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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, December 11, 1995**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 11, 1995

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### QUEBEC'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should, in accordance with international law, recognize Quebec's inalienable right to choose its political destiny and consequently its right to self-determination.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am sorely tempted to dedicate my speech to the member for Kingston and the Islands. You will understand how proud I am to make this speech, because constitutional dialogue requires a discussion, not of a distinct society but rather of what is as plain as the nose on our face, what is an accepted fact and a sociological reality: Quebec is a nation.

As you know, when international law recognizes the right to self-determination, the holders of that right are individuals who together are characterized as a people and form a nation.

First and foremost, let me state that on this side we are totally convinced that Quebec is indeed a nation, which is to say it has its own vernacular, controls its territory, has its own legal system, and possesses a proud history which is the focus for its collective feeling of belonging. Obviously, there is a fifth element in Quebec's right to self-determination, a collective desire for it.

I feel that it would be important, to say the least, and one of the most positive indications for our future, if this House were to acknowledge this morning that Quebec is a nation and therefore entitled to self-determination. An examination of international law shows that the right to self-determination means specifically the right to freely choose a collective destiny. Most often, but not always, this takes the form of a referendum process.

I trust that all of the hon. members speaking in this debate will acknowledge that Quebec is blessed with highly democratic and up to date legislation on public consultation. No parliamentarian could object to the fact that Quebec held a referendum last October. Nothing could prevent Quebec from holding a referen-

dum in 12 months, 26 months, 3 years or even six weeks if it so desires, to determine freely its collective future.

There is a paradox here, because to foreign observers, even those well up on the Canadian political scene, constitutional reform has been central to the political debate in this country for the past 30 years. When we started talking about constitutional reform 30 years ago, there were two tendencies. One said patriate the Constitution first and include a Canadian charter of human rights. Mr. Trudeau chose to take the same position during the eighties, but the fact remains this was already being discussed in the early sixties.

There was a second tendency, mainly in Quebec, to say that the important thing was not necessarily patriating the Constitution which at the time, I may recall, had no official French version while half of its sections were already obsolete, so Quebec's political leaders said, and I am sure the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will remember this, that the important thing was not necessarily—that was how Quebec's leaders felt at the time, in any case—to patriate the Constitution but to revise thoroughly the balance of Canadian federalism, which meant reviewing sections 91 and 92.

This would be the position held by all Quebec's leaders, whatever their political stripe, from Jean Lesage onward. Among those who succeeded Lesage, there would be this insistence that for Quebecers, the crucial point was not the Constitution as that last trace of colonialism but the fact that Quebec should have a certain number of powers which were sadly lacking. It was on this basis that constitutional reform was to begin.

Of course the process, which would go on for 30 years, gave rise to a number of political doctrines. Some people became experts on the subject, including Richard Arès, who spent much of his life examining the national question. Of course there were many others, and we can say that during the past 30 years, constitutional reform has given rise to three major political anchors for Quebec.

In the 1960s, the idea that Quebec should have a special status was picked up by Gérard Fillion, who, at the time, was editor in chief of *Le Devoir*. This marked the first attempt to amend the Constitution and to change the colour of the constitutional debate. With *Le Devoir*, Gérard Fillion and a number of other intellectuals, it was felt that all of Canada's institutions required reworking. There was even talk of the Senate. There was increasing discussion obviously of an official languages act as well. There was a feeling of special status. In other words, the fact that Quebec, in addition to being a province, was a nation

*Private Members' Business*

and had a special responsibility towards all French speakers in this part of North America had to be recognized.

• (1110)

With this idea of special status, it became clear that Quebec had to be seen to be a French society in a binational context expressed in all of Canada's major institutions.

This idea was set aside to some extent and gave rise, a bit later, about five years later, to the idea of associated states. Those who remember the political and constitutional debate in Quebec will remember this idea. The idea of associated states or two nations, on an equal basis, involved the idea of full equality, an idea that reached a much fuller and much more concrete conclusion with the idea, proposed by the Parti Québécois and its president and founder René Lévesque, of sovereignty association.

