamic, and our ability to respect our differences while working together has made us the envy of the world.

The United Nations said Canada is the greatest country in the world. We owe this honour in large part to those who built Canada, to the men and women who came here searching for a better life and for hope.

The fabric of our country is woven from the threads brought here by people from around the world. These threads of hope, tolerance and compassion unite us as Canadians and will provide the strength to see us through the challenges that lie ahead.

Countries are not rigid like the stone and rock they are carved from. They must be fluid and adaptable if we are to survive.

Since Confederation, Canada has successfully adapted to a rapidly changing world. Our boundaries have changed and it was less than 50 years ago that we acquired a new province, Newfoundland. We are now in the process of creating the new territory Nunavut.

Our economic base has expanded and diversified to the point at which Canada has a highly integrated economy and is a competitor in world markets. A century ago the people of a country that was largely based on farming and trapping could never have dreamed that the Canada of today would be a leader in telecommunications, aerospace and finance, and that its agricultural products would be marketed around the world.

Canadian society has also changed dramatically. Our population has grown tremendously and shifted from largely rural to mostly urban. An influx of people immigrating from around the world has made Canada a unique cultural mosaic.

Canada has grown and prospered because of its ability to read the signals for change and to adapt for the well-being of our country. The referendum vote on October 30 was a vote for Canada. It was a signal for change.

As the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism noted during the debate on Friday, the Prime Minister, the government and Parliament have a duty to preserve the unity of Canada as a nation indivisible.

Quebecers and Canadians have asked the government to keep Canada together. The Prime Minister has responded quickly to the signals for change. It is a response to keep the country united. That is what Canadians and the people of my riding of Dauphin—Swan River want.

• (1925)

When the Bloc members refer to the rest of Canada as English Canada they do a great disservice to the hundreds of French Canadians who live in my riding of Dauphin—Swan River; French Canadians who have kept their language, culture and traditions alive in rural Manitoba.

I am pleased and proud to represent predominantly French communities such as Ste. Rose du Lac, Laurier, St. Lazare and San Clara where people of many ethnic origins, including English, French, Ukrainian, Polish and First Nations people, work together toward their common goal of building strong communities and contributing to a strong and united Canada.

I have been overwhelmed by the response of the people of Dauphin—Swan River about the future of Canada. The people of my riding tell me that for the good of Canada, for our present and for our future, we need to remain united.

As the Prime Minister has so eloquently stated, a Canada without Quebec is no Canada, and a Quebec without Canada is no Quebec.

I also bring to the House a message from the youth of Canada. They too want and deserve a voice in the debate about the Canada they will inherit from us.

In November I travelled to a number of schools in my riding of Dauphin—Swan River to listen to young people about their vision of Canada. The students told me their Canada includes Quebec. It is important to them that we make every effort to keep our country united, from sea to sea to sea. That is the Canada they know. That is the Canada they want. That is the Canada they deserve.

This was also the message three young people from Russell, Manitoba brought to me in Ottawa on their way to the Montreal rally. These young people spent their hard earned dollars to travel to Montreal to be part of the chorus of voices ringing across Canada, telling Quebecers they are important to Canada. The courage and the commitment of these young people is a shining example of the belief western Canada has that a strong Canada is a united Canada.

We must lead by example. We must show our young people that differences can be overcome and that compromise is preferable to conflict. As a member of Parliament and as a member of the Liberal government I am committed to ensuring a strong and united Canada for the benefit of the people of Dauphin—Swan River and for all Canadians. As a mother and a grandmother, the Canada I want to give to my children and my grandchildren is a Canada which includes Quebec.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Motion No. 26 this evening.

It is a pleasure to speak to any government legislation of significance these days because the Liberal government has developed a habit of invoking closure on important controversial bills. It is beyond comprehension. This is one of the most important issues before the House and the government is limiting debate. What is the government afraid of, that people may actually find out what it is doing?

It is difficult for me to find parliamentary language to accurately describe my outrage at how the government rams through legislation by denying members of Parliament the opportunity to bring the concerns of their constituents into the debate. However, I digress. I am here to talk about the motion before the House today. I had better take advantage of the opportunity to speak before the Liberals decide they want to invoke closure in the middle of my speech.

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The motion is rather simple but leaves many questions unanswered. Motion No. 26 calls on the House to recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada. Before I give my opinion on the issue of whether Quebec is distinct, I will address the issue of what this means to the rest of Canada.

• (1930)

If Quebec is distinct, does that mean the rest of Canada is indistinct? Does it mean there is no difference between the outports of the Newfoundland coast and downtown Toronto? Does it mean there is no distinction between the isolated native communities of the north and downtown Vancouver? Does it mean the rural grain farming communities of the prairies are indistinct from downtown Ottawa?

The answer to these questions is obviously no. Not only are the other nine provinces distinct from each other but there are significant distinctions within the provinces themselves.

My first administrative assistant on the Hill was a francophone from Campbellton, New Brunswick. I can accept the fact that she and her fellow francophone New Brunswickers consider themselves to be distinct from the Quebecers who live just on the other side of the Restigouche River.

This motion also recognizes the distinction between francophones in Quebec and New Brunswick but it does not recognize the distinction between New Brunswick's Acadians and New Brunswickers of British origin. Does that mean that there is no distinction between the two groups? That is the biggest flaw of M-26. It demands that this House recognize only one distinction.

Let us look at the three largest metropolitan cities in Canada. I have enjoyed my visits to Montreal and could have spent days wandering in the old town, but like Toronto and Vancouver, Montreal is a city whose population is a blend of old stock Canadians and larger, newer immigrant communities. Immigrants come to these cities from countries that span the globe. What is different is the percentage of the various ethnic groups that make up the population of each of these three cities.

Despite this difference, they are still all large cosmopolitan cities with tall skyscrapers in the central business district surrounded by a mix of industrial and residential communities.

However, the government wants us to recognize that Montreal is distinct but Vancouver and Toronto are not. Why? Because as is stated in part (2) of the motion, the government wants the House to recognize that Quebec's distinct society includes its French speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition.

Now we know why Montreal is to be considered distinct and Vancouver and Toronto are not. Montreal is distinct because of its French speaking majority but where does this leave Montreal's anglophones and allophones? According to this motion,

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they must be indistinct. Let us flash back to the aftermath of the referendum and Premier Parizeau's comments about the ethnic vote. His comments were roundly and rightfully condemned.

Members opposite were especially vocal in their condemnation of Premier Parizeau's attack on the ethnic vote. What does the government do in response? It put forward this motion that states that Quebec is distinct because of its French speaking majority. It wants to legislate a distinct status for Quebec's francophones, separating them from the ethnic minority, the very fact Liberals condemned Premier Parizeau for stating.

Once again, the government deals in a logic that can be understood only by that side of the House. It must be something in the drinking water in the government lobby.

Let us return to the question of whether Quebec is distinct. Yes, Quebec is distinct but Quebec is a diversified province with one area distinct from another within its own provincial borders, the same as all the other provinces.

The northern parts of British Columbia and Alberta are very different from the southern parts. I recall the comments separatists were spouting after the referendum loss that the results showed division in Canada. No, the referendum result showed division in Quebec. Although Quebec is no longer a homogeneous province, the federal government wants it to be treated as one.

Points (2) and (3) of the motion state:

(3) the House undertake to be guided by this reality;

(4) the House encourage all components of the legislative and executive branches of government to take note of this recognition and be guided in their conduct accordingly.

What this means is unclear. The Prime Minister is telling Quebecers that these sections will provide Quebec with a great deal of power, yet at the same time he is telling Canadians outside Quebec that it does not. Which is it? Let us not leave this motion undefined. Reform Party members have attempted to clarify the meaning of distinct society with our amendment, that this motion does not confer any powers, rights, status or privileges to Quebec that are not provided to any other province. Our amendment will ensure that all Quebecers will be treated equally.

• (1935)

Our amendment also makes it clear that there is nothing in this motion that denies the fact that Canada constitutes one nation. That is the danger of passing the government's motion without the Reform amendment. By identifying Quebec as a distinct society, the government is agreeing with the basic tenet of the separatist mantra that the Quebec people are different from the rest of Canadians. Do the Liberals honestly believe that once they acknowledge this difference they can counter the second

part of the separatist argument that because of this difference Quebecers need their own nation?

In dealing with this issue I have tried to do what the government refuses to do: ask the opinions of average Canadians. In my latest householder I included my regular 10-question survey. Two questions in that survey are first, do you believe that Quebec should be granted distinct society status if it confers special privileges or powers to Quebec? Second, do you believe that Quebec should be granted distinct society status if it confers no special privileges or powers to Quebec?

Unfortunately with the government's rush to stifle debate, I will not have enough time to have a truly representative response to these questions. However, as of this moment the answer to the first question is overwhelmingly no. The answer to the second question is still too close to see a trend. My greatest objection to this motion is that the government believes it is ordained to make these serious decisions on its own without any consultation with Canadians.

It would have been more appropriate if the government had stayed to its original plan and had us voting on this motion tomorrow, December 7. What could have been more fitting than having the government ram through a motion in this manner, and by having it do so on a day that already has a reputation of being a day that shall live in infamy? I guess we will have to come up with our own day of infamy, but then the government is providing us with so many.

The people of Surrey—White Rock—South Langley should have had an opportunity to express their opinions on this motion and the veto issue directly through a national referendum. However, they will have to be content with their MP's having a chance to contribute in this debate. It is very unfortunate that there are many Canadians who have lost the opportunity to have their member of Parliament speak to this issue.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the distinct society motion presented by the Prime Minister and his government with respect to the province of Quebec.

The reason we are debating this motion late tonight is because of the Prime Minister's last minute Hail Mary promise to Quebecers during the dying moments of the referendum campaign. With this motion, combined with a constitutional veto and a transfer of manpower training to Quebec, the Prime Minister feels he has now made the best and most significant contribution to national unity. We are all going to live happily ever after.

I am afraid I cannot agree with his logic, his proposals and the timing of them. He has resurrected the constitutional ghosts of Christmas past and will witness the same results as was had with Meech and Charlottetown: failure.



In analysing the components of the distinct society motion I have to ask the question whether the Prime Minister truly feel this really satisfies Quebecers' desires, hopes and needs. The Prime Minister is a Quebecer. If anybody should know what Quebecers want, it is he.

However, during the referendum campaign he misread, he misunderstood and he misrepresented to the rest of Canada what should be done. He said: "Thank you very much for staying quiet. Don't worry, they won't leave. Just don't say anything to upset them and everything will be fine". He almost blew it and he knew it.

He got the minister of fisheries, Captain Tobin, to use his turbot popularity and throw together a unity rally in Montreal asking everybody from sea to sea to get to Montreal. He then turned around and made promises to the separatists, promises to the sovereignists, promises to the nationalists, promises to the federalists. Keeping promises is not one of the Prime Minister's strong points. He promised to renegotiate NAFTA, but did not; he promised to eliminate the GST, but has not; he promised to eliminate patronage appointments, but will not; he promised free votes, which maybe is something he is not allowed to deliver on. Now we have him promising to recognize Quebec as a distinct society in Canada.

• (1940)

As a Quebecer he should know what Quebecers want when they say distinct society. He knows they want the rest of Canada to recognize Quebec as one of two founding nations. He knows Quebecers who want distinct society do not feel there is any cost in acknowledging that they are one of two founding nations. They want a distinct society clause that will protect their rights over language, culture and civil law while keeping the province French.

I do not disagree with some of these aspirations. What I do worry about are the consequences if the definition of distinct society is not spelled out. If distinct society means Quebecers are different because of their language, culture and civil law, I recognize that. That means they are unique and distinct from other provinces and people, just as other provinces and people are unique and distinct from them.

However, if Quebecers want this distinct society clause to mean that not only are they different but they also get special legislative powers above and beyond the rest of Canada, I am against that. I am sorry but the answer is no to one province getting special treatment over another.

While Reformers can agree to recognizing differences, we cannot agree to giving Quebecers some form of special status

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over and above other Canadians. That is fundamentally unacceptable and I truly feel that most Quebecers understand that point.

All Quebecers want is something that gives them satisfaction that they will not be trodden on, stamped on and kicked on, as is currently being done by the Minister of Human Resources Development with his new employment insurance program.

The frustration in Quebec is based on the fact that we have too much federal interference in matters of provincial jurisdiction. Quebecers want the federal government to get out of their lives in a lot of areas. That is where the solution to national unity lies. Give the provinces the powers they want and need, regulated by the federal government, and let us make government the right size doing the right thing. Let us have a smaller and more open government.

Simply put, all provinces want control over their purse strings on programs closest to the people, delivered at a lesser cost than is currently the case with the bureaucratic nightmare in Ottawa.

I am not against the distinct society motion which recognizes Quebec as a distinct society within Canada, provided it is fully defined and does not make them the biggest kid in the playground. That is why I ask the Prime Minister and the government to support Reform amendments to this distinct society motion so that he can get more support from all across Canada, including from those people in Quebec who look on this motion very suspiciously. It would give the people of Quebec and the rest of Canada what they want: recognition with powers, but not special status.

I ask the government to support our amendments because what we are trying to do is please the majority of Quebecers, not the minority. If we keep trying to come up with programs and with definitions to please the separatists it will never work. It has not worked for 25 years and it will not work for the next 25 years. The separatists act like spoiled children; not all Quebecers, just the separatists.

Most Quebecers want what is in their best interests, and that is no different than me as a distinct and different person from the province of Alberta. I want the best for my province just as people in Quebec want the best for their province.

Let us design a motion that appeals to the majority of Quebecers, that appeals to the majority of Canadians. That is how we can build on national unity. For the sake of national unity I ask the Prime Minister to please consider the input and information that has been coming to him through the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs on the constitutional veto. I hope the government listens. There has been some valuable input there.

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We can debate sharing the federal government veto with four or five regions. That is not really the issue. I believe there are five regions because British Columbia is more like the Atlantic provinces than it is like the prairies.

The point is this veto should be for the people of Canada and not their legislative assemblies. We already have the seven provinces out of ten representing 50 per cent within the constitutional amendment clause. The separatist Parti Québécois will now have veto power over changes to the Canadian Constitution. This is ridiculous. The veto should be given to the people of Quebec and not to the politicians.

• (1945)

We should be and I think we are a country of 10 equal provinces committed to similar goals and objectives, each with the same rights, privileges and powers. If we want to change those rights, privileges and powers, it should be one way or another through a national referendum from the bottom up, not necessarily by elected officials from the top down.

We have to look at the situation very seriously. We have to conclude that a lot of people in Canada want change, not just the province of Quebec or the people who had the referendum. People across the country want change for the good. They do not want change to justify the status quo.

We have to look at issues like changes to the Constitution or granting one province recognition in a way that the rest of the country worries might give it special powers. We have to address those issues. What is wrong with addressing them? We all have to work together to bring the country together from sea to sea.

We have to make amendments to the Constitution to give it the ability to live and the ability to be changed. It should be difficult. It should not be easy to change the Constitution once we define the powers, the levels of responsibility and the way we will work together as 10 provinces. We should think about how we can make changes to it. We cannot give a veto to every province, or there will never be change. We cannot put that Constitution in a vault, let it die and gather dust. We have to give it life. It has to be a breathing document. It has to be tough to make change but we have to allow change to happen.

We have to look at different provinces and different regions and try to recognize their specific needs and wants. There is no reason we cannot accommodate them. There is no reason we cannot come up with a mechanism to give Quebec what it wants and recognize it as a distinct society. It is different. It is unique. It has made a valuable contribution to the building and the nurturing of this great country called Canada.

If that means that Quebec should also get special powers over and above being recognized as distinct, that is not right and we have to tell Quebecers that. The separatists really want this. It is not all Quebecers. Those who want it want to protect their French language. We should be able to help them protect their French language and their French culture.

They in turn should protect minority rights within their province, the English and any other immigrant, and how they can interface with their provincial problems. They do that. What I am saying is that we have ways and means of producing a collective agreement if we just identify the right problem.

This is a panic effort by the Prime Minister and the government to fulfil a promise that he made in the dying moments of a game that he thought he would lose. The game is called unity and he was afraid he would lose the country. He did not want to go down in history as the Prime Minister who lost the country after having told all of us: "I am from that region. Don't worry. They won't vote to go", and they almost did.

It is sad. Now that it is all over they almost look at us and ask: "What did the Reform Party do?" We kept telling them all along to tell Quebecers the consequences of separation, the price of separation. They did not do it then. We will do it now and never in the future will any province look at itself and say it will separate and everything will be perfect. We will tell them the cost of separation.

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to address the House today on the motion put forward by the government to recognize Quebec as a distinct society.

I remind members of the most recent referendum in which a majority of Quebecers voted to stay in Canada. With this motion we are trying to make sure we build on that commitment by Quebecers.

With all the rhetoric it is difficult for Canadians to understand what is going on. The Bloc is telling Quebecers there is nothing in this package, that it is a bunch of platitudes, that it means nothing, that we in so-called English Canada really do not want them to stay. The Reform is telling us that we are giving Quebec everything, that we are giving it something that other provinces do not have, and that somehow it will be able to do other things within Canada to get special powers because of the motion.

• (1950)

No wonder Canadians are having a hard time understanding. Quite frankly it is not only rhetoric but lies are being told to Canadians on the issue. It is disturbing, especially given the fact of how important the issue is to Canada and to the future of the country.

The opposition is telling truths but it is only telling half truths. The Bloc says it does not want to talk about the Constitution. Then it says that somehow the motion does not give Quebec any special constitutional power. How can it argue on the one hand that it does not want to talk about the Constitution and on the other hand argue that the motion somehow is not constitutionally significant?

Frankly it is no surprise that Canadians do not want to talk about the Constitution. They want to deal with other issues. They want to deal with jobs. They want to make sure that their families have opportunities for education and proper health care. These are issues of concern to Canadians.

The Prime Minister gave a commitment at the Montreal rally, which I am proud to say a number of my constituents attended, to address some of the concerns of Quebecers. I know the Reform Party blames us for the outcome being so close, and it was. I agree that it was Canadians who came together in that last week, drew the referendum together and showed Quebecers what they thought.

On behalf of not only the constituents of Haldimand—Norfolk but of all people of Canada I want to say how proud I was of those great Canadians who went from the riding of Haldimand—Norfolk on their own volition to Montreal to express their deep desire for the country to stay together.

All Canadians inside and outside Quebec understand there is nothing we could propose right now to the Government of Quebec and to the Bloc Quebecois that would make them happy. There is nothing we could propose right that would make them all of a sudden jump up and say that they want to stay in Canada. They are not prepared to do that.

What the Prime Minister has done, and I think he has done it very well, is drafted it in a way that he is giving exactly what he committed to. He is opening the door for future commitments and future negotiations in 1997 or 1998. He is allowing Canadians the time to sit down and work on some of the problems we have as a country.

I call on all Canadians to take up the challenge of the Prime Minister to go to Quebec, to Alberta or British Columbia and tell them we need to keep the country together and that the fact the United Nations considers us the number one country in the world is no mistake.

It is because we have been able to draw together, to work together, to bring the diversity of Canadians together and to focus attention on working for the betterment of not only Canadians but the country as a whole. We have stayed together all these years because of that desire of Canadians.