The common denominator, however, in these three ideologies, these three constitutional doctrines, is that Quebec is a nation. Each time a Quebec premier went to the constitutional table, it was in this context. There is a reason for us to always make this claim as one of Quebec's constitutional demands, including in Victoria.

I found that a little funny. As some veteran members of this House will recall, the Victoria formula was not only about regional vetoes but also about giving Quebec more power over language and social policies. According to then Premier Robert Bourassa, however, that did not go far enough.

Will the House of Commons, which is supposed to be a fairly accurate reflection of Canada, have the courage to recognize that there are two nations in Canada and that one of them will therefore probably move toward full and true sovereignty? This, of course, will be achieved through a referendum to be held in the coming months.

Yet, it is difficult to understand how, 30 years after initiating the debate on constitutional renewal, we are now considering Bill C-110, which all but ignores the major constitutional demands traditionally made by Quebec. Even without going as far as recognizing Quebec's right to sovereignty in a bill, how can a Prime Minister such as the one now in office, who has been a key witness to the events of the past 30 years in Quebec, believe that he will satisfy a single Quebecer with a bill offering nothing but a hypothetical veto that is not even enshrined in the Constitution.

What prevented the Prime Minister and his government from considering Quebec's major constitutional demands and ensuring that federal spending powers are defined in Bill C-110, for example? For the past 30 years, this has been part of a set of

demands that have been renewed by every successive administration and government.

If the Prime Minister had been serious, he would have included a minimum of demands in Bill C-110, namely to limit federal spending powers, resolve the issue of residual powers, give Quebec more power over language matters, and recognize that Quebec is the only authority on language.

Even the Pepin-Robarts report, that Pierre Elliott Trudeau liked quoting from ad nauseam, recommended, besides a Confederation Chamber, the notion of recognizing Quebec as distinct, because, through its National Assembly, the Quebec government is the only real government ever to have been run by francophones in this part of the country. What would have kept the Prime Minister from recognizing that Quebec does have, regarding language, certain prerogatives?

The key issue of manpower is also at the heart of Quebec's demands. But this issue does not basically mean that, within the context of national standards, the Government of Quebec will be allowed to manage a program. That certainly was not what all the people who, in the past 30 years, recognized the need for Quebec to manage what could be called globally labour market policies had in mind.

• (1115)

Now the situation emerges where Quebec is told: "You will have the right to take back manpower programs, provided however that your program is compatible with our national standards". That is the crux of the problem.

How can they think that national standards could be established regarding something as changing and fluctuating as the labour market, when we know full well that, even within an economic space as small as the Quebec economy, labour market policies vary from region to region. The reality in the Gaspesian Peninsula is not the same as in Montreal. We find ourselves in a relatively disturbing situation, to the extent that those who launched the constitutional debate, those who worked to ensure that Quebec is treated more fairly and more in accordance with its status as a nation within Confederation, now find themselves with a constitutional proposal that is disappointing to say the least.

We could have gone a lot farther. That is part of the list of demands. What keeps us from recognizing Quebec as a distinct society? The term "distinct society" is absolutely meaningless. Just ask Library of Parliament researchers to go through the literature on international law. They will not find a legal basis to the effect that we are a distinct society. That concept is absolutely meaningless in terms of what Quebec truly is and in terms of its nationhood.

The government, and in particular the Minister of Justice, who seems somewhat reluctant, will have to take notice of that. We understand that the Minister of Justice may not be the best informed person regarding claims made by Quebec in recent years, but there are well informed people in cabinet, including the Minister of Labour, who has some experience in the Quebec political arena, and who may miss it at times. In any case, there are people in this government who know very well that Quebec is a nation, that it has a right to self-determination, like any other group forming a people and a nation, and that nothing will keep Quebec from holding another referendum when it chooses to do so. Quebec will hold a referendum when it has democratically decided to ask its citizens to make the inevitable choice.

In a debate like this, we cannot help but think of someone like André Laurendeau. In some respects, André Laurendeau is like a spiritual father to the Bloc Québécois because he too, in his days, believed it was important to have a sovereigntist front right here in this Parliament, to protect Quebec's interests.

For several years, André Laurendeau was the member for Montréal—Sainte-Marie. He accepted Lester B. Pearson's invitation to co-chair the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission. When he and his team tabled the preliminary report, the white paper, I think he understood something which is at the heart of the present political and constitutional wranglings in Canada. You will recall that he wrote "Out of disappointment will come the irreparable". The irreparable, of course, is sovereignty.

André Laurendeau had clearly understood that the federal regime's inability to acknowledge that there are two nations which must be treated as equals, that there are two nations in fact and in law which must engage in dialogue and treat each other as perfect equals, and that from this inability of the federal regime and those who personify it to recognize those two nations the irreparable will ensue. The irreparable will be—already is—that feeling. There is great satisfaction in seeing that in less than a decade the sovereigntist option has made a ten per cent gain.

• (1120)

There are not many examples of an idea which was initially perceived as being really marginal ending up with democratic backing that has become more and more solid; it is now headed toward a majority.

We are not wrong in this. I would like to state in closing that we in Quebec are committed, as is the rest of Canada, to engaging in a dialogue on the basis of what we are, through and through, which is a nation. Discussions between nations are on a totally equal footing. That equality will be made official in a democratic referendum, which will be Quebec's next rendez-vous with destiny.

### *Private Members' Business*

It is my belief that today's debate ought to afford an opportunity, particularly on the government side, for recognition that Quebec is a nation, that it is entitled to self-determination, and that this right to self-determination justifies its demands for full and complete sovereignty.

[English]

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have read the hon. member's motion and listened to him very carefully. Despite his sincerity I have to tell him and the House in the strongest possible terms that there is no provision in international law which would recognize Quebec's effort to become a separate, independent state.

In the months leading up to the Quebec referendum on October 30, many statements were made regarding international law and the right to self-determination. Unfortunately those statements have led to confusion and especially a false impression that international law gives Quebec the right to secede from Canada.

Quebec has no right to secede from Canada unilaterally either under the Canadian Constitution or under international law. There is no principle of international law according to which Quebec has the right to secede from Canada. This is the conclusion that was reached by five international law experts who produced a study on the question at the request of the National Assembly's 1991 commission on Quebec sovereignty.

As one author put it in that recent study on self-determination, the inhabitants of Quebec do not have a legal right under international law to secede from Canada.

What then is meant by the right of self-determination? A statement of the right is found in various international documents. For example, the charter of the United Nations states that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples.

The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights state that all peoples have the right of self-determination. Affirmation of a people's right of self-determination is also found in the United Nations 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations.

We must note immediately that these documents speak of people's right to self-determination, not the right of a province, not the right of a county, not the right of a city. In Quebec there are several peoples: the descendants of New France, the aboriginal nations, the Inuit, the descendants of the British settlers and many immigrants who simply call themselves Canadians. We have to be very clear on that point.

*Private Members' Business*

Within the Canadian federation there is one province of Quebec but there are many peoples in that province, a point to which I will return in a moment. The first question to be answered is what does the right of self-determination mean? This is a difficult question which may be best answered by first looking to what is not included within a right of self-determination in international law.

Most important, a people's right of self-determination is not the same thing as a people's right to secede from an existing state. In most situations the right of self-determination must be exercised without causing any detriment to the territorial integrity or political unity of existing states.

The United Nations 1970 declaration on friendly relations states that the exercise of the right of self-determination must not dismember or impair, totally or partially, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states. This means that a right of self-determination must, except in unusual circumstances where a people is subject to a non-representative government, be exercised within the context of existing states. A people's right of self-determination then means the ability to participate fully and freely in the democratic process of governing the existing state. Certainly the population of Quebec participates fully and freely in the democratic process of governing Canada. This was the conclusion of the five international law experts who prepared a study for the national assembly's 1991 commission.

• (1125)

Canada is a federal state in which the province of Quebec has its own national assembly that exercises exclusive powers under the Canadian Constitution over such important subjects as property and civil rights, natural resources, education, health and social services and the administration of justice, among other things.