There are those who ask: “What is Canadian? What is Canada?” Some people say Canada is something that is not American. I believe we saw in Montreal what Canada really

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stands for: for sharing, caring and working together. The motion tries to build on that. I ask Canadians to challenge the naysayers and those in Quebec who say that English Canada does not want them based on history and on fact.

Recently we observed Remembrance Day with ceremonies in which we remembered the strong dedication that many Canadians gave to their country. We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. Those Canadians died for their country, believing in their country. I wonder what they would think today about the ongoing debate in the House, what they would think about the silliness of some of what is being said. They fought and gave their all for their country. They deserve our giving them something back. We should sit down, talk, throw away politics, throw away the rhetoric and let their memory guide us in terms of our deliberations.

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

On behalf of my constituents of Haldimand—Norfolk, I want to tell Quebecers there is a desire on our part to make things right. I think Quebecers are being told lies about the position of English speaking Canadians in rural areas. My constituents would like a chance to sit down and talk with their French speaking compatriots.

People in Haldimand—Norfolk are proud of Canada, and they think we have accomplished great things together over the last few years. We would like you Quebecers to try to understand how we feel. Do not believe all the talk about English speaking Canadians being willing to let you go and not being ready to compromise. We are ready. Let us get together and talk about it.

[*English*]

I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, whether you understood what I said. Perhaps you can read the translation afterward. I say on behalf of the people of Haldimand—Norfolk that we need to sit down, to throw away the rhetoric, to put politics behind us and to share our common values of what is Canadian. We can do that and at the same time we can work on what Canadians really want.

We can work on making the economy work. We can work on a health care system that is envied the world over. We can work on saving the environment. These are all very important issues that we need to address. We do not need to be talking about the Constitution at this time.

In our three-point plan we are trying to make sure that as Canadians and as legislators responsible for all of Canada and not just one region or one province, we make it very well known to Quebecers that we love the country, that we need them as a part of the country for it to be strong and that we recognize their distinctiveness. We recognize they have a distinct and different language from that of a lot of Canadians. We recognize they

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have a different culture and a different legal system. I only wish the opposition party, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, would recognize it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I assure the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk that I understood every word and I take the liberty to compliment him on his effort to speak in the other official language.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in tonight's debate on the Prime Minister's motion concerning the recognition of Quebec's distinct society within Canada. In supporting this motion, I would like to talk, first of all, as an Acadian from Nova Scotia. As you know, Acadians were among the first people to settle in Canada after the First Nations, and, since the founding of the first settlement at Port-Royal, four centuries ago, we have had our share of upheavals, struggles and turmoil.

• (2000)

Protecting our language and culture has never been easy. We have had to fight, and we still do, to get our share of recognition. But we realized a long time ago that our chances of survival as a cultural community were much better if we joined forces with the francophones of Quebec, Manitoba and elsewhere in Canada.

We know that the preservation and blossoming of our language and culture largely depend on our being part of a larger country which has been able to include our concerns as well as those of other cultural communities in a larger entity and a broader vision. This is Canada.

The Official Languages Act and the bilingualism policy have provided a concrete example of this broader vision of Canada.

I consider myself lucky to have had a chance to personally experience the distinct nature of Quebec. For four years, in the early 1980s, I was a student at Laval University, where I made a lot of close friends among Quebecers. I had a chance to have lengthy discussions with them about their vision and their place both within Quebec and within Canada.

I found that, in general, the distinct nature of Quebec and of Quebecers is not based on a separation from the rest of Canada, but rather on an affirmation of oneself and a feeling of solidarity that finds its expression and its soul in the vitality of the French language, as the singer-songwriter Michel Rivard says so beautifully: "The language of my heart is the heart of my life".

But despite all the political rhetoric and the sovereigntist movement, the Quebecers that I know have a profound attachment to Canada. And I think that if all cultural communities

across Canada can work together, we can contribute to the growth and prosperity of our wonderful country.

[*English*]

I have no trouble with the notion of Quebec being seen as a distinct society within the context of this motion. Nor do I see any contradiction in the notion that while not conferring special powers to the Government of Quebec, this motion is by no means symbolic, although it carries some important and powerful symbolism.

By recognizing the distinctive character of Quebec in its policies, its laws, its regulations and its programs, this motion provides one more prism among many others through which the Government of Canada commits itself to be guided in the development of its laws, its regulations, its policies and programs before they are enacted and as they are implemented.

The members of the Reform Party have a hard time understanding this because they do not really understand how modern government functions. When government policy is developed and presented before cabinet for consideration or when a change is made to a body of regulation or when a new law or program is adopted and advanced and presented before Parliament, it must be evaluated according to many different angles or dimensions. One of these is the balance of impacts of the program across gender lines, socio-economic lines, and regions and provinces so that the balance of these impacts is fair and equitable.

• (2005)

A good example of this is the legislation that was tabled last week by the Minister of Human Resources Development. In the package of information that accompanied the legislation creating the employment insurance program, one of the first tables presented is a table describing the financial impacts of employment insurance by province. No government would contemplate a major change in a program such as employment insurance without considering the impacts across provincial lines.

Another example of a prism through which government policy has to be evaluated is provided by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which since 1982 has been enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ensures that laws and regulations and programs introduced by the federal government respect the basic freedoms and rights of Canadian citizens that we have enshrined in the Constitution through the charter.

A third example is provided to us by the official languages legislation enforced by the official languages commission for Canada and the whole policy and infrastructure promoting official bilingualism in Canada, which ensure that linguistic minorities in Canada, including Acadians and other francophone groups throughout the country, as well as anglophones in

Quebec, receive the recognition of their language and receive services in the language of their choice.

These are commitments the federal government has made for itself and for its programs. They are part of the prism through which all laws, regulations, and programs must be evaluated by the Government of Canada.

The distinct society motion the Prime Minister has brought forward this week will in a different way act as a prism and a guide and an opportunity for the federal government to commit and ensure that the programs and its policies reflect this particular cultural aspect of Canada, which is the distinctive character of Quebec in those very important categories of unique language, culture, and civil law tradition. That in a sense is the genius of the Prime Minister's approach to recognizing Quebec as a distinct society and putting into practical effect the application of that respect as far as the Government of Canada is concerned.

One of the reasons Canadians continue to be so supportive and have such great confidence in the Prime Minister of Canada is because largely through his great experience in government he has found a way to give concrete effect to the commitments and undertakings he made to the people of Quebec and to the people of Canada for change and for recognition of their particular place in Confederation in a way that does not violate the rights of other Canadians and the rights of provinces but acts as a positive discipline on the Government of Canada.

If other Canadians and provinces through the constitutional discussions choose and can agree on the enshrinement of such a principle in the Canadian Constitution, that would strengthen the notion of the distinct society we have adopted and will adopt through this Parliament.

[*Translation*]

I will conclude my remarks by saying that I know this initiative will never satisfy the separatist members of the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry but the member's time has expired. I now give the floor to the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans.

• (2010)

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member who just spoke that it will never satisfy us.

“Whatever they say or do, Quebec is, today and forever, a distinct society”. Those words were spoken by Quebec's federalist Liberal premier Robert Bourassa, the day after the failure of Meech. “The days of negotiating with ten or eleven parties around the table are over. From now on, only bilateral discussions will be held.”

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This goes to show that the federal Liberal government motion before the House today is nothing new. The concept of a distinct society was developed by the Quebec Liberal Party. Actually, it goes back to 1965 and the preliminaries of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Laurendeau—Dunton Commission, which used the term distinct society in a marginal note to the paragraph that defines Quebec society on page 103.

In a speech on May 9, 1986, Quebec Intergovernmental Relations Minister Gil Rémillard stated five minimum conditions which, if they were met, might lead Quebec to ratify the Constitution Act, 1982. Meanwhile, the Parti Québécois was talking about a distinct people.

According to the Meech Lake Accord, in 1990, the Quebec National Assembly would have been responsible for protecting the duality and promoting the distinct identity of Quebec. We supported the Meech Lake accord because it was supposed to recognize the distinct identity of Quebec. This provision would not have the effect of lessening the existing powers of the federal government.

Basically, including this in the Constitution would be a way to make up for the affront we suffered in 1982, after Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau said in a speech on May 14, 1980, before the May 20 referendum: “We are putting our seats on the line, and if you vote no, this no will mean yes to a new Canada”. The result was the unilateral patriation of the Constitution in 1982, with the help of the present Prime Minister.

To take a leaf from the book of the hon. member from Nova Scotia, how can we trust these people? Basically, what were we asking for? We were asking the judges to consider both concepts, the Canadian duality and distinct society, in their interpretations of the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982, the latter including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Prime Minister's baby, as he keeps reminding us in this House.

At the time, the distinct society clause would have limited the centralist and standardizing tendencies of the Charter. When the Supreme Court ruled that certain sections of Bill 101 were unconstitutional, the Quebec National Assembly would have been able to adopt them again, if the distinct society clause had been accepted.

Another important event, involving a player we saw at work during the referendum campaign last October, was initiated by the Charest report, named after the hon. member for Sherbrooke, who is often conspicuous by his absence from this House, and the Charest report goes back to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but, if I have heard him correctly, the hon. member is not allowed to comment on a colleague's absence from this House. I

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would ask the hon. member not to comment on any member's presence or absence.

**Mr. Guimond:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, you have been vigilant and I withdraw my comment.

The purpose of the Charest report, published in May 1990, was to limit the scope of the distinct society concept, particularly by stating that the distinct society clause did not in any way restrict the effectiveness of the charter.

Right from the start, in May 1990, it was obvious that certain provincial premiers were uncomfortable with the idea of a distinct society. From then on, the Meech Lake accord began to experience some difficulty.

• (2015)

According to certain premiers, the semi-official nature of the distinct society concept could have led to the Canadian courts' not using that clause in interpreting the Canadian Constitution. Then came the Charlottetown accord, in which the constitutional importance of the distinct society was watered down into a set of eight fundamental characteristics defining Canada. How could the courts have seen their way clear in all of that?

We were led to believe that the notion of a distinct society ranked higher than the other fundamental characteristics. But the overall sparseness of the Charlottetown accord shows that the notion of a distinct society would not have had any real effect. This was already an indication that it was an empty shell. And that is why Quebecers voted no in the October 26, 1992, referendum on Charlottetown: because they considered that it did not give enough to Quebec. The other provinces voted against it as well, but because they considered that it gave too much to Quebec. Imagine!

I have just given a brief overview of Meech 1, Meech 2, the Charest report and the Charlottetown accord. I have never seen a box wrapped in Christmas paper without anything inside, but such is the case with the propositions of the Prime Minister, his Liberal team, and the "learned committees" he has set up to show Quebecers how much he loves them.

Nothing in this motion recognizes Quebecers as a distinct people. As we know, a motion of the House of commons has no legal value, let alone a constitutional one. The motion introduced by the Liberal government is an empty shell that will have no legal or political impact. It is an act of panic aimed basically at deceiving those who want real changes to Quebec's status.

Fortunately, Quebecers can see through all this and pick out what is truly good for them. The Prime Minister's reaction in introducing this motion tells us there is a terrible threat. He kept

the phrase "distinct society" because it would have been difficult to do otherwise, but he did all he could to strip it of its meaning. Just imagine. The Liberal government's proposal was considered unacceptable even by Quebec Liberals, whose leader, Daniel Johnson, recently asked that the distinctive character of Quebec be entrenched in the Constitution.

The definition of distinct society proposed by the Prime Minister is identical to the one contained in the Charlottetown accord, which was rejected by a majority of Canadians and Quebecers. Furthermore, the definition proposed by the Prime Minister does not go as far as the one initially proposed in the Meech Lake accord. How could anyone in this House believe that we could not oppose such a motion? Come on. We are not idiots.

The government's motion to recognize the distinct nature of Quebec cannot, in any way, be considered an adequate response to the changes demanded by Quebecers during the October 30 referendum. We must bear in mind that, last October, Quebecers voted in favour of sovereignty in a very large proportion and that a majority of Quebecers, including some who voted no, were in favour of a comprehensive renewal of Canadian federalism.

Given that my time is almost up, I would like to tell you that we are in favour of sovereignty for the people of Quebec and that it is out of the question for Quebecers to negotiate agreements that even Daniel Johnson called, when referring to manpower training, cut-rate agreements.

• (2020)

Clearly, the federal government's proposals give nothing to Quebec.

To conclude, like many, I think that we must be careful not to undermine whatever good faith remains between the various parties. On the contrary, we should create links that will bring us closer to a partnership—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry, but the member's time is up. The hon. member for Chicoutimi has the floor.

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is true that we are all making history in taking part in this debate, establishing the federal system's inability to renew itself.

I never thought I would rise in this House to speak on anything so empty as this motion on Quebec's recognition as a distinct society. This motion by the government is essentially an exercise in futility. It is complete and utter nothingness.

Since October 30, improvisation has prevailed in this House, so much so that the Quebec Ligue nationale d'improvisation now has pretty stiff competition.

Before October 30, constitutional matters were systematically off topic. We were told time after time again that Canadians

wanted to hear about the economy, work, jobs and job creation. But, surprise, the day after October 30, the sovereignist project was within a hair's breadth of becoming a reality.

A few days later, the federalist camp reacted hastily in the face of a potential victory of the yes side. In Verdun, we had the pleasure of a speech by the Prime Minister, which brought back memories. In 1980, on the eve of another referendum, another Prime Minister came to Quebec to make promises. The current Prime Minister was at his side.

On October 30, the federalist camp heaved a sigh of relief. The reality of the matter is something else, however. After their narrow victory, the federalists no doubt consulted each other and decided to react. And what a reaction! I said before that this smacks of improvisation. Two committees were created in this very House. But, all of a sudden, the Prime Minister himself announced the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society. To hell with the committees, he sidestepped his own creations and everybody else.

The distinct society motion, as it stands, is nothing more than idle talk and pure window dressing. It being only a motion of the House of Commons, it could be easily overturned at the whim of any federal government. There is nothing in the Constitution that recognizes Quebec as a distinct society. All this motion means is that, in the future, it will be possible to tell Quebecers: "You are distinct. Are you not happy? You are distinct." But giving Quebecers the means to act as a distinct people is out of the question, let alone seeing the Liberal government try its hardest to have this distinctiveness recognized in the Constitution. Again, this would be too much to ask.

But, come to think of it, what else could we expect from a Prime Minister who told this House last September that everybody knew that Quebec was distinct therefore it did not have to be enshrined in the Constitution. If this is how he reads last week's motion, then it is justified.

• (2025)

The Prime Minister would certainly need a history lesson. History teaches us that every time the federal government wants to do something for Quebecers, it ends up watering down its promises. This is akin to using the same coffee grounds to make five or six pots; what remains at the end of this process is like dishwater. That is what the government is doing with this motion. First Meech, then Charlottetown, and now the 1995 motion. There is nothing left; not much substance indeed. It merely encourages the legislative and executive branches of government to take note of the recognition that Quebec is a distinct society.

Unlike some Liberal members, we see the past as important. As the famous saying goes: what goes around, comes around.

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Quebecers know their history. They also know what they want. The Prime Minister's motion will go down in history mostly as another insult to Quebecers' intelligence, as an attempt to convince them that a simple motion could finally settle the issue.

This government is forgetting something else. Quebec's motto is "Je me souviens". On October 30, some Quebecers decided to give Canada a last chance. It was the last chance. Once again, they thought that Canada would recognize them as a people and give them the powers that go along with being a people. Unfortunately, they were once again in for a disappointment when they saw what was really being proposed: a motion that sets us back even further.

This motion was put together in a mad rush because the Prime Minister knows full well that he will be questioned by the official opposition. While, in 1980, Quebecers were represented by 74 Liberal members in the House of Commons, in 1995, it is quite a different story, since 53 Bloc members have been given the mandate by the people of Quebec to look after their interests. The Prime Minister knows full well that if he tries to delude Quebecers into believing that he is delivering the goods, we will be there to condemn him for it. The mandate we have been given by the people of Quebec was clear and it has become even clearer since October 30.

Where I come from, we have a saying that goes: "Rude awakenings are to be expected on the morning after". Never has the saying been so true as in the aftermath of the October 30 referendum. At the beginning of my remarks, I indicated that I never expected to have to speak on such an empty and meaningless motion, and I am sure that the people of my region agree.

This is another history lesson that Quebecers are not about to forget. It is also a lesson for those who thought they would give a last chance to Canada. But by dint of remembering, the people of Quebec will take action. I have no doubt about that. One day soon we will start writing the history of the people of Quebec.

The motion put forward by the Prime Minister is tasteless, colourless and odourless. Anyone who believes that Quebecers are a people must reject it.

• (2030)

[English]

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time with the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

I was torn as I thought through what I would say tonight on this resolution. I am profoundly saddened that I am standing here and talking on this issue at this time in our history. We have so many issues to deal with in this country. However we are once more drawn back into a debate that at its roots is not going to put

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bread on the table, is not going to do anything to alleviate poverty, is not going to create a job, is not going to enhance the capacity of people to work, to learn or to earn. It is a debate that if I understand what the members of the Bloc have been saying tonight is based on a constant bringing forward of a history that has not served them or the rest of Canada particularly well.

What confuses me is that shortly after I was elected to this Chamber I had several opportunities to travel into Quebec; one as a student in Jonquière. I spent some time there at the CEGEP studying French and meeting with the Bloc member for Jonquière who most hospitable. He took me around, showed me his constituency and introduced me to people there. We had wonderful discussions about what Canada needed to do to deal with the debt, with social programs and with all of the kinds of things that we talk about all across the country.

Some time after that I had an opportunity as a member of the HRD committee to go into Montreal, Quebec City, Lévis and Rivière-du-Loup to talk to people and receive submissions, in particular, about unemployment insurance but really all of the social programs that were encompassed in that rather large review.

Three members of the Bloc toured with us across Canada as part of that committee. We started in Vancouver and travelled right across the country. What struck me about that experience is that when we got away from the opening moments of the hearings, when the organized groups would come in and demonstrate, wave and shout and scream in Vancouver, in Toronto and in Montreal, and sat down with people to talk about what they were concerned about and what did they wanted to see the government do and what were the issues they wanted us to confront, I did not hear the word "Constitution", I did not hear the word "embarrassment", I did not hear the word "insulted".

I heard people talking about how we can help our kids get an education, how we can build skills, how can we find jobs. I heard people in Lévis and Rivière-du-Loup talking about being very concerned about their future and about the fact that their children were having to move out of town to find work. I heard unilingual French people saying the same things in those communities as unilingual English people were saying in Saskatchewan, Alberta and in my own province of Manitoba.

I do not mean to make light of what occurred. Any time 50 per cent of any area votes to leave a country as strong and wonderful as Canada, there is a problem.

I have talked about this with members of the Bloc. Lots of conversations go on in this House, some of them across the floor like tonight. I have a conversation two or three times a week in

the gymnasium with the member for Quebec-Est. We talk about what is at the root of the concerns that is driving people in Quebec to want to leave Canada. I have had many long talks with the member for Mercier about her views of social programs in Canada or in Quebec. Frankly they are very consistent with my views of social programs in Quebec. To try to understand what is driving this desire to break up this country is something that has been very difficult for me.

I want to share with the members of the Bloc something that I hope will help their understanding of the feelings in other parts of Canada about this issue. When the Meech Lake accord failed to pass the Manitoba legislature, I was the House leader for the opposition. When the constitutional amendment was brought to Manitoba, there was a very detailed and thorough public examination of the proposals.

• (2035)

A committee was struck, with representatives from all three parties in the legislature. That committee travelled all over Manitoba. Committee members went to Indian reserves in the northern part of the province. They went to small rural communities in the north, the south, the east and the west and they spent many days in the city of Winnipeg, allowing Manitobans to come forward and speak to them about their feelings on the Meech Lake accord.

As a result, Manitoba put forward some amendments to the accord as it was then struck. When I hear the language used by previous speakers here about how people did not respect Quebec and how that was an insult to Quebec, I want to tell them that subject never came up in these hearings.

The Meech Lake accord says in subsection (2)(i):

The Constitution of Canada shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with

(b) The recognition that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society.

(3) The role of the legislature and Government of Quebec to preserve and promote the distinct identity of Quebec—

That was what the Meech Lake accord said, if I understood the members opposite correctly.

After holding hearings all over the province, after researching it, considering it, debating it, this is how the three parties in the Manitoba legislature said the clause should read:

The Constitution of Canada shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the recognition that the following constitute fundamental characteristics of Canada:

(d) Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society;

In the Meech Lake accord the recognition is that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society. The recommendation of all parties of the province of Manitoba was that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society.



My province has recognized and supported that fact since 1990. This resolution, which calls on the House to recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada, is simply consistent and affirms the very statements that the member holds up as an example of the things that Quebec wanted. It is the very thing that the three parties in the legislature and the people of Manitoba were prepared to support and the very thing that the Prime Minister asks us to support now.

When I look at the role we have as legislators, there are six practical things we do. We pass, amend or rescind legislation. We deal with expenditure or the withholding of expenditure, the cutting of expenditure. We regulate. However, there is an intangible thing we are called on to do in the Chamber and that is provide leadership.

It is time we began to talk about not how we drive this country apart, but how we pull it together, how we collectively provide some leadership that will improve the lives of people in this country, not harm them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my speech this evening is entitled *An open letter to my Quebec kissing cousins*. They know who they are.

First, I want to thank these cousins for the discussions we had during the referendum campaign. One of them was in charge of the yes side in her community, in the lower St. Lawrence region. We had a brief conversation, two days before the referendum, in a very serene and pleasant atmosphere.

The other two had me over for dinner, in a Montreal suburb, on a stormy fall evening. Inside, there was also a storm raging. It was a storm of ideas, concepts, rebuttals and assertions. In short, it was a very pleasant evening, and I thank them.

That evening, we discussed the Constitutional Act of 1982, the Meech Lake accord, as well as issues such as overlap, duplication, immigration, and the French language in North America, Canada and Quebec. Of course, we also talked about the distinct society.

• (2040)

Today, I find myself participating in a debate revived last Wednesday by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. That day, I listened very carefully to the speech made by the opposition leader. If I do not call him by name, dear cousins, it is not out of disrespect, but because the rules and the tradition of this House prevent me from doing so.

As I said, I listened carefully to what he had to say. Several of his statements are so skilfully crafted that you have to stop and think for a minute or two to figure out what he means, especially when he is talking about the Constitutional Act of 1982. Here are some quotes from the speech he made. "One of the things the 1982 Constitution effectively introduced into Canada and

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Quebec's legal and political landscape was the notion of a single country, a Canadian nation—this was a first".

And he added: "This was the first time constitutional and legal texts talked about Canada as a single nation, the nation of Canada. The corollary, needless to say, was that Quebecers found their existence as a people being denied, implicitly, if not explicitly".

Finally, he said, and I am still quoting: "—but it never occurred to me that, someday, a democratic Canada, English Canada, a nation that is open, tolerant and respectful of individual rights, could actually rely on its weight to crush Quebec's wish, tear up the Constitution agreed upon by our forefathers in 1867 and replace it with another constitution that was not recognized by Quebec but imposed on Quebec, a constitution repudiated—" I could go on and on.

I could spend hours proving that the Constitution was not replaced or torn up, that not all Quebecers repudiated this Constitutional Act, as the Leader of the Opposition would have you believe. But by doing this, I would be getting into an argument with some politicians. For now, I would rather talk to my cousins.

In the face of such a condemnation of what happened in 1982, I thought it was time for me to reread the Constitution Act of 1982, which I did. I looked everywhere to find some hint of the crushing he talked about and that some people would like to make a part of the historical baggage of Quebecers, but I could not find it.

I looked everywhere to find where it says that the existence of Quebecers as a people was denied implicitly or explicitly, with the same result, but I could not find a thing.

I looked everywhere to find the provision that says that English Canada—and I will come back to this irritating expression a little later on—relied on its weight to crush Quebec's wish. Again, I could not find it.

So we have every reason to wonder, Mr. Speaker and dear cousins, whether these remarks were intended to perpetuate and to reinforce a myth that has been created and spread by separatist forces.

Dear cousins, I have a question for you. What bothers you in the Constitution Act, 1982? Is it the entrenchment in the Constitution of your fundamental freedoms, such as the freedom of conscience and religion, the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including the freedom of the press and other communications media? I do not think so.

Is it the freedom of peaceful assembly? I do not think so either. Freedom of association? I doubt it. Is it the entrenchment of your democratic rights, your mobility rights or your legal rights? I do not think so. To this day, I have not met one Canadian, or one Quebecer for that matter, who is against these rights.

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Is it the entrenchment in the Constitution of French and English as the official languages of our country then? Does it bother you so much? Or is it the fact that the concepts of equalization and regional disparity, two typically Canadian concepts that continue to serve Quebec well, were included in the Constitution?

I still fail to see what is the cause of this national humiliation the advocates of independence have talked so much about. Based on the points I just mentioned, how has Quebec's wish been crushed?

Dear cousins, on the autumn evening when we met, I really appreciated our ability to speak frankly, directly and with mutual respect. So I ask you to consider carefully and as objectively as possible the following question: what bothers you personally about the Constitution Act of 1982?

• (2045)

There is something else I would like to say, and I referred to this earlier. The term English Canada, which Bloc members and their leader are using indiscriminately these days in a poorly disguised attempt to keep erecting walls between Canadians, cropped up at least a dozen times in the speech made last Wednesday by the Leader of the Opposition.

Well, I want to ask Bloc members who are constantly complaining, loud and clear, about the general lack of understanding of the Quebec society, to please stop ignoring a million French Canadians who do not live in Quebec. We would appreciate some respect.

In fact, the term is not accurate since New Brunswick is officially bilingual, probably another humiliating result of the Constitution Act of 1982. The Bloc likes to speak in separatist terms, and it is pretty obvious why. I hope you, my cousins, are not fooled. You know, in northern and eastern Ontario, there are a lot of French Canadians, including your own cousins. Some day, we should discuss how certain expressions evolved and why, hardly a generation ago, we were all French Canadians, and today, we are Franco-Ontarians, Québécois, Acadians, Fransaskois and so forth.

Maybe we should invent new hyphens, new links, with all due respect for the late John Diefenbaker. I agree, we are all Canadians. But as such, we all have one or more links elsewhere. Some are new Canadians, others are English or French Canadians. In this great country with a strong tradition of tolerance and openness, there is room for everyone, even communities that form a distinct society.

When you think about it, the hyphen is a symbol that seems tailor-made for Canada. Are we not one of the hyphens or links between France and the United Kingdom, between Europe and the United States of America? We see those links throughout our history, between Lower Canada and Upper Canada and even in the Act of Union.

The beauty of the hyphen is that it manages to link two entities that are sometimes entirely distinct. Is this not the very essence of Canada? Squaring the circle, duality in unity? My dear cousins, you will agree this would make an interesting subject for our next meeting. Meanwhile, let this House recognize the distinct identity of Quebec society by voting for the motion presented by the Prime Minister, a motion which, at the very least, is a step in the right direction. That being said, my dear cousins, I remain, yours sincerely.

[English]

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to Motion No. 26, which is the motion put forward in the House by the Prime Minister. I will oppose the motion unless it is amended, as was suggested by my leader, the hon. member for Calgary Southwest.

I am concerned that the federal government has used closure to limit debate on something as important as how Canada functions, how we respect and treat one another, and whether or not the principle of distinct society is a worthwhile course for us to follow as a nation.

The whole idea of using closure, or time allocation, has been addressed many times in the House. I will not condemn it at length. I will just repeat that I believe it is wrong. I know that members opposite, when they sat in opposition, declared that it was wrong. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands called it morally wicked if the Mulroney government introduced time allocation and closure. Yet the Liberal government has introduced this procedure far more often than the Conservatives did under Mulroney. The Liberals do not even bat an eye. They think there is nothing wrong with limiting debate on important issues that do not need to be dealt with in an emergency when the national good is at stake.

When we talk about distinct society it brings back memories. I first remember hearing this phrase discussed in the debate on the Meech Lake accord. Perhaps it was coined before that, but I was not aware of the phrase until the Meech Lake debate. Subsequently, it was a bone of contention when the Charlottetown accord was put forward and voted on in a national referendum in Canada and defeated.

• (2050)

It is interesting that the reason the Meech Lake accord never did pass is because of a member who sits in our midst. While there was opposition to the Meech Lake accord in the province of Newfoundland with its premier and there was resistance in the province of Manitoba with the government there, the one member at that time in the Manitoba legislature who probably had more impact on bringing down the Meech Lake accord than any other Canadian was the hon. member for Churchill, who now sits in the House.

It is interesting that the member for Churchill, in recognizing other problems the aboriginal people of Canada face, has called a sacred assembly. As a people they are doing some soul searching. They are even looking for inspiration from higher powers than themselves to solve problems facing the aboriginal people.

Maybe if we as a nation started to reflect on the one we recognize in our Constitution as the supreme authority, perhaps we would be better off than spending all this time trying to confer special privileges, rights, or distinct society, whatever that may mean, on a group of individuals. The Constitution calls upon us to recognize the supremacy of God. If we have the correct interpretation of how this almighty person looks upon the world, he looks upon us with the same eyes regardless of our language, our race, or our culture. I believe we are all equal before him. We are all special, but certainly I do not expect he would suggest that any of us are distinct or in some way deserve privileges the rest of us do not.

I want to talk a little about why I am concerned about the phrase distinct society. I am a little concerned about how it may be interpreted in the future. Quite frankly, I do not trust the Liberal government when it proposes that this really does not mean anything.

I am reminded of a Liberal politician in the past who when he spoke in western Canada would not speak in glowing terms of the national energy program. This subject seldom came up because this Liberal, being a fairly knowledgeable and experienced politician, realized that western Canadians were aware that the national energy program had siphoned billions of dollars out of the western Canadian economy and into the federal treasury and the same proportional benefits were not returned to the people who owned the natural resource. Natural resources of course are a provincial jurisdiction.

This same experienced Liberal politician would go into Atlantic Canada, far away from the west, and expound on the virtues of the national energy program. I saw this on television one day. The wonderful thing about television is that sometimes it captures the things you say and it is recorded and broadcast in other parts of the country.

I realize that we have to be careful that we are consistent with our message in all parts of Canada when we are dealing with an issue, whether it be the national energy program or whether it be distinct society.

I have the uncanny feeling that when we are talking about distinct society the message being conveyed to the province of Quebec is not the same message that is being conveyed to other parts of Canada. The message to Quebec is that this will meet their aspirations. This somehow will confer on them some feeling of being a nation, meet demands that have been made by

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the separatists. Somehow these demands will be met and their feelings of nationalism will be appeased by recognizing them as a distinct society.

Then in the rest of the country the message is a bit different: Distinct society does not really mean anything, it is just an acknowledgement of something that already exists; it is no big deal, nothing to be worried about, and it might keep the country together.

I doubt that very much. It does not seem to make sense to me that you can convey one message to Canadian citizens in the province of Quebec and another message outside of the province. Something does not fit. Rather than question the message, we have to question the messenger. I do not think they are dealing a fair hand to Canadians when they describe the distinct society.

We really have to be concerned about how this term distinct society will be interpreted in the future. We can sit in this House and the government and the Prime Minister can say distinct society means this or that. But we know this term will be interpreted in the future by the courts and by future governments, so we have to be concerned about how distinct society is defined.

• (2055)

Actually I cannot find any place in Motion No. 26 or in any other information that tells us exactly what distinct society means in this case. We are told it includes the French-speaking majority. It does not say anything about any other Quebecers. We are told the House will be guided by this distinct society phrase. We are told the House will encourage all components of the legislative and executive branches of government to take note of this recognition and be guided in their conduct accordingly.

To me that sounds like a blank cheque. That is saying let us adopt the phrase distinct society, hang it over the door of Quebec, and then we will try to pursue it with diligence and all our effort without knowing really what it means. We will interpret that in the future. We will let future politicians and future governments, perhaps even separatist governments, define the phrase distinct society for us. Just trust us, it will work out all right, that is what they are saying.

That concerns me very much as a Canadian, because I realize that when we are talking about the future of our country we are not talking about today only. We are not even talking about the people who make the decisions in this House and in the legislative assemblies of the provinces across the land. We are talking about the decisions that will be made in the future by parliamentarians and by people in the various legislatures, including possibly a separatist government in the province of Quebec.

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I want to deal with this whole idea of conferring special status or rights on any group of society. Why would we do that? There are three reasons we might do that. The first reason is because these people are inferior to us and they need some kind of assistance. I do not accept that for the province of Quebec. I see them as my equals. Second, we can say that they are superior and they deserve some special status. I do not accept that either. I see them as my equals. Thirdly, we could say that because some of their ancestors were here before some of our ancestors they deserve a higher rung on the ladder. I do not accept that. Wherever we come from, we should all be treated equally. None of us should have any special status conferred upon us. Therefore, unless we accept the Reform amendments I cannot support the motion.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 26 today, as it will have a profound impact on the future of our country if it is adopted.

Let me state my position quite clearly. As a Reformer, as an Albertan, as a Canadian and as someone who considers Canada as home, I cannot support distinct society for any province. I cannot support elevating one province over another, and I am not prepared to separate the haves from the have nots. I believe in equality and fairness for every man, woman, and child in this country regardless of their race, colour, creed, origin, or abilities.

To say that this motion is ill conceived is a euphemism of the first order. This motion is an unmitigated disaster, an affront to the House, a disgrace to the country and misrepresents all Canada stands for.

It is our duty today to govern this country with democracy, freedom, and equality as our guiding lights as we build on the past and lay the groundwork for the future generations. We have to be accountable for our actions today, just as those in the past have been judged by history for their actions.

There have been defining moments in history that were hailed as great achievements, yet history found them to be shallow and empty gestures that in hindsight would have best been left undone. I think of 1938, when Mr. Chamberlain promised us peace in our time as he waved a document that was, as I called it, a one-sided agreement. One year later, his proclamation for peace was trampled under the jackboots of an army that marched across Europe.

• (2100)

In 1982 the prime minister of the day proclaimed a new Constitution for the country that he said would last for 1,000 years. But that Constitution did not have the signature of Quebec, and like Mr. Chamberlain's declaration for peace in 1938, this Constitution was a one sided agreement.

I hear the historians of tomorrow calling this motion a one sided agreement that will not stand 1,000 years and will not even buy peace in our time. Today we are debating a motion which the

government promises will bring peace and harmony to the country. As in 1938, the motivation for this motion is appeasement, not resolution. This is an offer to Quebec, not an agreement with Quebec.

Let us look at the proposed motion. The government wants the House to affirm a distinct society in the province of Quebec. Distinct society is not defined. Those who have demanded recognition as a distinct society in these last few years have not demanded recognition as a medal to be worn with pride but as a lever to exert more power, more advantage and to receive preferential treatment at the expense of the rest of Canada. Let us not lose sight of that fact.

The government mistakenly believes that talking about an issue, making statements about an issue, is equivalent to resolving the issue. Our debate today is a perfect example of that hypocrisy. In passing this motion the Prime Minister believes he will have achieved peace in our time. We know today Quebec is not satisfied. We know today the leaders of the separatist movement in Quebec will brush this gesture aside and march on.

What faith do we have today that this agreement will buy peace within Canada, harmony within Canada and build the structure for a united Canada while the forces of separation organize and marshal their resources for another assault on the unity of the country? We have none.

Alberta and British Columbia have been vocal over the years in their demand for change within this united federation, but they have voiced their concerns in a true and democratic way of working in a positive manner to achieve change. Both of these provinces are designated as have provinces within the equalization formula. Both of these provinces have contributed billions over the last few decades to the promotion and protection of this Confederation while they continue to live up to their commitments without demands that they receive the benefits equal to their contribution to the country.

If we are to have peace we need goodwill and commitment by the parties involved, not a simple, frivolous motion debated in the House produced at the whim of the government, all in the false hope that one single motion is a panacea to several decades of dissent.

The Reform Party has proposed three simple amendments to this motion to give it strength and focus. First, the government is asking that we recognize Quebec as a distinct society. We as Reformers say that is fine provided we recognize this is not to be used as a lever for more power and privilege at the expense of other provinces. Surely our amendment confirms the very heart of any federation, any family and any society that wants to survive today: equality for all.

• (2105)

Second, we recognize the French speaking majority, culture and legal traditions in Quebec. They are a fact of life which exist each day. However, we also recognize the great promise of the

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new world which guarantees equality for all regardless of who we are, what we are and where we came from.

Third, while we undertake to be guided by the reality of a distinct society and recognize that fact, we also undertake to be guided by the reality and recognize that this nation is one nation, from sea to shining sea.

Changes to the Constitution and the devolution of federal powers is a manageable process, but it is being managed in a most disgraceful manner by the Liberal government. The Reform Party knows that Canada can work together, will work together and, with real leadership in the country, will stay together. Leadership requires vision and a clear statement of the way to the promised land.

In the face of the challenge to break up the country the Reform Party has responded with a call to action with a plan and a program. A strong and proud Canada will move forward only when the leadership of this great nation articulates a clear vision for the country which is created by, endorsed by and supported by the large majority of Canadians and provinces.

This motion, in the way it is presented, is not the answer.

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to enter the debate on Motion No. 26, which would recognize Quebec as a distinct society.

As we listen to the opposition parties we are wondering just what we are doing here. A distinct society will not cause the price of gasoline to go up. It will not affect our paycheques. It will have little or no effect on the lives of Canadians.

I have taken the opportunity to do a mailing to the constituents of Durham. I am happy to say that a good many of them are responding on how they feel about this issue. Their main concern is they want to keep the country united and strong. However, they have limitations. They do not think it should be done at any price. They are concerned that we respect the civil rights of all people in Canada. This motion will not inhibit the civil rights of individuals within the province of Quebec.

People are prepared to recognize each other as being distinct. However, it is an unusual concept for a society to recognize one element as being distinct. Clearly that means the other elements must also be distinct. There is a polarization of understanding. I believe that is healthy. It is useful within our system.