At the federal level, representatives from the province of Quebec hold roughly one-quarter of the seats in the House of Commons. Many of Canada's prime ministers, including the current Prime Minister, have come from Quebec. Quebec is and has long been well represented in the federal cabinet. The Leader of the Opposition is also from Quebec. Quebecers, therefore, play a large role in governing the nation both through their own national assembly and through their representation in the federal Parliament and government.

Quebec has its own legal system, based on French civil law. Quebec is always represented by three of the nine appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada. The current chief justice is also from Quebec.

Quebecers also benefit from a strong set of cultural and linguistic guarantees under the Canadian Constitution, under federal legislation, such as the Official Languages Act, and through various programs and activities. Cultural initiatives are strongly supported by Radio-Canada, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada and other Canadian institutions. Therefore, the population of Quebec enjoys everything that a right to internal self-determination implies.

Since self-determination is a right of people, there has never been a consensus exactly on what the term people means. To some, people is synonymous with the population of a state, such as the Canadian people, especially where the entire population of the state participates fully and freely in the governing of the state. Others take a broad view that the term people means any group that meets certain basic criteria, such as common language and history, along with a sense of collective identity.

Given these different views of what the term people means, it is not self-evident that the political entity known as the province of Quebec, which embraces a diverse range of people and a diverse range of cultures and linguistic groups, would qualify for the spectrum of people able to assert the right to self-determination.

Quebecers have had a direct say on their future within Canada through two referenda held in Quebec in the last 15 years. In both 1980 and 1995 a majority of Quebecers reaffirmed their commitment to Canada and rejected attempts to break up the country. Even had the result of the referendum been yes to the question formulated by the Parti Québécois government, international law would not have recognized the yes vote as a legal basis for the creation of a new state.

International law demands that a political entity meet several specific criteria before it can be considered a state. Along with satisfying these criteria, a political entity trying to achieve statehood must also receive international recognition. Recognition by other states is both an acknowledgement that the new state meets the criteria of statehood and an expression of willingness to enter into relations with the new state.

Therefore, any movement toward the independence of Quebec would not only be without legal foundation in international law, it would have to meet the legal criteria for statehood and the practical necessity of international recognition, which in both cases would be extremely difficult.

In conclusion, and in response to the motion before the House, there is no right in international law for Quebec to secede from Canada. To imply otherwise, as this motion does, is to depart from international law in contravention of Canada's right to continued existence.

• (1130)

Those who support such a proposal as is before the House today are living in an unreal world of illusion and misrepresentation. I suggest the House reject this motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Reform Party to speak against this motion on Quebec's right to self-determination. I want to thank the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for presenting this motion and thus recognizing the right of this federal Parliament to debate and judge this question.

[English]

In speaking against this, it is the position of the Reform Party that Quebec has no inherent right under international law to self-determination because it is neither a colony nor an occupied country, and that the Quebecois are probably not a people within the meaning of international law. For this I cite almost exclusively the work of the Bélanger—Campeau commission on the sovereignty of Quebec. The strongest argument in support of the view that Quebec is neither a colony nor an occupied country is found at pages 382 to 383 of its report:

[Translation]

“According to those who support Quebec's accession to sovereignty, the right to self-determination constitutes the basis of the alleged right of the Quebec people to form a distinct state, but pursuing the same reasoning, many of their opponents and the spokespersons for most aboriginal peoples take the position that:

[English]

If Quebec can opt out of Canada then obviously sections of Quebec that preferred to remain part of Canada could opt out of Quebec.

[Translation]

This analysis is based on a postulate we believe to be erroneous, according to which the right to self-determination implies the right to independence”.

[English]

The report then suggests on pages 419 to 422 that the principle of self-determination implies the right of people to participate in shaping their political, economic, social and cultural future, and that due to the principles of respecting the territorial integrity of states, self-determination could result in independence only in the rarest circumstances.