As I was coming to the House tonight I thought about all the debates and arguments caused by these two words in the last two or three decades. I wondered what would happen if we all collectively went to bed tonight and got amnesia. We would forget about our past. We would forget about our history. We would forget about we were doing when we lived together.

• (2110)

What would happen when we woke up tomorrow morning? We would find that we still have this huge country, the second largest nation in the world. We would discover that within that nation there were different linguistic groups: some French, some English, some others.

We would find that over a certain period of time they had entered into agreements with each other, individuals. That is all government is about, contracts and agreements between people.

We would discover that we had built a caring society, that we had developed medicare systems, unemployment insurance systems, pensions for our elderly. We had built all of these things, a social fabric, and we called it Canada.

We also did some other things. We also borrowed a lot of money to pay for some of these social programs in periods when our revenues could not sustain them. We would discover as we opened the books that we had huge debts; some of them federal, many of them provincial, but all culminated in a huge bill we all had to pay.

Having looked at these aspects, we would also see we had inherited tremendous resources. We had inherited the forests, the mines, the rivers. We had inherited a country of mountains, of lakes, from sea to sea to sea, and that we all together shared this great nation.

It seems to me we would be hard pressed to discover what we did not like about each other. We would be quite respectful with each other and humble to live in such a country. We would discover we were willing to respect the cultural integrity of the numerous groups that live within that country; that our objectives were not to overpower or overwhelm another culture but to co-exist.

I am sure we would look at the calendar and would see we were approaching the 21st century. We would look at our debts and we would look at our resources and we would try to see how we can live together and work together as we approach the 21st century. I am sure we would find a solution for that.

The other side of the coin is we do not have amnesia and so what have we forgot? We probably forgot the negative parts of our history. We forgot about the Plains of Abraham. We forgot many other aspects about the existence of Canada today. We probably forgot about some of the symbols we display so proudly, which are really symbols of a bygone day. They are symbols of our heritage, and not something we want to get rid of; we want to evolve as a nation.

It is clear to me as I travel throughout the country that people no longer understand what the governor general stands for or represents. Ever since being elected to this place, one of the things I enjoy doing, at least initially, is going around to our high schools and presenting the governor general's award. The

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governor general's award is presented to the highest scholastic student in a secondary school each year. I have many high schools in riding and I do many of these events.

When I am handing out that award I ask those people to name the governor general. In two years none of these academics has been able to name the governor general. If our institutions of government have become so irrelevant maybe they should be changed.

If we want to enter into and renew our partnership links, both of these cultures have to adjust for each other. I question some of my brethren in other parts of the country who want to cling to the status quo, our symbols of the past.

• (2115)

Two days ago I was surprised to hear my Reform colleagues arguing about changing the coat of arms of Canada in such a way that it states we want to work toward a better country. Can we imagine wanting to stick to the status quo to the point where we could not see that simple change as being useful? I would like to change a lot of other things in the country. I know many people respect the monarchy. Indeed that is part of our past and is something we cannot erase.

It is time to change some of the symbols of Canada. I have no problem with our currency reflecting distinctly Canadian symbols.

It was interesting to watch the referendum in Quebec. It was my privilege to be at the Montreal rally and see the oui signs which showed that side of the loonie depicting the Canadian loon. I ask some of my colleagues in the House whether that tells us something. Does it not tell us that if we want to evolve as a country we clearly we have to evolve together?

It would be very good if we could all get collective amnesia, put to one side some of the things in our past that we are not happy with and recognize the true strength and wealth of the country. Basically we should get along together. We have many problems. Our deficit is a tremendous burden. It is much like having a huge mortgage in a marriage and not being able to afford a divorce.

The people out there should remember that we are not talking about giving away the farm. There is very little expense, but the bottom line is that it is time to change our nation.

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak to the resolution which recognizes that Quebec is a distinct society because of its majority French language, its culture and its civil code legal system.

A month or so ago our country was brought to a precipice by the referendum in Quebec. As I campaigned in Quebec during the referendum, as I talked to people in Quebec and thought about what was happening there, it was frightening that we had failed to understand each other. People outside Quebec did not have a good understanding of the concerns of Quebecers, how sincere they were in their concerns about the preservation of their language and culture within this huge sea of English that is North America. With the huge English area surrounding Quebec, including the U.S. and the rest of Canada, Quebecers have a very real concern about it.

I found a lack of understanding among some francophone Quebecers of the point of view of people outside Quebec and of their love for Quebec. There was a misunderstanding among them of how the rest of Canada would react to a yes vote in Quebec. The consequences would have been severe for all of us. Certainly there was a failure among Bloc members to recognize that. This reminds me that we almost lost a great country.

• (2120)

We must remember that Canada's position in the world is a very important one. It is one that is widely respected. Why is that? We are respected as a peacemaker and a peacekeeper around the world. We are respected because we provide an example to the world of living peacefully with differences. It is a great example. We are respected widely for our exercise of the art of Canadian compromise.

A few weeks ago I was watching a CBC television program during which Allison Smith was interviewing Israeli prize winning author Amos Oz. It was interesting to hear him talk about his work. His novels have always tried to bring together the two sides, the Palestinians and the Israelis.

He was talking about the need for compromise and the need to work out solutions in that country. He talked about the example of the Israelis and the Palestinians. He pointed out that on the one hand the Israelis had always looked upon the land in the area of the West Bank as being very important to their nation and a very important part of themselves. It is essential to them to have that land for their country. On the other hand the Palestinians look at that land as being essential to their nation, an essential part of themselves.

As he pointed out often, we feel we have a misunderstanding but if we talk enough we can work out the problem. However there was not a lack of understanding on the two sides. There was an understanding but the problem was that they both wanted the same thing. There was an impasse and a conflict.

As he also pointed out, when people realize there is that kind of conflict eventually they come to the realization that the only

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logical, rational response is a compromise. His phrase was that compromise is life and life is compromise.

Surely any of us who is married will understand that is true. Life is full of compromises. Certainly a marriage is made up of compromises. How can we have one without compromise? It is a very important part of a healthy marriage. Compromise is an important part of living with differences, as is all of life.

We have to recognize that we have different points of view in the country and that we have to find compromise between those points of view.

Some people have the idea that the country is made up of two founding linguistic groups. We also have the point of view on the other side that suggests that we are 10 equal founding provinces. These are two different points of view. Somewhere in the middle we have to find some common ground.

[Translation]

We are familiar with the history of the Maritimes. In 1867, the two big provinces, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, joined with Quebec and Ontario in the Confederation. At that time, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had very powerful economies, stronger than Ontario and Quebec. Obviously, from our point of view, in Nova Scotia for instance, the agreement involved equal provinces, equal partners.

But there must be an understanding of the historical links between Lower and Upper Canada, Ontario and Quebec, with their two main language groups. Those groups joined forces to create this country. The two are part of one reality. Neither one nor the other represents reality; the two together do. But there are different understandings of what this country is, and it is difficult sometimes for those who understand things one way to understand the other point of view.

[English]

I want to talk for a moment about the word distinct which was dealt with in the resolution. According to the definition in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* it is an adjective and has three different meanings:

**1** a not identical; separate; individual. **b** different in kind or quality; unlike. **2** a clearly perceptible; plain. **b** clearly understandable; definite. **3** unmistakable, decided.

A lot of francophones do not realize that in English the word distinct is often thought of in terms of the word distinguished, which suggests some sort of superiority or a heightened level. When we talk about a distinguished person, it is a person who has achieved a high level in life. In the past that has created a problem in Canada.

• (2125)

[Translation]

The difficulty with defining the word “distinct” is to make both sides, anglophones and francophones, see that it is used differently in both languages. That was a problem I encountered when I visited Quebec. I was talking with some students at Saint-Jovite and a girl asked me: “Why do the anglophones not look up the definition of the word “distinct” in a French dictionary. In French, it means “different”; there is absolutely no suggestion of superiority”.

But back in Nova Scotia, in my riding of Halifax West, when I talk to the people from down home, they ask: “Why will the francophones not consider the definition and meaning of the word “distinct”, because it has a different meaning in English?”

You can see that it is hard to see the other side’s point of view, or for them to see ours. It is always hard. The answer is not to separate but to communicate and find a compromise.

[English]

Whenever we have an impasse or a deadlock the only solution is a compromise. In the measures we brought forward this week is a compromise. For example, we know that Quebec wanted a veto for itself over constitutional change. We are providing in the system of how we govern the federal government’s approach to the matter a veto to four regions, not just to Quebec. We also recognized in the resolution that Quebec is a distinct society because of its culture, its language and its civil code. This is an important compromise for the country. Together they form an important compromise position that will help us bridge toward the constitutional conference in 1997.

This is not a constitutional change. Constitutional change is not precluded or prevented by these measures. It will be up to those who meet at the conference in 1997 whether or not they wish to make future changes to the Constitution. That is left to the future for now.

People in my area are saying: “Let’s deal with it quickly. Let’s deal with it in a nice, clean manner and set it aside for now so we can focus on the real problems of the country”.

Is Quebec distinct? If Quebec were to separate it would be as distinct as Mexico from the other provinces of Canada. It has a different language and a different culture in many ways, not in every way, from the rest of Canada. The majority language there is different. We cannot say that about any other province. It is clearly distinct in that way.

Does this make Quebec superior? No. Does it recognize and celebrate our differences? Yes, it does.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member’s time has expired.

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[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak on the motion to recognize the distinct nature of Quebec society.

Before speaking on the motion, as such, I would like to refer to a short passage from the *Practical Guide to Private Members' Business*, which defines what is a motion. It says that the effect desired is the first consideration in deciding between a bill and a motion, that in passing a motion—as is the case here—stating a resolution, the House expresses a wish without committing the government to a particular measure or direction.

A wish is expressed, which does not commit the government to a particular measure or direction. It is important to remember that this is what the motion is directed at. The guide goes on to say that, on the other hand, a bill passed by Parliament may have major implications for both the government and the public.

But there is no cause for anxiety. This is not a bill, it is a motion, that is to say a wish that does not commit the government to a particular measure or direction; in other words, it does not amount to much.

I would also point out that, in this House, a motion was passed on December 13, 1994, which reads as follows: “That, in the opinion of this House, the government should officially recognize the historical contribution of the patriots of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada to the establishment of a system of responsible democratic government”.

• (2130)

This motion was passed on December 13. What action has been taken to implement this motion since? None, none whatsoever, because it was idle talk that did not commit the government to anything.

Let me remind you that a motion recognizing hockey as our national winter sport and lacrosse as our national summer sport was also passed. What action has been taken since? The Canadian lacrosse team's budget was eliminated. Completely. What good is a motion? It does not mean a thing.

Besides being meaningless, the motion is contradictory to begin with, because it reads in part, and I quote:

That—the House recognize that Quebec's distinct society includes its French-speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition;

“Unique culture”. Just this afternoon, my hon. colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata asked the Primer Minister the following question:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday, government members of the heritage committee maintained that there was no such thing as a Quebec culture—

Now this motion says that we in Quebec have a unique culture. Unique means that it is exclusive to Quebec, if I am not mistaken.

Yet government members maintained that there was no Quebec culture, only one great big Canadian culture. It seems to me that their position flies in the face of the motion these same members are about to vote on.

And what was the Prime Minister's answer?

Mr. Speaker, there is a French culture in Canada, which is Canadian.

There is only one culture in Canada: the Canadian culture. That is what the Prime Minister said. On the other hand, the motion tabled by the Prime Minister himself, seconded by his Deputy Prime Minister, recognizes that there is a unique culture in Quebec. It reads:

That—the House encourage all components of the legislative and executive branches of government to take note—

—it does not say much, “to take note”—

—of this recognition and be guided in their conduct accordingly.

What did the Prime Minister do this afternoon? Just the opposite. The opposite of what? The opposite of what a meaningless motion says to do. Is there any doubt about that? I will let you be the judge of that, Mr. Speaker.

Yet, during the referendum campaign, the Primer Minister repeated time and time again that he would positively not address constitutional issues, but deal with the real problems instead, namely job creation and deficit reduction. How did we end up debating this motion then? Because they were afraid. They looked at the polls and realized that they were losing ground. Faced with rising support for the yes side in opinion polls toward the end of the campaign and with the possibility of losing the referendum, the Prime Minister suddenly changed his mind. He set up a smoke-and-mirrors operation aimed at convincing the people of Quebec that the federal government was committed to making major changes to the current federal system after a hypothetical no.

The fact that this strategy was improvised from beginning to end was, of course, reflected in the Canadian Prime Minister's ambiguous and meaningless comments in the final days of the referendum campaign. On October 24 in Verdun, he said, and I quote: “Quebecers want Quebec to be recognized within Canada as a distinct society because of its language, culture and institutions. I have said it before and I say it again, I agree”. Yet, he tells us today that there is only one culture in Canada, although his motion says that Quebec has a distinct culture. It is no big deal, he has a right to be mixed up.



The Liberal government also felt pressured to deliver on its vague promises to change the federal system following the razor-thin victory of the no side on October 30.

• (2135)

To do so, it set up two phoney committees. One of these committees was chaired by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Its mission: to save Canada. What a nifty little mission.

On November 29, even before the committee tabled its findings, the Prime Minister hastily announced three initiatives aimed at satisfying the desire for change expressed by the vast majority of Quebecers.

As far as recognition of Quebec as a distinct society is concerned, however, these efforts are not very impressive. But, before going any further, allow me to read the motion:

Whereas the people of Quebec have expressed the desire for recognition of Quebec's distinct society;

(1) the House recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada;

(2) the House recognize that Quebec's distinct society includes its French-speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition;

Perhaps my English is not so good, but to me, "unique culture" means a culture that is different from others.

(3) the House undertake to be guided by this reality;

(4) the House encourage all components of the legislative and executive branches of government to take note of this recognition and be guided in their conduct accordingly.

In other words, this is just the opposite of what was done this afternoon.

Upon reading the motion, we realize that it is merely a recognition of Quebec society as it is now. It simply reflects a mathematical reality.

Nowhere in this text is there any mention of additional powers being given to Quebec. The minister himself said it did not provide powers to Quebec. He is an honest man.

This motion is meaningless, an empty shell. It is merely a symbolic recognition of what we already know, namely that we are different from the rest of Canada. Even the Prime Minister said so.

The fact is that the recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness, as currently proposed by the Liberal government, is light years away from what was proposed in the past.

Indeed, during the 1986-87 federal-provincial negotiations to get Quebec to sign, with honour and enthusiasm, the Constitutional Act of 1982, the Liberal Party of Quebec made a demand, as part of its June 1985-86 political agenda. This quote is for the benefit of the Quebec Liberals who hold a Liberal party membership: "The Liberal government is asking that a statement be included, in a preamble to the new Constitution, to explicitly

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recognize Quebec as a distinct society and as a cornerstone for the French element of the Canadian duality".

That was not written by nasty separatists in their political agenda, but by the Liberal Party of Quebec.

These proposals from the Liberal Party of Quebec led to the Meech Lake accord. Although the concept of distinct society in that accord was not worth much, at least it was entrenched in the Canadian Constitution. Moreover, the distinct society clause was interpretative. Therefore, the provisions of the Canadian Constitution had to be interpreted based, among other things, on that clause. Consequently, today's motion on the concept of distinct society is very far from what was agreed to in the Meech Lake accord. There was a minimum of interpretative powers. Today, there are none.

There is nothing of the sort being proposed today. Besides, the government side is deluding itself into believing that Quebecers will smilingly accept such a ridiculous proposition and undertaking—and I am weighing my words carefully with that choice of adjective.

• (2140)

Where were the people in the Liberal government when the people of Quebec came close to saying yes to sovereignty on October 30, at 49.4 per cent? Do the Prime Minister and his cronies really believe that the people of Quebec will settle for that stuff and nonsense when they came within a hair's breadth of gaining a country and full control over all powers? No. The federal government needs to stop fooling itself and face up to reality.

Quebec is not inhabited by a distinct society, but by a people, the people of Quebec. The men and women of Quebec already know this, and that is why they do not recognize themselves in the meaningless concept of a distinct society. If there is one lesson to be learned from the October 30 referendum, it is that the people of Quebec are on their way to sovereignty.

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is both a pleasure and a duty for me to speak to a motion, so well characterized by the previous speaker as wishful thinking on the part of the House of Commons, to recognize Quebec as a distinct society.

In this country people have long misunderstood the so-called identity of the province of Quebec. Quebec is not a province like the others. It is a people, a nation. It is a nation forged by history, a society that included aboriginal peoples and the many immigrants that came to change that society and be changed by it, that would enrich it and absorb its identity.

Quebec is not a province like the others, and until this fact is recognized other than by a motion on distinct society or some Charlottetown accord on an equally hollow concept, Quebecers

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will have no choice but to ensure that in the next referendum, the result will not be 49.4 per cent, which is a defeat or a narrow victory, but a clear majority.

I hope so, not only for Quebec but also for Canada because, as long as this issue remains unresolved, Canada will not be able to consider its own potential and problems and guide the development of its economy and its own history in the best interests of Canadians.

We in Quebec claim, and will continue to claim, that the best thing for Quebec and Canada would be to agree to a partnership.

• (2145)

We realize that the outcome of the referendum does not give us a mandate to negotiate this partnership immediately. However, Canada should not get the impression that symbolic gestures as frivolous as a motion on distinct society will do anything at all to deal with the problem facing both Quebec and Canada.

In my youth, which, I must admit, was a long time ago, I was very keen on history. History is an impassioned quest for understanding what makes a people and a nation. Quebec as a people, as a nation, has come a long way since the first French colonists immigrated to Canada, which is an aboriginal name. These French immigrants quickly mixed in.

I need only mention the Carignan-Salières regiment and its many soldiers, mercenaries from every country in Europe. They settled here. When the English conquest left the people no choice but to submit, their interbreeding explains why every historian studying this time in history says that, even in those days, Canadians or "Canayens", like the Americans, former English settlers, would not have taken long to become independent in a country with a different name.

Fortune, if we can use such a term for the English conquest, dictated that there would be a colony within a colony and that, many years later, Quebec through its complex but clear and unilateral history, would succeed in imposing itself more and more as a people and a nation. Even more so since 1960, when after a business and economic middle class abolished in 1760 revived. These young people spoke with one voice calling for "maître chez nous" and for "égalité ou indépendance", through the Ralliement pour l'indépendance du Québec, the RIN, and even the FLQ, leading this people, already a fact, to speak for itself. General de Gaulle did no harm either with his "Vive le Québec libre" from the balcony.

Quebec's history includes the election of the Parti Québécois and the failure of its first referendum, a bitter pill for those who had worked so hard. But it was nevertheless productive, because 15 years later, in 1995, the 1980 referendum was almost won.

In these few minutes, it is not possible to review all our rich Quebec history. I want to say that I have tremendous respect for every Canadian who speaks here today; they are committed to their country. I say to them the only way the countries of Canada and Quebec can develop and flourish is through mutual recognition.

• (2150)

It is by mutually recognizing not Quebec's distinct society, which is practically meaningless, but the depth, the profound nature of our people and our nation, in both Quebec and Canada, that we can mutually and collectively prepare for the future by building on a real foundation.

Unfortunately, instead of bringing us closer to a future to which Canadians and Quebecers are entitled, this initiative marks a setback, because it tries to fulfil a wish that has absolutely nothing to do with the real underlying needs.

I sincerely hope that our position will help Quebecers and Canadians take a real step toward their future.

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great honour of supporting the motion before us today.

I am a Quebecer and it is as such that I associate myself with this motion. I do so because it is in the best interests of Quebec and because it opens the door to a renewed partnership for Canadian partners from coast to coast.

The ideal country does not exist, except in the imagination of certain persons. And we all agree that Canada is far from perfect. It needs to change. It must change to better reflect its own reality.

[English]

What is that reality? It is the reality of a vast country with a scattered, diverse population. It is the reality of a country in which regional identities are strongly expressed. It is also the reality of a country in which the francophones are concentrated in one province but a million others are distributed across the rest of Canada.

[Translation]

That is the Canadian reality. Not only must we take it into consideration and recognize it, but our institutions must also reflect this reality if we want this country to work and to achieve its full potential.

[English]

On October 30 Quebecers sent us a clear double message. While reaffirming their attachment to Canada, they indicated that they wanted to see Canada change quickly to reflect their aspirations. We must know how to interpret this message. We

must not only take note of it, but we must respond to it in a concrete way or this country will fail.

As the Prime Minister pointed out so well when the motion was tabled, the referendum results have taught us that we must not take Canada for granted. It was in this context that the Prime Minister made three firm commitments on behalf of the Canadian government during the referendum campaign. These three commitments were as follows: to recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada; to refrain from making any constitutional change affecting Quebec without the consent of Quebecers; and to undertake changes to bring citizens closer to services and decision making.

[*Translation*]

The time has come to fulfil these commitments, to take action. Through the motion before this House, we are starting to give concrete expression to the commitments made by the Prime Minister. By putting it to the members of this House this quickly, the government is showing that it takes its commitments seriously. It is showing how important this issue is, not only for Quebec, but also for the rest of Canada.

• (2155)

[*English*]

Why do Quebecers want to be recognized as members of a distinct society? The reasons are obvious. Quebec is home to a French speaking majority, a unique culture, and a civil law tradition. Quebec has been built around these essential elements for more than three centuries. Recognizing this is not only acknowledging reality, it is also agreeing that these characteristics of Quebec society must be preserved and nourished in a context where Quebec co-exists in North America with a population of about 300 million anglophones.

To adopt this motion is to recognize that the French character of Quebec must be protected. It is to assert that Quebec must enjoy cultural security. It is to recognize the linguistic duality that is in the very nature of Canada and contributes to its cultural and social richness.

[*Translation*]

By recognizing Quebec's distinct nature and by admitting that the definition of distinct society contained in this motion is by no means complete, this House is undertaking to let itself be guided by this reality. The legislative and executive branches of government will be encouraged to take this recognition into account in all their activities and all their decisions. This means that this motion will have a positive impact on the way legislation is passed in this House and decisions are made in federal government departments and agencies.

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There is more. The motion before us today is but one of a whole series of government actions. During the referendum campaign, the Prime Minister promised not to make any constitutional change without Quebec's consent. That commitment is reflected in the bill recently introduced by the Minister of Justice to provide a regional veto power. Under this bill, any constitutional amendment proposed by the federal government will require the consent of Quebec and the other regions of Canada.

[*English*]

The objective of the motion is clear: to protect Quebec from amendments that might reduce the powers of the Quebec National Assembly. By taking this action the Government of Canada is recognizing that the Government of Quebec, as the only government representing a francophone majority in North America, has a central role to play in the evolution of Canada.

[*Translation*]

This is a far cry from the so-called meaningless motion referred to by the separatists in recent days. Through this bill, the federal government strengthens the regions, particularly Quebec. We feel it is a first step toward more flexible and more effective federalism.

[*English*]

It would be wrong to claim that the only purpose of the motion is to meet the aspirations of Quebec. Canada is not a melting pot, nor has it ever been. The issue here is proposals that reflect the deep nature of Canada. The issue here is ensuring not only our national unity but also its harmony and the effectiveness of its institutions.

I have followed the debate on the motion with interest. I have heard the criticisms of the official opposition, which were not really surprising. I have also heard the criticisms of others who claim to be defending Canada while at the same time opposing the motion. To them I would say that it is easy to criticize after the crisis is over. However, what will those who object today say when the separatists mount another attack? I invite them to answer right now, before it is too late.

Canada is a federation of partners. It is by preserving the spirit of partnership and co-operation and by recognizing both our differences and our shared objectives that this country will grow and prosper. The motion we are debating today deals exactly with this concept of partnership. The Canada we all want is a country in which each region has its own specific character and the freedom it needs to express it. That is the essence of what this motion contains.

• (2200)

The definition of a federation is not a grouping of equal partners. The purpose of a federation is to permit the differences of the various parts to be accommodated within one country. Otherwise it is a unitary state. We are not, because we have started as a group of people who were different and who founded

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a type of government able to accept the differences. It is really unfortunate that there is now a party which does not agree that the differences the country has are part of its richness and of its wealth.

[Translation]

The motion before the House specifically relates to the concept of partnership. The Canada that we want is a country in which every region will have its own distinctive character and the means to develop it. This is the very essence of the motion.

Canadians want a united country. They are open to changes that will preserve its unity and promote its development, as evidenced by the resolutions recently passed by the legislatures of Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, to recognize Quebec's distinct identity.

I am convinced that the majority of Quebecers and Canadians recognize themselves in this motion. I would humbly submit to the Official Opposition, moreover, as well as to the Government of Quebec, that they are wrong to reject it.

Of course the separatists cannot accept propositions with the object of making Canada work better. This is an undemocratic attitude, for it denies the results of the referendum. It also condemns Quebec to immobility and rejection of any improvement to the system. It is thus in contradiction to what most Quebecers want.

We have no illusions about it. Since the Government of Quebec is interested solely in its own option, we shall not engage in constitutional discussions which would be doomed to failure from the word go. But that does not mean that we will not take steps today in the direction Quebecers and all Canadians want us to go. Needless to say that if Quebec and the other regions of the country consent, the Government will be open to including the changes contained in this motion in the Constitution.

[English]

Every member sitting in the House has the opportunity by voting for this motion to acknowledge Canada for what it is, a diversified country, an open country, a country that has always based its development on accepting and preserving its differences.

[Translation]

For, beyond those differences, the shared values and objectives we have always had as Canadians, regardless of where we live, remain: freedom, tolerance, the creation and distribution of wealth for individuals and regions.

The months and years to come will surely afford us the opportunity for a concrete demonstration of the fact that we go far beyond principles and idle talk.

[English]

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to put on the record some of the comments I have received from constituents. They have watched and participated with all of us, or most of us, as a number of members and parties in the House did not participate in the process, in order to reach out to the province of Quebec with most Canadians to set the country back on a path of a unified purpose and commitment to the dream which has made this country the envy of the world.

• (2205)

I would like to publicly thank those from the Prince Edward—Hastings riding who took that long bus trip to Montreal on October 27 to extend their hand and to once again tell Quebecers their Canada included Quebec. It certainly was a contribution I know was well meant and very useful. I thank them for that extra effort as well as the individuals and businesses in the riding that helped to make that possible during that day and during that critical time in the future of our country.

The resolution we are debating is certainly an honest and thoughtful fulfilment of an important commitment the Prime Minister made to the people of Quebec during the referendum debate. We are fortunate as Canadians to have a Prime Minister who displays and portrays very clearly integrity and sincerity in his actions. When he makes a promise to Canadians he fulfils that promise.

The package of unity measures announced and put forward to the House and to Canadians in every province has three parts, as we well know: to recognize within Canada that Quebec is a distinct society; not to proceed with any constitutional change that affects Quebec without Quebecers' consent; and to undertake changes to bring services and the decision making process closer to citizens, initially in the field of labour market training.

This kind of leadership, to put this type of thing before Canadians and before the House, is what is needed today in order to heal the wounds, and the recent wounds, that need to be healed in order to move forward together as Canadians. This motion along with the bill concerning the veto and other actions of the House concerning workforce training measures provide a confident display of national reconciliation.

The motion that addresses the legitimate concerns of the citizens of Quebec in terms of our acknowledgement of the distinctive characteristics of Quebec as a society is only a recognition of the reality there today.

If we analyze the motion by looking at the second part it says very clearly that Quebec includes a French speaking majority. That is a reality. It says Quebec has a unique culture. That is a

reality. It says Quebec is governed by the civil law tradition. That is a reality.

This motion does not give any special status to the people in Quebec. It recognizes one of the things we all say everyday, that our country is made up of many diverse cultures. However, we have six million French speaking people of a unique culture, different from many of the rest of us, in Quebec.

The motion provides them the assurance that the federal government will be guided by the recognition of that distinctness and carries the Prime Minister's personal commitment that he and the government will gladly incorporate into the Constitution, when all the provinces are prepared along with Quebec, appropriate resolutions to do so.

No matter what area we are dealing with, our own riding or an organization we belong to or in the House, we know there are differences. We know there are people who think differently. The important thing, whether in our own families or whether in the larger family of a constituency, a province, a municipality or in the House, is that we recognize and appreciate each other's differences.

• (2210)

We may not always agree but the only way we are to get ahead in a family of any kind, whether it is a family of the House or a family that we call Canada, is to go forward together. We are stronger as we work together to achieve that end. It is a disappointment to most Canadians when we see one political party in the House saying it wants a Quebec without Canada and another political party making it very clear it would be very happy, certainly not upset, if we had a Canada without Quebec.

The concerns that this motion conveys special powers to the province of Quebec or that this motion is an acknowledgement of the Constitution's inability to be flexible enough to accommodate such changes are simply unwarranted.

While this motion has no legal effect, it definitely expresses an important commitment by the elected body that speaks for all Canadians, this body that we are all part of here this evening, and it recognizes an obvious reality without giving the people of Quebec any powers that Canadians elsewhere do not possess.

That is not the intention of this motion. The intention of this motion and the intention and the challenge of the House is to treat all Canadians equally. We also have to recognize Canadians are not all the same when it comes to language, culture and, in the case of Quebec, the law and the civil law code they are governed by.

The Constitution is more than capable of accepting this change, as is the government. The willingness of the Quebec

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government to make that possible would be a significant help in giving greater weight to this important measure.

I am disappointed that the official opposition and the third party are opposed to this motion, opposed and fail to recognize the diversity of what makes up this wonderful country we are all part of.

The negative contributions to the debate during the referendum by some members of the House, some parties in the House, nearly cost us the country. We cannot stand by and allow that to happen again. It is illogical, narrow minded and not of the national character we have here Canada.

Canada must reassert our strength of purpose and unite our people. This is a commitment the government is prepared to make, and is making. It is the potential of this motion and it will be the legacy of the government and the Prime Minister.

We are a country incredibly rich in culture, resources, beauty, geography and opportunity. I encourage all members of the House to do what we can, individually and together, to make our country even stronger in the future than it is at the present time. I urge all members of the House to support this motion.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with one of my fellow members.

In May 1987 Pierre Trudeau wrote an open letter to the country after the Meech Lake accord was signed. He had this to say about Quebec as a distinct society:

The real question—is whether the French Canadians living in Quebec need a provincial government with more powers than other provinces. I believe it is insulting to us to claim that we do—. The new generation—has no use for this siege mentality in which the elites of bygone days used to cower—. They don't suffer from any inferiority complex, and they say good riddance to the times when we didn't dare to measure ourselves against others without fear and trembling. In short, they need no crutches. Quite the contrary, they know that Quebecers are capable of playing a leading role within Canada.

Mr. Trudeau believed the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society would be a stepping stone to sovereignty, that granting special powers to Quebec would be the end of the Canadian dream. I think he was right.

Call Quebec a distinct society, promise to make government decisions in light of that status, and sovereignists will seize on it to say at last we are recognized as a distinct society, and a distinct society is a nation; we have only one more step to go.

The notion of a distinct society formed the basis of the sovereignty argument in the last referendum campaign and will be used to greater effect next time if this motion passes.

• (2215)

The current Prime Minister's last minute promise of a distinct society was born out of panic. It is a policy of appeasement to sovereignists in Quebec and it stands in opposition to traditional Liberal Party policy.

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I agree with Mr. Trudeau about distinct society, but I take issue with his belief that national unity lay in his new Constitution and the charter which would form a federation, as he put it, set to last 1,000 years.

Instead Mr. Trudeau, by invading provincial jurisdictions, by consolidating power in Ottawa and by starting us down the debt road that has led us to the fiscal crisis we now face as a nation, set in motion a series of events that led us to the brink of separation on October 30. It does not help that our current Prime Minister is so closely associated with the repatriation of our Constitution and being finance minister during the time that this fiscal crisis began.

Federal strategy during the referendum and afterward was put forward by the Prime Minister in the following way. He promised a virtual status quo, even though Quebec had been demanding that the federal government get out of provincial jurisdiction since 1920. The Prime Minister now says he will decentralize some job training to the provinces. It is too little, but it is not yet too late.

Finally, the lack of federal strategy ignores the changing face of Canada. The new Canada is more than just two founding nations. We have come of age in this country. We are no longer simply two founding nations. We are a nation of almost 30 million people and growing. We are a nation of 30 million equal people. There are no longer just two languages, there are many. Canada is more than just two rich and populace central provinces. It is a nation with a growing western economy and a population to match.

In the old Canada, Ontario and Quebec could afford to ignore the western hinterland. However, in 20 years British Columbia will be nearly as populace as Quebec. Alberta and B.C. already have the two strongest economies in the nation. The west is not only a theoretical equal, it sits now at the table as a practical equal with the central provinces.

Liberals seem to be living in the past, in the old Canada. That is why the notion of a distinct society reverberates so poorly in the west. If the Prime Minister wants to give special status to Quebec and this status means unequal powers or unequal treatment of all Canadians, regardless of race, sex, language or culture, then this idea will not sell in British Columbia and the rest of Canada.

That is why we proposed these amendments. It was to make it crystal clear that it does not involve any more powers or any unequal treatment of any Canadians. If he continues to treat provinces unequally, he is starting to drive a wedge in the west where there once was one only at the Ottawa River.

It is fair to say that everyone in the Chamber feels a good deal of pressure today, pressure from their constituents, from party colleagues, from provincial governments and even from people

who are yet to be born, because future generations may have to live with whatever we decide. They are in a sense looking for us to do what is right.

I regret what is happening in the House. As the proverb states, a house divided against itself cannot stand. At this crucial time in our history, we face a divided House of Parliament, not only between federalists and separatists, which is to be expected, but incredibly we also face a divided House among federalists.

The government seems to claim a certain omniscience on the subject of national unity but the results of the referendum proved it to be sadly mistaken. If at the beginning of the referendum campaign the Prime Minister had brought in the leader of the Reform Party and said: "We both represent legitimate viewpoints of Canadians. We can work out a strategy together. Let us combat the separatists in Quebec", I think the leader of the Reform Party would have co-operated gladly. However, there seems to be no room for compromise in the Liberal ranks.

Instead the Prime Minister questions the loyalty of Reformers just because they do not agree with the way the Liberal Party wants to fight separatists. Of course this is not true. We are not lacking in patriotism. We simply feel like most Canadians, that we have been shut out of the process and that the strategy is wrong.

What is that process? The resolution came before the House with two days' notice, an hour's notice to the press, a briefing to the Liberal caucus on the same day that the Prime Minister held the press conference. There was no briefing for any other members in the House. There was no public consultation or even consultation with the provinces, many of which reject this notion of distinct society.

Members of the Reform Party, like it or not, represent real points of view of real Canadians. On the Liberal side they may want to ignore the Reform members in the House but the people of Canada who voted for us cannot be ignored. In ignoring the thoughts of Reformers, the Prime Minister is alienating strong federalist forces outside of his own cloistered offices. Yet when the Reform Party protests, the Prime Minister chides them like school children and says: "Shame, shame you're in bed with the separatists". Then he proceeds to offer a constitutional veto to the separatist Government of Quebec.

• (2220)

There is a sincere desire for national unity on the government side of the House. I do not question that. Their tactics are wrong. There is wisdom on this side of the House worth hearing.

I would like to read from *Hansard*. When I asked the Prime Minister, when he must have known or he should have known that the west would never ever accept this distinct society clause, why he brought it forward, his Minister of Justice said: "Mr. Speaker, I do not think we should assume for a moment

that the hon. member speaks for the people of British Columbia”.

A slick Toronto lawyer does not speak for the people of British Columbia. If he wants to know what the people of British Columbia are saying, he should come out to the coffee shops, come out to the public meetings, come out to the talk shows, come out anywhere in the west and listen. If he listened he would realize the wedge that he is driving with this motion between British Columbia and the rest of Canada. I do not know why the government is proceeding with this.

The Reform policy is to confront hard and soft Quebec separatists on the one hand by developing realistic answers to the hard questions that the sovereignists like to sweep under the rug. We would detail the costs of separation for Quebecers and make sure that all Quebecers hear them. A huge percentage of voters in Quebec thought that they could vote yes and still have all the benefits of being Canadian. The federal government's failure to detail the cost of separation, to tell them where the rubber meets the road, tell them what they are in for, brought us nearly to the brink of separation on October 30. That is what we should do on the one hand.

On the other hand Reformers would also appeal to Canadian nationalists in Quebec, who represent well over half of the population. We would do this by showing them exactly where Canada can change, that we can devolve programs and responsibilities to all of the provinces equally.

We have detailed 20 separate areas where changes can be made without constitutional change simply by getting the federal government out of areas of provincial jurisdiction. Our strategy would confront the separatists on the one hand and encourage Canadian nationalism on the other and cultivate unity among all federalists across the country by preserving the concept of equality.

It is a reasonable strategy. It will work. I appeal to all members to drop this disastrous distinct society motion while there is still time. Members should stop casting insults when someone comes up with another idea and maybe see if there is a kernel of truth in it.

I invite all federalists to create a strategy in this House for all members that is not created in the Prime Minister's office. It is time for the west to be brought into the picture. It is time for federalists to work together to tell the separatist Quebecois exactly what they are in for and to offer a new vision for a united Canada.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might have the consent of the House to split my 10 minutes with the hon. member for Elk Island.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

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**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mrs. Ablonczy:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very ill conceived move on the part of the government. I believe it is politically motivated solely. The Prime Minister, having totally botched the matter of the referendum and the move on the part of some people from one province to separate from the country is now desperate to show he is doing something. If this was such a good idea he should have done it two years ago and not hastily thrown it into the breach when he was in desperate difficulty.

Members on the other side are telling us over and over that this is going to unify the country. This distinct society proposal will do nothing but intensify Canada's divisions. In my few minutes I am going to put on the record why I believe this is so.

First, once we concede that Quebec is distinct we have provided an enormous justification for it to be separate. Second, formal recognition of Quebec's distinctiveness in the Constitution is meaningless unless that special recognition also becomes a principle used to interpret the Constitution with respect to this distinct society. The rules by which our country functions would then always be interpreted so as to treat one province as distinct and special.