The report suggests the principle really only applies to non-autonomous or colonized people who have been recognized as such by the United Nations. This is clearly not the case in Quebec.

*Private Members' Business*

[Translation]

And this quote again from page 422: “On the evidence, that is not the situation of Quebecers nor that of the various minorities within Quebec's territory”.

[English]

For non-colonial peoples, self-determination has “at least for now stopped being a principle of exclusion and became one of inclusion; the right to participate. The right now entitles peoples in all states to free, fair and open participation in the democratic process of governance freely chosen by each state”. The report goes on at page 425 to endorse this position.

[Translation]

Another quote: “One cannot reasonably maintain that Quebecers are colonial people nor that they are deprived of the right to their own existence within the Canadian federation or exercise their democratic rights. Consequently, the Quebec people have no legal basis for invoking the right to self-determination to justify a future accession to independence”.

[English]

The conclusion of the report is clearly stated:

[Translation]

“From the legal point of view, a possible accession to sovereignty by Quebec cannot be based on the principle of the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, which implies the right to independence only in the case of colonial peoples or of those whose territory is occupied by a foreign power”.

[English]

The second point is that the Quebecois are not a people within the meaning of international law. Even the Bélanger—Campeau commission is not sure whether the Quebecois constitute a people.

At page 418 the commission recognizes that the Quebecois can either be French speaking or English speaking. At page 425 the commission states:

• (1135)

[Translation]

“Some authors have tried, with some success, to establish the existence of a Quebec or, alternatively, French Canadian people”.

[English]

Although the commission is not explicit, undoubtedly its members were aware that for the purposes of international law, a nation is defined in *Black's Law Dictionary* as follows:

A people, or aggregation of men, existing the form of an organized jural society, usually inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth, speaking the same language, using the same customs, possessing historic continuity, and distinguished from other like groups by their racial origin and characteristics, and generally, but not necessarily, living under the same government and sovereignty.

*Private Members' Business*

Obviously given the ethnic and sociocultural make-up of modern Quebec society, only the *pûre laine* Quebecois could arguably be considered a people. While they constitute a majority of the Quebec population, they do not constitute a majority in each region of Quebec. This produces a curious result, that if the Quebecois *pûre laine* are a people and if they have a right to secede, they could not claim the right to territorial integrity. Therefore Quebec separatists cannot have this both ways.

If the strict definition of the word people is applied, only the aboriginal people in the north would likely qualify. This is clearly not in the interest of sovereignists and quite probably the reason why the Bélanger-Campeau commission did not explore the point further.

While Quebec does not have the right to self-determination, this does not mean that whatever Quebecers decide in a referendum is unimportant from a democratic standpoint. We in the Reform Party have said it is very important. However, the Government of Quebec would also have to admit to the importance of a large number of Quebecers opting for federalism. So far it continues to be a majority. Even if a minority opted for Canada this would also constitute an important democratic fact which the Government of Quebec would have to take into account.

From the standpoint of the Reform Party and I believe from the standpoint of the majority of Parliament, the motion is not based on international law or fact. Quebec does not have the right of self-determination other than by negotiating its future in Canada and with the rest of Canada.

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Hochelaga for a sparkling address which had the added advantage of reminding me that I have been there before. My colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, also brought me back to time past.

I advise the hon. member opposite to beware of experts and especially people who claim the title of expert. I was also invited and gave evidence as an expert before l'Assemblée nationale de Quebec on these and related issues. I admire and respect the five experts who have been cited very often by the Quebec government and others for their different interpretations. They are experts but I would have thought in other domains than those in which they gave their opinions which might suggest that perhaps l'Assemblée nationale did not do its homework.

I have little difficulty in returning to the point made by my colleague, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, in international law. There is no explicit joining of the right of self-determination which is a comparatively recent principle of international law with the fission or break-up of existing states or with the outright entry into independence.

If we trace the history of this principle, it is related, as so many things in contemporary constitutionalism are, to Emperor Napoleon and the liberating ideas of the French Revolution which sometimes are put forward without necessarily the intentions of the founders.

The spirit of liberalism, the spirit of nationalism and the spirit of independence are somewhat antinomic and conflicting principles of the heritage of the 19th century, the 19th century of the French Revolution, and carried through into the 20th century in Woodrow Wilson's 14 points. I suppose the apogee of the concept of self-determination as a historical imperative, not a legal one, meaning the break-up of large multinational states, was reached in the Treaty of Versailles.

• (1140)

The tragedy is that it was a principle carried historically to its logical and perhaps foolish conclusion. Most historians today would trace as one of the causal factors of the conflict in World War II the creation of a vacuum in central Europe by the creation of a plethora of mini states, incapable of forming common economic policies and incapable of co-operating militarily to resist the larger threats from the east and west, from Nazi Germany and from the Soviet Union.

This is one of the reasons why in San Francisco in 1945 the principle of self-determination represented a learning from the lessons of history and less enthusiasm for the categorical imperative that some had asserted: that every time one is identify as a nation or a people—the terms in the UN have been used interchangeably and somewhat confusedly—one did not have to break up a state to assert one's right of self-determination.

The classic demonstration of this is the principle that the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce referred to, friendly relation and co-operation among states. It was a symbolic ending of the cold war. It is the last great act of east-west relations. It supplements the United Nations charter. It is a code of conduct between communist Russia and the west when the cold war is still on.

It contains this very important historical exception. It was agreed by all parties that there was nothing in the principle of self-determination put in the declaration of friendly relations requiring the break-up of existing multinational states, specifically federal states like Canada and the claimed federal state, the Soviet Union, which specifically were adverted to in the friendly relations conference agenda.

One can find it over the whole 10 years of the history of this. It was pleasant to be reminded of it. I wrote several books that I thought were persuasive on this some years ago and it is nice to have them brought back.



Let me come back to present reality. If members look at the situation in Bosnia, at Yugoslavia, I suppose some might even argue that what has happened there is worse than what existed before, a centralized authority imposing unity on a multinational society.

If self-determination led to the break away, members can see the rule of reason emerging in the current settlements. One saw immediately with the Vance-Owen plan for Bosnia 11 cantons on the Swiss model, and one said it will not work. There is no legal imperative requiring it. It historically does not make sense.

As one follows, as Secretary General Boutros-Ghali has, the trend away from Vance-Owen to Owen-Stoltenberg to what we could call the Clinton or the Dayton plan, there is the 11, now down to 3. The implicit element in it is that two of the three may rejoin their neighbouring states, their so-called mother states.

What we are really saying is we live in a period of historical transition where the main historical currents are contradictory. The trend to supra-nationalism, the imperative of larger and larger regional supra-national associations, economic, political, replacing the old military one, is accompanied by a fragmentation which most historians would regard as a pathological condition today.

The future of the world community is not a series of little Basutolands, enclaves within larger states; nor is it breaking up viable economic political units into a plethora of smaller units. It is basically in recognizing that the lesson of today is constitutional pluralism. People can work together. A state that can successfully combine several different peoples or nations, if one wants to use those terms interchangeably, is a stronger state.

The unity comes from the diversity in the original sense of the term used by the great Austro-Hungarian and late Israeli philosopher who coined the term community of communities. It is that larger concept.

To a certain extent when self-determination is preached there is the false statement that international law requires it. It does not. International law is neutral. In a certain sense it is running counter to the preferred view of how history is unfolding: an interdependent world community and larger and larger associations transcending national frontiers, rendering nationalism in its pathological sense out of date, and making Bosnia-Herzegovina and the conflicts there an absurd survival at the end of the 20th century of an anarchic past that is better left behind. The nation state has been the master institution of western European thinking for the last 300 years, but it is out of date.

• (1145)

This is the biggest lesson. There is no international law imperative here. There are lessons of history but there are good historical trends, trends that rest on sound scientific evaluation of the past, and there are the bad lessons. It is for us to choose on this basis.

### *Private Members' Business*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for presenting this motion, which I have here before me, and all other members who gave very well documented presentations on the subject.