• (2225 )

As a result, that province would have special status and constitutional powers, for if we state that in spite of its being a distinct society, Quebec has no more power than the other provinces, in the end it would be no more distinct than the others. The whole exercise would only be window dressing because Quebec's interests would not be better served by it. Separatists would be able to denounce it as yet another empty gesture and cause disaffection with the federal government to increase, not decrease.

The greatest danger is that giving Quebec distinct society status in the Constitution would almost certainly be interpreted as also giving Quebec special status and constitutional powers. Former Prime Minister Trudeau in 1987 pointed out that Quebec politicians will take the position “that if the Constitution says something it is because a meaning was intended”. It is an old principle in lawmaking that legislators usually do not talk without saying something. It can happen, but not when they write laws. Thus we have to suppose that distinct society means something.

Trudeau was also quoted as commenting that if anyone thinks recognizing Quebec as a distinct society means nothing, “you are in for a superb surprise”.

Anyone who has studied the courts' interpretations over the last several years of existing constitutional provisions will have no trouble understanding this. Canadians were astonished, for example, when our courts told us the Constitution says that if

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you are extremely intoxicated when you kill someone, you are not guilty of a crime.

While we may intend only to recognize a sociological and historical fact when we amend the Canadian Constitution to designate Quebec as a distinct society, down the road it is clearly open to the courts to affirm that the provision really confers special status and powers on one of the ten provinces, whether it is in the Constitution or in any other legislation, such as the motion which is before us today.

Why would it matter if Quebec was given special status and powers? The simple answer is that it would only intensify Canada's divisions.

First, it would violate the principle of equality. This principle is foundational to the whole characterization of Canada as a democracy, where every citizen has the same rights and the same value. It would be completely unacceptable for some Canadians to be designated as having different or greater rights, different or greater value, than others. In the past we have condemned societies that sought to operate on that tenet. We have declared the very idea repugnant. Would we now find special status for some acceptable in our country? Never.

Second, far from bringing Canadians together, such a move would segregate them and emphasize the differences between them even further. The Prime Minister will attempt to characterize the move to confer distinct society status and a constitutional veto on Quebec as an act of generosity and reconciliation.

Tolerance and kindness have long been praised as traits of the Canadian people. We would not wish to be accused of acting otherwise. However, I believe that Canadians must place reasonable limits on any exercise of generosity. Therefore, we must ask whether it is reasonable to give a separatist government, committed to breaking up the country, a veto over the Constitution of Canada. It will truly result in fundamentally redesigning Canada to give some citizens more say and a greater degree of control than all other citizens.

If a unified Canada is our goal, the only sound course of action is to pursue those issues on which Canadians agree and not those issues on which they are divided. The Reform Party's vision for a new and better Canada is guided by the founding principle of equality of provinces and citizens. It is the only sound basis on which to go forward as a confident and unified people.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am both angry and grieved this evening. I am angry because something which I value so highly, the wonderful country in which we live, is being treated with such indifference by the government. I am grieved because the principles of equality are being violated in the proposed legislation.

• (2230 )

I joined the Reform Party and became a member of Parliament because of my commitment to the equality of Canadians. I cannot understand how a government can look back without seeing that the policies of the last 30 years have driven a deep wedge into this country. How can those members then conclude that wriggling around that wedge some more is now going to produce unity? That does not make sense to me.

I am very gravely angered by that. I am grieved by the fact that we are here in a Parliament where we cannot properly and openly discuss this. Whenever we bring forward ideas we get into name calling instead of honestly and openly debating the issues and the principles that are involved.

We have a parliamentary system here that does not respond. There is no mechanism in this Parliament to change what is now being proposed and what is clearly wrong. The reason is that all the members on the government side do not have the freedom to speak and to vote what they truly believe.

I cannot believe that among the 176 members on the other side, not one of them has any serious questions about this legislation. There are four members in the government from Alberta. Every one of us in the Reform Party who is from Alberta has heard from numerous constituents that there are large problems with further bifurcating this country with this kind of legislation. Surely those other four Liberal members in Alberta have heard those same messages. If they have chosen not to listen and not to represent them here because of that nasty party discipline that is exercised in the House, which makes this place ineffective, that makes me very angry. We have here a system of governance that cannot respond to a major crisis in this country because of its archaic systems.

I plead with those members opposite to use their own intelligence, their own analysis, their own convictions, their own beliefs, and stand in the face of this government. Because of their majority, they alone can do it. They are the only ones who can save this country.

If we keep on following the plan that is proposed, it is inevitable that the divisions among us will increase. In this very weak attempt to try to appease one province that has legitimate beefs and instead of listening to the legitimate beefs to offer this little appeasement carrot, they are putting at risk the unity of the whole country. They are doing that with impunity and as if they do not care.

It is a total shame. It distresses me. I really eagerly wish the Liberal members in the House would exercise principle and forget about this policy they have had of voting the way they are told. That will destroy the country.



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**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to repeat the resolution, we are today debating the government's proposal to recognize Quebec as a distinct society within Canada.

According to the resolution, this distinct society is defined as including a French speaking majority in Quebec, which is certainly distinct, since there is no other province in Canada that has such a French speaking majority; a unique culture in Quebec based on the French language, which is also unique and distinct in Canada; and a civil law system, which no other province has. These are not exclusive traits of the distinct society but simply the high marks.

Let me point out that these three distinctive features that are in the resolution were first recognized and granted by the British in the act of cession of 1763 and in the Quebec Act of 1774. These distinctive features that are attributed to Quebec in this resolution are not new. What we are doing here today is simply restating this distinctiveness in a different way in this century.

● (2235 )

Distinct society does not mean superior; it means different. We have in Quebec the civil law. Those in the other provinces have the common law. Neither is superior. They are different. That is what the distinct society clause means.

The distinct society clause does not mean special status. Quebec and all provinces have some special provisions in the Constitution relating to them, and they all in some way have special status, but this is not the meaning or the purpose of the distinct society clause.

Finally, the distinct society clause does not mean more power to Quebec. Those who suggest this are being mischievous, destructive, and misleading. I found it extremely hurtful to hear one Reformer after another continually refer to this resolution as a constitutional amendment with constitutional consequences.

The source of the federal and provincial powers is in the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Constitution Act of 1982. In particular, the powers of the federal and provincial governments are in sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution of 1867. The only way those powers can be changed, abridged, increased or diminished is by a constitutional amendment. That is the only way they can be changed.

This resolution before the House is not a bill. It is a resolution. It is not a proposed constitutional amendment. To suggest otherwise is misleading the Canadian public, which almost amounts to dishonesty in the House. This is a resolution of the House of Commons. It is not a bill that will lead to legislation. It is not a proposed constitutional amendment. In no way can this resolution augment the powers of Quebec, nor can it reduce the powers of the federal government or any other province. This or another government might want to some day change those powers, but it is not doing it through this resolution.

If the purpose of this resolution is not to grant special status or to give additional power, then what is its purpose? The purpose of the resolution is to assure Quebec that despite its different language, despite its different culture and legal system, we want them with us; we honour and respect them with their uniqueness, with their differences, with their distinctiveness. It is a formal commitment by the Parliament of Canada, representing all the people of Canada, that we recognize they are distinctive and we want them as they are. We do not want to assimilate them, we do not want to blend them. Once passed, the resolution is also meant to be a guide, but it is not legally binding; it is simply a guide.

In many respects the resolution is like the great rally in Montreal on October 27. By that rally Canadians from all over the country, at great expense to themselves, came to Montreal to say they wanted Quebec to stay in Confederation, that they respected Quebecers as they are, with their differences. The rally had no legal or constitutional consequences. It did have very strong symbolic and political consequences. It is the same with this resolution before the House.

The distinct society clause is saying to Quebec that we recognize its distinct institutions and culture and because of them Canada is a better country. Its consequences are political and symbolic but extremely important, considering the atmosphere of the country today.

It makes Canada a better country because Canada with two official languages and two cultures has a great advantage over other countries. These two languages and cultures are great assets, not burdens. Unlike the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and Japan, which have one official language, Canada can do business in English and French, can do diplomacy in English and French, research in English and French, write plays, novels, and poetry in English and French, produce television, films, and songs in English and French. It has great universities, libraries and centres of research in English and French.

● (2240)

This resolution alone will not do the job, but with the veto bill it is a very good start to assuring Quebecers that we accept them as they are with these differences referred to in the resolution and we want them to stay with us.

I urge Canadians and I urge my colleagues in the House to put themselves for one moment in the shoes of French speaking Quebecers. Here we have an island of approximately 8 million francophones in a North American sea of about 350 million anglophones. Put yourself in that same situation. Reverse the languages. We have 8 million anglophones in a sea of 350 million francophones. They see this situation as putting their language and culture at risk, their distinct language and culture

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threatened by the overwhelming majority of the anglophone provinces and of the population of North America.

Under the Quebec Act of 1774, French speaking Quebecers were the majority in that state, although it was a British colony. Under the Constitution of 1791, with Upper Canada and Lower Canada, it was one to one: the French Canadians were equal in population more or less with the Upper Canadians. It was the same under the act of the union; up until 1867 it was Upper Canada and Lower Canada.

Now they are one out of ten provinces and they are a much smaller percentage of the total population. Would my colleagues try to understand this situation, put themselves in the shoes of the French Canadians in Quebec? Try to understand how they might believe with great credibility that their unique institutions would be at risk in that situation.

That is why assurances are required, and the distinct society clause is such an assurance. I urge my colleagues to give it some thought and support it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Colleagues, there are two members who wish to speak further. We are supposed to stop at 11 p.m. I wonder if the two members who wish to speak could either divide the time or we could not see the clock until each is finished. Would that be agreeable?

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Not seeing the clock is fine.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Not seeing the clock is acceptable.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.):** If my hon. friend from Esquimalt cannot see the clock, I can understand it at this hour. I am sure he and I would be happy to share our time.

In spite of the remarks that were made by some of the predecessors from his party who suggested that those of us on this side of the House were speaking because we felt we had to vote a certain way with the government, let me assure the other members in the House that when we rise to speak on this question we are speaking from the profound desire of Canadians to speak for our country, to speak of how we understand our country and what we are trying to achieve. We may have our differences, but we must understand that together we must try to determine what is right about our country.

As the great prime minister of this country, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, said many years ago, elections decide everything and answer nothing. The referendum is somewhat like that. It made a decision. It decided that Quebec was to stay in Canada, but it did not answer the question as to under what conditions it is to stay

in Canada. It did not answer many of the fundamental questions we are obliged as parliamentarians to review.

I believe profoundly and seriously that the Prime Minister's initiative is not a constitutional initiative but is a realistic initiative. It corresponds to the aspirations of Quebecers. It is a solemn undertaking by this federal House and our executive to be guided in its decisions by a recognition of Quebec's unique culture, linguistic characteristics, and civil law traditions.

[*Translation*]

When we come to this House, we all do so with our various experiences as individuals and Canadians. I was born in Montreal but grew up in British Columbia, in Vancouver. Most of my family still lives in Vancouver.

• (2245)

I visit regularly. I consider myself a westerner in a way, although I now live in Toronto. I had the opportunity and the privilege of teaching at the University of Montreal and at McGill University. So, I also consider myself a Quebecer.

When I look at the history of Quebec since 1774, since the Quebec Act, since our colleagues rejected Lord Durham's proposal to submerge Quebecers in an English ocean, so to speak, when I look at the history of my country, I see great French Canadians like Cartier, Laurier, Saint-Laurent, Trudeau and Chrétien, federalist Quebecers faithful to their people and convinced that federalism is the best way to protect their people's existence. On what basis?

Because the province of Quebec has a distinct identity. There is a distinctiveness that makes it different from the rest of Canada. There is Bill 101 which protects the French language in Quebec. Quebec controls immigration to the province, which is not the case in other provinces. Internationally, and I have a particular interest as chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Quebec, with its membership in the francophonie and its privileged relationship with France, is seen as different from the other provinces.

We can say that, in terms of protecting French culture and the French language in North America, for reasons already mentioned by the previous speaker, Quebec already has a different identity, a kind of distinct society. It is a very important asset for us in the rest of Canada. The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell made an emotional speech the other day about protecting the French language outside Quebec and he really convinced me that I as an Ontarian had a duty to protect the distinct identity and distinct society of Quebec.

[*English*]

I speak as an Ontarian. Can we say as Ontarians and as British Columbians that we have an interest in protecting a distinct society in Quebec? Does the existence of a francophone major-

ity within a province in Canada enrich the cultural and political life of the country in a way that enables us to be distinct and different?

This is an extraordinary and complex subject. We can say that our colleagues who have spoken earlier in the House are right when they say that British Columbians are distinct. Of course this is true. We are all distinct.

However speaking as I do, coming from Toronto, we recognize that our culture in North America will only survive in the face of North American television and the enormous pressures in which we live on the north-south pole, whether they are economic, environmental or cultural, if we live beside Quebec which is part of us, enriches us and gives us a specificity that sets us apart. We as Ontarians are different because we have Quebec as a distinct society beside us. We as Ontarians live in a country that is bilingual, bicultural and bi-juridical.

I have had experience as a young lawyer travelling outside the country. One of my great advantages was to work as a Canadian in international conferences. People were able to say to me: "You represent a country that represents the civil law and common law traditions. You represent a country which has the Gaelic traditions and the Anglo-Saxon traditions. You are able to act as a bridge in this new world, this interdependent world in which we live. You are able to participate in this world in a way that is different from Americans, British, French and anyone else in the world", precisely because we are Canadians and precisely because we are enriched by the presence of the distinct society of Quebec which forms a part of ourselves. We do not need to reject it. It enriches our experience. We are able to be what we are because we have Quebec as a part of us. We would be poorer if we did not. We would be poorer if we did not have Quebec as a distinct society.

• (2250)

Looking into the 21st century we must recognize that we will be challenged as a people. Whether we come from British Columbia, Alberta, the maritimes, Ontario or Quebec, we will be challenged to adapt to enormously changing conditions. In the course of those changes our adaptation, our flexibility and our ability to be something different will be precisely due to the fact that we have been able to share together, to partner together with our colleagues in Quebec a linguistic and cultural experience that means we can live and make something work in the country that is different from anything else.

That is why I argue with my colleagues in favour of the distinct society. I respect their difference of opinion. I ask them to respect ours. This is not some political vote. This is a strong belief of people.

**Mr. Epp:** How about inequality?

**Mr. Graham:** There is no suggestion of inequality, as my colleague suggests. Distinct society is not a special status. In

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recognizing Quebec as a distinct society we do not diminish ourselves. We enrich ourselves. This is not a suggestion of superiority. This is a suggestion of a recognition of a difference with which we live and with which we enrich ourselves by adapting and making a part of our culture.

[*Translation*]

I realize my time is almost up. I want to say that, in Ontario, we have a very large francophone community, whose survival depends on the existence of a distinct society in Quebec. A society that contributes to the enrichment of our society in Ontario and to the existence of an Ontario that is distinct from the United States, and I want to say to this House that the existence of Canada as a distinct society hinges on our recognizing Quebec as a distinct society.

[*English*]

I will repeat that in English as I believe it very strongly. The existence of Canada and the future of Canada as a distinct society depend upon our willingness to recognize the existence of Quebec as a distinct society within us. That will be our strength. That will be our future. That will be the future of Canada.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a basic principle in a democratic society is the principle of equality for all of its individuals. This principle is being abrogated and trashed by the motion the government is putting forth to give the distinct society clause to one province.

The principle of equality is something that Canada stands for, Canadians have fought for and Canadians have died for. It is the basic tenet of our country and one that this party and Canadians outside Quebec will not stand by and allow to be broken apart.

Canada stands as a beacon of hope on the planet. It stands as a beacon of hope in the global community, a hope for equality, peace and tolerance. That is what Canada stands for. Yet the course the government is taking is abrogating that and violates the very principle of equality we stand for.

Rather than leading us down the road of unity, it is leading us down the road to disunity. The government is balkanizing the very country that stands as a beacon of hope for unity and tolerance that is held up by the rest of the world.

• (2255)

The recognition of Quebec as a distinct society is not a benign statement. Rather, it enables one province to have special status over others. It is first step toward including it in the Constitution. Some may argue that it is benign and necessary, but that flies in the face of equality for all Canadians.

It enhances Quebec's group rights as opposed to the individual rights of Quebecers. It would enable an aggressive Quebec provincial government to abrogate its responsibilities and trample the rights of the minorities within Quebec. Statements by

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various separatist leaders after the referendum led us to believe nothing else than the fact that some of them were racist.

Furthermore, the province of Quebec with the distinct society could supplant federal policies by using the argument that Quebec is one half of Canada and the remainder is the other half. It could manipulate federal policies based on that. It is highly iniquitous because Canada is made up of ten provinces, not two groups.

Unfortunately this and previous governments have not engaged in the process of trying to bring Canada together. They have engaged in the process of appeasement. There are some glaring examples.

The federal government gives Quebec \$7 billion a year. Ottawa has transferred \$160 billion to Quebec over the last 30 years.

Quebec has three seats on the Supreme Court of Canada.

Quebec has been allowed to use the notwithstanding clause to step on the rights of anglophones within that province. Would Quebec tolerate the rest of Canada using the notwithstanding clause to do the same thing? I do not think so. Neither would the rest of Canada.

The rest of Canada has not been trampling on the rights of Quebecers. Rather, it has been engaging in the process of appeasement. Quite frankly the people in the rest of Canada are fed up and will simply not tolerate this any longer. That is why a distinct society with a veto is intolerable to the rest of Canada. We are hearing, sadly, the nascency of separation in the rest of Canada. That is not something about which we should be proud.

We are witnessing a tragedy. Canada is being fractured into many different groups. People are talking about Canada in a defeatist fashion. They are saying we have no vision, no direction, no identity and no culture. Some would say that Canada is like a rudderless boat in the ocean, buffeted around by circumstances beyond her control.

I do not accept that. Canada has an identity. Canada has a soul. Canada is strong. Canada has courage as we see in our peacekeepers. Canada has culture as we see in Celine Dion and the Group of Seven. Canada has made scientific contributions through Dr. Fraser Mustard.

Canada has strength in its people, in their everyday actions. That is what has made Canada the great country it is today. They are the heroes of Canada. That is the identity of Canada and that is why it is held in such high esteem throughout the world. It is our identity. It is very clear to those who have travelled to other

parts of the world. We are not some benign, opaque country without an identity. We are a great country.

Essential to the unity of a country is the concept that every citizen is equal. We are not first anglophones or francophones, Quebecers or British Columbians, Afro-Canadians or Indo-Canadians. Above all else we are simply Canadians. The hyphenated Canadianism we have pursued does not bring us together with our differences; it divides us. Our differences, whether they be language or culture, do not need to ghettoize us. Rather, our differences are something we can cherish. Our differences bind us together as citizens and as human beings in a common humanity.

It irritates me to no end and gets me very angry and also saddens me to see our differences used as a way of separating us instead of bringing us together. We need to change that now. It requires strong leadership for us to do this.

To the Prime Minister, stop negotiating with the separatist leaders because you will not win. It is a futile action. Bring your principles of equality, your principles of understanding and tolerance directly to the people on the ground in Quebec and the rest of Canada. Both need to heal. Both need to come together and both need to understand each other. You must have again as the basis of your decisions equality for all.

Constitutional changes must not go to the politicians. They must not go to the provinces. They must go directly to the people. Constitutional changes must go to a binding national referendum, to all Canadians, as it affects us all. It seems the government lacks the belief in the people of this country that they would uphold tolerance and respect for each other in the decisions they make.

The rest of Canada and I am sure the people of Quebec want nothing more than to be treated as equals. They want nothing more than to live their culture and their language. If we give culture and language directly to the provinces, as we must, the people of Quebec would be the masters of their own cultural and linguistic destinies.

That is what they ask for. That is what they must have. That is also what the rest of Canada must have. The message we send to the people of Quebec and the rest of Canada is this. We stand here today simply as proud Canadians with a history, Canadians with a future based on our differences, based on what binds us together, based on respect and tolerance for each other.

It is not a fantasy. It is something we can pursue and achieve. All it requires is leadership from here, leadership in the community and for all of us to work together to raise Canada to the truly great height it can reach.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 57, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to the order made earlier this day, the House is deemed to have divided on the motion and the recorded division on the question is deemed to have been requested and deferred until December 11, at 6.30 p.m.

[*English*]

On behalf of the House I thank everybody who permitted us to have this late debate, all the people who worked long and hard tonight.

It being after eleven o'clock, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 11.04 p.m.)

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## **APPENDIX**

**ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS WITH THEIR  
CONSTITUENCIES, PROVINCE OF CONSTITUENCY  
AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS;  
COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE,  
THE MINISTRY AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES**

**CHAIR OCCUPANTS**

**The Speaker**

HON. GILBERT PARENT

**The Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole**

MR. DAVID KILGOUR

**The Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole**

MRS. SHIRLEY MAHEU

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole**

MR. BOB KILGER

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**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

HON. GILBERT PARENT (CHAIRMAN)

MR. DON BOUDRIA

MR. GILLES DUCEPPE

HON. ALFONSO GAGLIANO

MR. MICHEL GAUTHIER (ROBERVAL)

HON. HERB GRAY, P.C.

MR. LEN HOPKINS

MR. DAVID KILGOUR

MR. BOB RINGMA

**ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

First Session – Thirty-fifth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay East	British Columbia	Ref.
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary North	Alberta	Ref.
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Ontario	Lib.
Alcock, Reg	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	Lib.
Allmand, Hon. Warren	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce	Quebec	Lib.
Althouse, Vic	Mackenzie	Saskatchewan	N.D.P.
Anawak, Jack Iyerak, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Nunatsiak	Northwest Territories	Lib.
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of National Revenue	Victoria	British Columbia	Lib.
Arseneault, Guy H.	Restigouche — Chaleur	New Brunswick	Lib.
Assad, Mark	Gatineau — La Lièvre	Quebec	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis	Don Valley North	Ontario	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	Quebec	B.Q.
Augustine, Jean, Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister	Etobicoke — Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Axworthy, Chris	Saskatoon — Clark's Crossing	Saskatchewan	N.D.P.
Axworthy, Hon. Lloyd, Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Quebec	B.Q.
Baker, George S.	Gander — Grand Falls	Newfoundland	Lib.
Bakopanos, Eleni	Saint-Denis	Quebec	Lib.
Barnes, Sue	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton	Ontario	Lib.
Bélaïr, Réginald, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Cochrane — Superior	Ontario	Lib.
Bélangier, Mauril	Ottawa — Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bélisle, Richard	La Prairie	Quebec	B.Q.
Bellehumeur, Michel	Berthier — Montcalm	Quebec	B.Q.
Bellemare, Eugène	Carleton — Gloucester	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon E.	Vegreville	Alberta	Ref.
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères	Quebec	B.Q.
Bernier, Gilles	Beauce	Quebec	Ind.
Bernier, Maurice	Mégantic — Compton — Stanstead	Quebec	B.Q.
Bernier, Yvan	Gaspé	Quebec	B.Q.
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac — Gatineau — Labelle	Quebec	Lib.
Bethel, Judy	Edmonton East	Alberta	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Maurizio, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development	York North	Ontario	Lib.
Bhaduria, Jag	Markham — Whitchurch — Stouffville	Ontario	Ind. Lib.
Blaikie, Bill	Winnipeg Transcona	Manitoba	N.D.P.

N.B.: Under Political Affiliation: Lib.—Liberal; B.Q.—Bloc Québécois; Ref.—Reform Party of Canada; N.D.P.—New Democratic Party; P.C.—Progressive Conservative; Ind.—Independent.

Anyone wishing to communicate with House of Commons members is invited to communicate with either the Member's constituency or Parliament Hill offices.



Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Blondin—Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Secretary of State (Training and Youth)	Western Arctic . . . . .	Northwest Territories . .	Lib.
Bodnar, Morris . . . . .	Saskatoon — Dundurn . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond . . . . .	Nickel Belt . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Bouchard, Hon. Lucien, Leader of the Opposition . . . . .	Lac—Saint—Jean . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Boudria, Don . . . . .	Glengarry — Prescott — Russell . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Breitkreuz, Cliff . . . . .	Yellowhead . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Ref.
Breitkreuz, Garry . . . . .	Yorkton — Melville . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Ref.
Bridgman, Margaret . . . . .	Surrey North . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	Ref.
Brien, Pierre . . . . .	Témiscamingue . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Brown, Bonnie . . . . .	Oakville — Milton . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Brown, Jan . . . . .	Calgary Southeast . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Ref.
Brushett, Dianne . . . . .	Cumberland — Colchester .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Lib.
Bryden, John . . . . .	Hamilton — Wentworth . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles . . . . .	Davenport . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Calder, Murray . . . . .	Wellington — Grey — Dufferin — Simcoe . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Campbell, Barry . . . . .	St. Paul's . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Cannis, John . . . . .	Scarborough Centre . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Canuel, René . . . . .	Matapédia — Matane . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Caron, André . . . . .	Jonquière . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Catterall, Marlene . . . . .	Ottawa West . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Cauchon, Martin . . . . .	Outremont . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	Lib.
Chamberlain, Brenda . . . . .	Guelph — Wellington . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Chan, Hon. Raymond, Secretary of State (Asia—Pacific) . . . . .	Richmond . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	Lib.
Charest, Hon. Jean J. . . . .	Sherbrooke . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	P.C.
Chatters, David . . . . .	Athabasca . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Ref.
Chrétien, Right Hon. Jean, Prime Minister . . . . .	Saint—Maurice . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	Lib.
Chrétien, Jean—Guy . . . . .	Frontenac . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Clancy, Mary, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration . . . . .	Halifax . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Lib.
Cohen, Shaughnessy . . . . .	Windsor — St. Clair . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David M., Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs . . . . .	Don Valley East . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Collins, Bernie . . . . .	Souris — Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Lib.
Comuzzi, Joe . . . . .	Thunder Bay — Nipigon . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment . . . . .	Hamilton East . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Cowling, Marlene . . . . .	Dauphin — Swan River . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Lib.
Crawford, Rex . . . . .	Kent . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Crête, Paul . . . . .	Kamouraska — Rivière—du— Loup . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Culbert, Harold . . . . .	Carleton — Charlotte . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Lib.
Cummins, John . . . . .	Delta . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	Ref.
Dalphond—Guiral, Madeleine . . . . .	Laval Centre . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Daviault, Michel . . . . .	Ahuntsic . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Debien, Maud . . . . .	Laval East . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
de Jong, Simon . . . . .	Regina — Qu'Appelle . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	N.D.P.
de Savoye, Pierre . . . . .	Portneuf . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
Deshaies, Bernard . . . . .	Abitibi . . . . .	Quebec . . . . .	B.Q.
DeVillers, Paul . . . . .	Simcoe North . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Lib.
Dhaliwal, Harbance Singh, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans . . . . .	Vancouver South . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dingwall, Hon. David, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Cape Breton — East Richmond .....	Nova Scotia .....	Lib.
Discepola, Nick .....	Vaudreuil .....	Quebec .....	Lib.
Dromisky, Stan .....	Thunder Bay — Atikokan ..	Ontario .....	Lib.
Dubé, Antoine .....	Lévis .....	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Duceppe, Gilles .....	Laurier — Sainte-Marie ...	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Duhamel, Ronald J., Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board .....	St. Boniface .....	Manitoba .....	Lib.
Dumas, Maurice .....	Argenteuil — Papineau ....	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Duncan, John .....	North Island — Powell River	British Columbia .....	Ref.
Dupuy, Hon. Michel, Minister of Canadian Heritage .....	Laval West .....	Quebec .....	Lib.
Easter, Wayne .....	Malpeque .....	Prince Edward Island ..	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Arthur C., President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure .....	York Centre .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
English, John, Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Kitchener .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Epp, Ken .....	Elk Island .....	Alberta .....	Ref.
Fewchuk, Ron .....	Selkirk — Red River .....	Manitoba .....	Lib.
Fillion, Gilbert .....	Chicoutimi .....	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Finestone, Hon. Sheila, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women) .....	Mount Royal .....	Quebec .....	Lib.
Finlay, John .....	Oxford .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Flis, Jesse, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs .....	Parkdale — High Park .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Fontana, Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport .....	London East .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Forseth, Paul .....	New Westminster — Burnaby .....	British Columbia .....	Ref.
Frazer, Jack .....	Saanich — Gulf Islands .....	British Columbia .....	Ref.
Fry, Hedy, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health .....	Vancouver Centre .....	British Columbia .....	Lib.
Gaffney, Beryl .....	Nepean .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Gagliano, Hon. Alfonso, Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons .....	Saint-Léonard .....	Quebec .....	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane .....	Québec .....	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Gagnon, Patrick, Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada .....	Bonaventure — Îles-de-la-Madeleine .....	Quebec .....	Lib.
Galloway, Roger .....	Sarnia — Lambton .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Gauthier, Michel .....	Roberval .....	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Gerrard, Hon. Jon, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development) .....	Portage — Interlake .....	Manitoba .....	Lib.
Gilmour, Bill .....	Comox — Alberni .....	British Columbia .....	Ref.
Godfrey, John .....	Don Valley West .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Godin, Maurice .....	Châteauguay .....	Quebec .....	B.Q.
Goodale, Hon. Ralph E., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food .....	Regina — Wascana .....	Saskatchewan .....	Lib.
Gouk, Jim .....	Kootenay West — Revelstoke .....	British Columbia .....	Ref.
Graham, Bill .....	Rosedale .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Gray, Hon. Herb, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada .....	Windsor West .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Grey, Deborah .....	Beaver River .....	Alberta .....	Ref.
Grose, Ivan .....	Oshawa .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Grubel, Herb .....	Capilano — Howe Sound ..	British Columbia .....	Ref.
Guarnieri, Albina, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage .....	Mississauga East .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Guay, Monique .....	Laurentides .....	Quebec .....	B.Q.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Guimond, Michel	Beauport — Montmorency — Orléans	Quebec	B.Q.
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	Ref.
Hanrahan, Hugh	Edmonton — Strathcona	Alberta	Ref.
Harb, Mac, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Harper, Ed	Simcoe Centre	Ontario	Ref.
Harper, Elijah	Churchill	Manitoba	Lib.
Harper, Stephen	Calgary West	Alberta	Ref.
Harris, Dick	Prince George — Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	Ref.
Hart, Jim	Okanagan — Similkameen — Merritt	British Columbia	Ref.
Harvard, John	Winnipeg St. James	Manitoba	Lib.
Hayes, Sharon	Port Moody — Coquitlam	British Columbia	Ref.
Hermanson, Elwin	Kindersley — Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	Ref.
Hickey, Bonnie	St. John's East	Newfoundland	Lib.
Hill, Grant	Macleod	Alberta	Ref.
Hill, Jay	Prince George — Peace River	British Columbia	Ref.
Hoepfner, Jake E.	Lisgar — Marquette	Manitoba	Ref.
Hopkins, Leonard	Renfrew — Nipissing — Pembroke	Ontario	Lib.
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity — Spadina	Ontario	Lib.
Iftody, David	Provencher	Manitoba	Lib.
Irwin, Hon. Ron, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid L.	Bruce — Grey	Ontario	Lib.
Jacob, Jean-Marc	Charlesbourg	Quebec	B.Q.
Jennings, Daphne	Mission — Coquitlam	British Columbia	Ref.
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	Ref.
Jordan, Jim	Leeds — Grenville	Ontario	Lib.
Karygiannis, Jim	Scarborough — Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Kerpan, Allan	Moose Jaw — Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	Ref.
Keyes, Stan	Hamilton West	Ontario	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole	Stormont — Dundas	Ontario	Lib.
Kilgour, David, Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole	Edmonton Southeast	Alberta	Lib.
Kirkby, Gordon	Prince Albert — Churchill River	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Knutson, Gar	Elgin — Norfolk	Ontario	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York — Simcoe	Ontario	Lib.
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	Quebec	B.Q.
Landry, Jean	Lotbinière	Quebec	B.Q.
Langlois, François	Bellechasse	Quebec	B.Q.
Lastewka, Walt	St. Catharines	Ontario	Lib.
Laurin, René	Joliette	Quebec	B.Q.
Lavigne, Laurent	Beauharnois — Salaberry	Quebec	B.Q.
Lavigne, Raymond	Verdun — Saint-Paul	Quebec	Lib.
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	Quebec	B.Q.
LeBlanc, Francis G.	Cape Breton Highlands — Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Leblanc, Nic	Longueuil	Quebec	B.Q.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough — Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Lefebvre, Réjean	Champlain	Quebec	B.Q.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Leroux, Gaston	Richmond — Wolfe	Quebec	B.Q.
Leroux, Jean H.	Shefford	Quebec	B.Q.
Lincoln, Clifford, Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment	Lachine — Lac-Saint-Louis	Quebec	Lib.
Loney, John	Edmonton North	Alberta	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe — Bagot	Quebec	B.Q.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence, Secretary of State (Veterans)	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacDonald, Ron	Dartmouth	Nova Scotia	Lib.
MacLaren, Hon. Roy, Minister for International Trade	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
MacLellan, Russell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Cape Breton — The Sydneys	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Maheu, Shirley, Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole	Saint-Laurent — Cartierville	Quebec	Lib.
Malhi, Gurbax Singh	Bramalea — Gore — Malton	Ontario	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie	Ontario	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John, Minister of Industry	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
Manning, Preston	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	Ref.
Marchand, Jean-Paul	Québec-Est	Quebec	B.Q.
Marchi, Hon. Sergio, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane, Minister of Health	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt — Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Ref.
Martin, Hon. Paul, Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development — Quebec	LaSalle — Émard	Quebec	Lib.
Massé, Hon. Marcel, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal	Hull — Aylmer	Quebec	Lib.
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo — Chilcotin	British Columbia	Ref.
McClelland, Ian	Edmonton Southwest	Alberta	Ref.
McCormick, Larry	Hastings — Frontenac — Lennox and Addington	Ontario	Lib.
McGuire, Joe	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKinnon, Glen	Brandon — Souris	Manitoba	Lib.
McLaughlin, Hon. Audrey	Yukon	Yukon	N.D.P.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Minister of Natural Resources	Edmonton Northwest	Alberta	Lib.
McTeague, Dan	Ontario	Ontario	Lib.
McWhinney, Ted	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga — Maisonneuve	Quebec	B.Q.
Mercier, Paul	Blainville — Deux- Montagnes	Quebec	B.Q.
Meredith, Val	Surrey — White Rock — South Langley	British Columbia	Ref.
Mifflin, Fred, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs	Bonavista — Trinity — Conception	Newfoundland	Lib.
Milliken, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	Ref.
Mills, Dennis J., Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry	Broadview — Greenwood	Ontario	Lib.
Minna, Maria	Beaches — Woodbine	Ontario	Lib.
Mitchell, Andy	Parry Sound — Muskoka	Ontario	Lib.
Morrison, Lee	Swift Current — Maple Creek — Assiniboia	Saskatchewan	Ref.
Murphy, John	Annapolis Valley — Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Murray, Ian	Lanark — Carleton	Ontario	Lib.
Nault, Robert D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour	Kenora — Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.
Nunez, Osvaldo	Bourassa	Quebec	B.Q.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Nunziata, John	York South — Weston	Ontario	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London — Middlesex	Ontario	Lib.
O'Reilly, John	Victoria — Haliburton	Ontario	Lib.
Ouellet, Hon. André, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Papineau — Saint-Michel	Quebec	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Rey D.	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	Lib.
Paradis, Denis	Brome — Missisquoi	Quebec	Lib.
Paré, Philippe	Louis-Hébert	Quebec	B.Q.
Parent, Hon. Gilbert, Speaker	Welland — St. Catharines — Thorold	Ontario	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga West	Ontario	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds — Dollard	Quebec	Lib.
Payne, Jean	St. John's West	Newfoundland	Lib.
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	Alberta	Ref.
Perić, Janko	Cambridge	Ontario	Lib.
Peters, Hon. Douglas, Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)	Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
Peterson, Jim	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Quebec	B.Q.
Pickard, Jerry	Essex — Kent	Ontario	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Ontario	Lib.
Plamondon, Louis	Richelieu	Quebec	B.Q.
Pomerleau, Roger	Anjou — Rivière-des- Prairies	Quebec	B.Q.
Proud, George	Hillsborough	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Ramsay, Jack	Crowfoot	Alberta	Ref.
Reed, Julian	Halton — Peel	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Richardson, John	Perth — Wellington — Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Rideout, George S., Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources	Moncton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Riis, Nelson	Kamloops	British Columbia	N.D.P.
Ringma, Bob	Nanaimo — Cowichan	British Columbia	Ref.
Ringuette-Maltais, Pierrette	Madawaska — Victoria	New Brunswick	Lib.
Robichaud, Hon. Fernand, Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans)	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, Minister of Labour	Saint-Henri — Westmount	Quebec	Lib.
Robinson, Svend J.	Burnaby — Kingsway	British Columbia	N.D.P.
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	Quebec	B.Q.
Rock, Hon. Allan, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma	Ontario	Lib.
St-Laurent, Bernard	Manicouagan	Quebec	B.Q.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Terrebonne	Quebec	B.Q.
Schmidt, Werner	Okanagan Centre	British Columbia	Ref.
Scott, Andy	Fredericton — York — Sunbury	New Brunswick	Lib.
Scott, Mike	Skeena	British Columbia	Ref.
Serré, Benoît	Timiskaming — French River	Ontario	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex	Durham	Ontario	Lib.
Sheridan, Georgette	Saskatoon — Humboldt	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Silye, Jim	Calgary Centre	Alberta	Ref.
Simmons, Hon. Roger	Burin — St. George's	Newfoundland	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Skoke, Roseanne	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	Alberta	Ref.
Solomon, John	Regina — Lumsden	Saskatchewan	N.D.P.
Speaker, Ray	Lethbridge	Alberta	Ref.
Speller, Bob	Haldimand — Norfolk	Ontario	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron — Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Christine, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)	Northumberland	Ontario	Lib.
Stewart, Jane	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan — Shuswap	British Columbia	Ref.
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley East	British Columbia	Ref.
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Taylor, Len	The Battlefords — Meadow Lake	Saskatchewan	N.D.P.
Telegdi, Andrew	Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Terrana, Anna	Vancouver East	British Columbia	Lib.
Thalheimer, Peter	Timmins — Chapleau	Ontario	Lib.
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	Ref.
Tobin, Hon. Brian, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Humber — St. Barbe — Baie Verte	Newfoundland	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Ontario	Lib.
Tremblay, Benoît	Rosemont	Quebec	B.Q.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski — Témiscouata	Quebec	B.Q.
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton — Middlesex	Ontario	Lib.
Valeri, Tony	Lincoln	Ontario	Lib.
Vanclief, Lyle, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food	Prince Edward — Hastings	Ontario	Lib.
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Hubert	Quebec	B.Q.
Verran, Harry	South West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Volpe, Joseph	Eglinton — Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Walker, David, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance	Winnipeg North Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough West	Ontario	Lib.
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	New Brunswick	P.C.
Wells, Derek	South Shore	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Whelan, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue	Essex — Windsor	Ontario	Lib.
White, Randy	Fraser Valley West	British Columbia	Ref.
White, Ted	North Vancouver	British Columbia	Ref.
Williams, John	St. Albert	Alberta	Ref.
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Ontario	Lib.
Young, Hon. Douglas, Minister of Transport	Acadie — Bathurst	New Brunswick	Lib.
Zed, Paul	Fundy — Royal	New Brunswick	Lib.
VACANCY	Labrador	Newfoundland	

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session — Thirty–fifth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
<b>ALBERTA (26)</b>		
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary North	Ref.
Benoit, Leon E.	Vegreville	Ref.
Bethel, Judy	Edmonton East	Lib.
Breitkreuz, Cliff	Yellowhead	Ref.
Brown, Jan	Calgary Southeast	Ref.
Chatters, David	Athabasca	Ref.
Epp, Ken	Elk Island	Ref.
Grey, Deborah	Beaver River	Ref.
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Ref.
Hanrahan, Hugh	Edmonton — Strathcona	Ref.
Harper, Stephen	Calgary West	Ref.
Hill, Grant	Macleod	Ref.
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	Ref.
Kilgour, David, Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole	Edmonton Southeast	Lib.
Loney, John	Edmonton North	Lib.
Manning, Preston	Calgary Southwest	Ref.
McClelland, Ian	Edmonton Southwest	Ref.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Minister of Natural Resources	Edmonton Northwest	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Ref.
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	Ref.
Ramsay, Jack	Crowfoot	Ref.
Silye, Jim	Calgary Centre	Ref.
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	Ref.
Speaker, Ray	Lethbridge	Ref.
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Ref.
Williams, John	St. Albert	Ref.
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA (32)</b>		
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay East	Ref.
Anderson, Hon. David, Minister of National Revenue	Victoria	Lib.
Bridgman, Margaret	Surrey North	Ref.
Chan, Hon. Raymond, Secretary of State (Asia–Pacific)	Richmond	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta	Ref.
Dhaliwal, Harbance Singh, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Vancouver South	Lib.
Duncan, John	North Island — Powell River	Ref.
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster — Burnaby	Ref.
Frazer, Jack	Saanich — Gulf Islands	Ref.
Fry, Hedy, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Gilmour, Bill	Comox — Alberni	Ref.
Gouk, Jim	Kootenay West — Revelstoke	Ref.
Grubel, Herb	Capilano — Howe Sound	Ref.
Harris, Dick	Prince George — Bulkley Valley	Ref.
Hart, Jim	Okanagan — Similkameen — Merritt	Ref.
Hayes, Sharon	Port Moody — Coquitlam	Ref.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Hill, Jay	Prince George — Peace River	Ref.
Jennings, Daphne	Mission — Coquitlam	Ref.
Martin, Keith	Esquimalt — Juan de Fuca	Ref.
Mayfield, Philip	Cariboo — Chilcotin	Ref.
McWhinney, Ted	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Meredith, Val	Surrey — White Rock — South Langley	Ref.
Riis, Nelson	Kamloops	N.D.P.
Ringma, Bob	Nanaimo — Cowichan	Ref.
Robinson, Svend J.	Burnaby — Kingsway	N.D.P.
Schmidt, Werner	Okanagan Centre	Ref.
Scott, Mike	Skeena	Ref.
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan — Shuswap	Ref.
Strahl, Chuck	Fraser Valley East	Ref.
Terrana, Anna	Vancouver East	Lib.
White, Randy	Fraser Valley West	Ref.
White, Ted	North Vancouver	Ref.

#### MANITOBA (14)

Alcock, Reg	Winnipeg South	Lib.
Axworthy, Hon. Lloyd, Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Blaikie, Bill	Winnipeg Transcona	N.D.P.
Cowling, Marlene	Dauphin — Swan River	Lib.
Duhamel, Ronald J., Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board	St. Boniface	Lib.
Fewchuk, Ron	Selkirk — Red River	Lib.
Gerrard, Hon. Jon, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development)	Portage — Interlake	Lib.
Harper, Elijah	Churchill	Lib.
Harvard, John	Winnipeg St. James	Lib.
Hoepfner, Jake E.	Lisgar — Marquette	Ref.
Iftody, David	Provencher	Lib.
McKinnon, Glen	Brandon — Souris	Lib.
Pagtakhan, Rey D.	Winnipeg North	Lib.
Walker, David, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance	Winnipeg North Centre	Lib.

#### NEW BRUNSWICK (10)

Arseneault, Guy H.	Restigouche — Chaleur	Lib.
Culbert, Harold	Carleton — Charlotte	Lib.
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	Lib.
Rideout, George S., Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources	Moncton	Lib.
Ringette-Maltais, Pierrette	Madawaska — Victoria	Lib.
Robichaud, Hon. Fernand, Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans)	Beauséjour	Lib.
Scott, Andy	Fredericton — York — Sunbury	Lib.
Wayne, Elsie	Saint John	P.C.
Young, Hon. Douglas, Minister of Transport	Acadie — Bathurst	Lib.
Zed, Paul	Fundy — Royal	Lib.

#### NEWFOUNDLAND (7)

Baker, George S.	Gander — Grand Falls	Lib.
Hickey, Bonnie	St. John's East	Lib.



Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Mifflin, Fred, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs	Bonavista — Trinity — Conception	Lib.
Payne, Jean	St. John's West	Lib.
Simmons, Hon. Roger	Burin — St. George's	Lib.
Tobin, Hon. Brian, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Humber — St. Barbe — Baie Verte	Lib.
VACANCY	Labrador	
<b>NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (2)</b>		
Anawak, Jack Iyerak, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Nunatsiak	Lib.
Blondin—Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Secretary of State (Training and Youth)	Western Arctic	Lib.
<b>NOVA SCOTIA (11)</b>		
Brushett, Dianne	Cumberland — Colchester	Lib.
Clancy, Mary, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Halifax	Lib.
Dingwall, Hon. David, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Cape Breton — East Richmond	Lib.
LeBlanc, Francis G.	Cape Breton Highlands — Canso	Lib.
MacDonald, Ron	Dartmouth	Lib.
MacLellan, Russell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Cape Breton — The Sydneys	Lib.
Murphy, John	Annapolis Valley — Hants	Lib.
Regan, Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Skoke, Roseanne	Central Nova	Lib.
Verran, Harry	South West Nova	Lib.
Wells, Derek	South Shore	Lib.
<b>ONTARIO (99)</b>		
Adams, Peter	Peterborough	Lib.
Assadourian, Sarkis	Don Valley North	Lib.
Augustine, Jean, Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister	Etobicoke — Lakeshore	Lib.
Barnes, Sue	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton	Lib.
Bélaïr, Réginald, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Cochrane — Superior	Lib.
Bélangier, Mauril	Ottawa — Vanier	Lib.
Bellemare, Eugène	Carleton — Gloucester	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Maurizio, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development	York North	Lib.
Bhaduria, Jag	Markham — Whitchurch — Stouffville	Ind. Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Boudria, Don	Glengarry — Prescott — Russell	Lib.
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville — Milton	Lib.
Bryden, John	Hamilton — Wentworth	Lib.
Caccia, Hon. Charles	Davenport	Lib.
Calder, Murray	Wellington — Grey — Dufferin — Simcoe	Lib.
Campbell, Barry	St. Paul's	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Chamberlain, Brenda	Guelph — Wellington	Lib.
Cohen, Shaughnessy	Windsor — St. Clair	Lib.
Collenette, Hon. David M., Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs	Don Valley East	Lib.
Comuzzi, Joe	Thunder Bay — Nipigon	Lib.
Copps, Hon. Sheila, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment	Hamilton East	Lib.
Crawford, Rex	Kent	Lib.
DeVillers, Paul	Simcoe North	Lib.
Dromisky, Stan	Thunder Bay — Atikokan	Lib.
Eggleton, Hon. Arthur C., President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure	York Centre	Lib.
English, John, Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Kitchener	Lib.
Finlay, John	Oxford	Lib.
Flis, Jesse, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs	Parkdale — High Park	Lib.
Fontana, Joe, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport	London East	Lib.
Gaffney, Beryl	Nepean	Lib.
Galloway, Roger	Sarnia — Lambton	Lib.
Godfrey, John	Don Valley West	Lib.
Graham, Bill	Rosedale	Lib.
Gray, Hon. Herb, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada	Windsor West	Lib.
Grose, Ivan	Oshawa	Lib.
Guarnieri, Albina, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage	Mississauga East	Lib.
Harb, Mac, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade	Ottawa Centre	Lib.
Harper, Ed	Simcoe Centre	Ref.
Hopkins, Leonard	Renfrew — Nipissing — Pembroke	Lib.
Ianno, Tony	Trinity — Spadina	Lib.
Irwin, Hon. Ron, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Sault Ste. Marie	Lib.
Jackson, Ovid L.	Bruce — Grey	Lib.
Jordan, Jim	Leeds — Grenville	Lib.
Karygiannis, Jim	Scarborough — Agincourt	Lib.
Keyes, Stan	Hamilton West	Lib.
Kilger, Bob, Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole	Stormont — Dundas	Lib.
Knutson, Gar	Elgin — Norfolk	Lib.
Kraft Sloan, Karen	York — Simcoe	Lib.
Lastewka, Walt	St. Catharines	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough — Rouge River	Lib.
MacLaren, Hon. Roy, Minister for International Trade	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Malhi, Gurbax Singh	Bramalea — Gore — Malton	Lib.
Maloney, John	Erie	Lib.
Manley, Hon. John, Minister of Industry	Ottawa South	Lib.
Marchi, Hon. Sergio, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	York West	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane, Minister of Health	Sudbury	Lib.
McCormick, Larry	Hastings — Frontenac — Lennox and Addington	Lib.
McTeague, Dan	Ontario	Lib.
Milliken, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Mills, Dennis J., Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry	Broadview — Greenwood	Lib.
Minna, Maria	Beaches — Woodbine	Lib.
Mitchell, Andy	Parry Sound — Muskoka	Lib.
Murray, Ian	Lanark — Carleton	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Nault, Robert D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour	Kenora — Rainy River	Lib.
Nunziata, John	York South — Weston	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London — Middlesex	Lib.
O'Reilly, John	Victoria — Haliburton	Lib.
Parent, Hon. Gilbert, Speaker	Welland — St. Catharines — Thorold	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga West	Lib.
Perić, Janko	Cambridge	Lib.
Peters, Hon. Douglas, Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)	Scarborough East	Lib.
Peterson, Jim	Willowdale	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Lib.
Pickard, Jerry	Essex — Kent	Lib.
Pillitteri, Gary	Niagara Falls	Lib.
Reed, Julian	Halton — Peel	Lib.
Richardson, John	Perth — Wellington — Waterloo	Lib.
Rock, Hon. Allan, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma	Lib.
Serré, Benoît	Timiskaming — French River	Lib.
Shepherd, Alex	Durham	Lib.
Speller, Bob	Haldimand — Norfolk	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron — Bruce	Lib.
Stewart, Hon. Christine, Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)	Northumberland	Lib.
Stewart, Jane	Brant	Lib.
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Andrew	Waterloo	Lib.
Thalheimer, Peter	Timmins — Chapleau	Lib.
Torsney, Paddy	Burlington	Lib.
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton — Middlesex	Lib.
Valeri, Tony	Lincoln	Lib.
Vanclief, Lyle, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food	Prince Edward — Hastings	Lib.
Volpe, Joseph	Eglinton — Lawrence	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough West	Lib.
Whelan, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue	Essex — Windsor	Lib.
Wood, Bob	Nipissing	Lib.

#### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Easter, Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence, Secretary of State (Veterans)	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Joe	Egmont	Lib.
Proud, George	Hillsborough	Lib.

#### QUEBEC (75)

Allmand, Hon. Warren	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce	Lib.
Assad, Mark	Gatineau — La Lièvre	Lib.
Asselin, Gérard	Charlevoix	B.Q.
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	B.Q.
Bakopanos, Eleni	Saint-Denis	Lib.
Bélisle, Richard	La Prairie	B.Q.
Bellehumeur, Michel	Berthier — Montcalm	B.Q.
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères	B.Q.
Bernier, Gilles	Beauce	Ind.
Bernier, Maurice	Mégantic — Compton — Stanstead	B.Q.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Bernier, Yvan	Gaspé	B.Q.
Bertrand, Robert	Pontiac — Gatineau — Labelle	Lib.
Bouchard, Hon. Lucien, Leader of the Opposition	Lac-Saint-Jean	B.Q.
Brien, Pierre	Témiscamingue	B.Q.
Canuel, René	Matapédia — Matane	B.Q.
Caron, André	Jonquière	B.Q.
Cauchon, Martin	Outremont	Lib.
Charest, Hon. Jean J.	Sherbrooke	P.C.
Chrétien, Right Hon. Jean, Prime Minister	Saint-Maurice	Lib.
Chrétien, Jean-Guy	Frontenac	B.Q.
Crête, Paul	Kamouraska — Rivière-du-Loup	B.Q.
Dalphond-Guiral, Madeleine	Laval Centre	B.Q.
Daviault, Michel	Ahuntsic	B.Q.
Debien, Maud	Laval East	B.Q.
de Savoye, Pierre	Portneuf	B.Q.
Deshaies, Bernard	Abitibi	B.Q.
Discepola, Nick	Vaudreuil	Lib.
Dubé, Antoine	Lévis	B.Q.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier — Sainte-Marie	B.Q.
Dumas, Maurice	Argenteuil — Papineau	B.Q.
Dupuy, Hon. Michel, Minister of Canadian Heritage	Laval West	Lib.
Fillion, Gilbert	Chicoutimi	B.Q.
Finestone, Hon. Sheila, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)	Mount Royal	Lib.
Gagliano, Hon. Alfonso, Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Saint-Léonard	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	B.Q.
Gagnon, Patrick, Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada	Bonaventure — Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Lib.
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval	B.Q.
Godin, Maurice	Châteauguay	B.Q.
Guay, Monique	Laurentides	B.Q.
Guimond, Michel	Beauport — Montmorency — Orléans	B.Q.
Jacob, Jean-Marc	Charlesbourg	B.Q.
Lalonde, Francine	Mercier	B.Q.
Landry, Jean	Lotbinière	B.Q.
Langlois, François	Bellechasse	B.Q.
Laurin, René	Joliette	B.Q.
Lavigne, Laurent	Beauharnois — Salaberry	B.Q.
Lavigne, Raymond	Verdun — Saint-Paul	Lib.
Lebel, Ghislain	Chambly	B.Q.
Leblanc, Nic	Longueuil	B.Q.
Lefebvre, Réjean	Champlain	B.Q.
Leroux, Gaston	Richmond — Wolfe	B.Q.
Leroux, Jean H.	Shefford	B.Q.
Lincoln, Clifford, Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment	Lachine — Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe — Bagot	B.Q.
Maheu, Shirley, Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole	Saint-Laurent — Cartierville	Lib.
Marchand, Jean-Paul	Québec-Est	B.Q.
Martin, Hon. Paul, Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development — Quebec	LaSalle — Émard	Lib.
Massé, Hon. Marcel, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal	Hull — Aylmer	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga — Maisonneuve	B.Q.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Mercier, Paul	Blainville — Deux-Montagnes	B.Q.
Nunez, Osvaldo	Bourassa	B.Q.
Ouellet, Hon. André, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Papineau — Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paradis, Denis	Brome — Missisquoi	Lib.
Paré, Philippe	Louis-Hébert	B.Q.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds — Dollard	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	B.Q.
Plamondon, Louis	Richelieu	B.Q.
Pomerleau, Roger	Anjou — Rivière-des-Prairies	B.Q.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, Minister of Labour	Saint-Henri — Westmount	Lib.
Rocheleau, Yves	Trois-Rivières	B.Q.
St-Laurent, Bernard	Manicouagan	B.Q.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Terrebonne	B.Q.
Tremblay, Benoît	Rosemont	B.Q.
Tremblay, Suzanne	Rimouski — Témiscouata	B.Q.
Venne, Pierrette	Saint-Hubert	B.Q.
<b>SASKATCHEWAN (14)</b>		
Althouse, Vic	Mackenzie	N.D.P.
Axworthy, Chris	Saskatoon — Clark's Crossing	N.D.P.
Bodnar, Morris	Saskatoon — Dundurn	Lib.
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton — Melville	Ref.
Collins, Bernie	Souris — Moose Mountain	Lib.
de Jong, Simon	Regina — Qu'Appelle	N.D.P.
Goodale, Hon. Ralph E., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Regina — Wascana	Lib.
Hermanson, Elwin	Kindersley — Lloydminster	Ref.
Kerpan, Allan	Moose Jaw — Lake Centre	Ref.
Kirkby, Gordon	Prince Albert — Churchill River	Lib.
Morrison, Lee	Swift Current — Maple Creek — Assiniboia	Ref.
Sheridan, Georgette	Saskatoon — Humboldt	Lib.
Solomon, John	Regina — Lumsden	N.D.P.
Taylor, Len	The Battlefords — Meadow Lake	N.D.P.
<b>YUKON (1)</b>		
McLaughlin, Hon. Audrey	Yukon	N.D.P.





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HON. GILBERT PARENT

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**The Deputy Chairperson of Committees of the Whole**

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**The Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole**

MR. BOB KILGER

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The Hon. Lloyd Axworthy	Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification
The Hon. David M. Collenette	Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs
The Hon. Roy MacLaren	Minister for International Trade
The Hon. David Anderson	Minister of National Revenue
The Hon. Ralph E. Goodale	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
The Hon. David Dingwall	Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
The Hon. Ron Irwin	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
The Hon. Brian Tobin	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
The Hon. Joyce Fairbairn	Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister with special responsibility for Literacy
The Hon. Sheila Copps	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment
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The Hon. Marcel Massé	President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal
The Hon. Anne McLellan	Minister of Natural Resources
The Hon. Allan Rock	Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
The Hon. Lucienne Robillard	Minister of Labour
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The Hon. Fernand Robichaud	Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans)
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George S. Rideout	to Minister of Natural Resources
Russell MacLellan	to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Robert D. Nault	to Minister of Labour

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#### Appendix

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