It would be interesting to see the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce patriated to the National Assembly, if he tries to run for election once Quebec has opted by way of self-determination to obtain its sovereignty.

Historically, the Canada of today, of 1995, which is also the Canada of 1867, was created with the consent of the partners who joined the Canadian federation.

You will permit me to quote the first “whereas” from the British North America Act of 1867. It reads as follows: “Whereas the Provinces of Canada [Upper and Lower Canada], Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have expressed their Desire to be federally united into One Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom”.

There are, however, three other “whereas” clauses. The first “whereas” is crucial. The text continues: “The Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled”—that is the Parliament of the United Kingdom of 1867. The imperial Parliament of 1867 would never have enacted the British North America Act without the consent of the colonies, of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Provinces of Canada to form the Dominion of Canada, as we know it now.

So the consent of the colonies already established at the time of Confederation was vital to the existence of the Canadian federation as we know it today. Its existence is contingent on the continued consent, at least of the well-defined colonies that made up the preconfederal British North America and that were joined by the colonies of the Pacific coast, essentially today’s British Columbia and, in 1949, the Dominion of Newfoundland, which decided to join the Canadian family.

We can see from the documents approved by the imperial Parliament following the Charlottetown and Quebec City resolutions that the consent of the colonies at the time was fundamental to the creation of the present federation. If constituents withdraw that consent at some point—and the real constituents are those who were asked in London: “Do you give final approval to the Quebec resolutions we agreed on?”—and this is what the British Parliament did in 1867. This was within their right; for all practical purposes, they ratified the Quebec resolutions by giving them force of law. For all practical purposes, the imperial Parliament gave up its legislative authority over British North America in 1867.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1150)

As my colleague for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve pointed out earlier, Quebec has, of course, a people, a language, a territory, a history, rules and regulations, legal institutions, and a common will to live together, which are the basic requirements in exercising the right to self-determination.

I want to focus on the issue of territory. As we recently heard, our Reform colleagues, in particular their leader—I think the hon. member for Calgary West put less emphasis on the issue, since he felt uncomfortable with his leader's position—, would like to turn Quebec into a Switzerland-type country, that is to say, full of holes with enclaves and removable parts. This essentially amounts to asymmetrical federalism at its best.

I see that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands belongs to a totally different school of thought; he is already fully committed to Quebec's right to self-determination.

Although the hon. member for Calgary West was uncomfortable about explaining his party's position, he still referred to this Swiss-cheese Quebec, this Quebec full of holes.

One of the basic elements of the right to self-determination is territorial control. The Quebec National Assembly, our provincial legislature, has control over the territory it was given under the acts that led to establishment of the 1912 boundaries, according to the interpretation given by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1927. These are the present boundaries of Quebec, stretching from the Outaouais to the Magdalen Islands, and from the Gaspesian Peninsula to the Abitibi. This territory is clearly defined, here, with the Ottawa river, as well as with the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the U.S. border and the polar circle.

These are clear boundaries, over which the Parliament of Quebec has absolute power, and no one is challenging that. When we hear Quebec being described as Swiss cheese, full of holes, with enclaves, corridors and ports that would remain under federal jurisdiction, that does not reflect the reality.

No one is disputing the authority of the Parliament of Quebec over the entire territory of Quebec. Every rule of international law recognizes that a people, a nation has authority over the territory under its control at the time it achieves sovereignty.

If the people of Quebec had voted yes to the question put to them on October 30, there is no doubt that Quebec would have control over the entire territory of Quebec. No one is denying that every RCM, municipality and local government in Quebec is subject to the legislative and constitutional authority of the Parliament of Quebec under section 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

That being said, in order for the territorial integrity of Quebec to be affected, the suggestion—I would say the seditious suggestion—would have to make that some portions of Quebec rebel against the legislative authority of the Parliament of Quebec, which neither Reform members nor our other colleagues in this House are suggesting.

I think that the greatest lesson we were taught by the October 30 referendum and will be again in the future is the fundamental respect not only for our institutions and our territories but also, fundamentally, for the people. Because sovereignty is not something that happens first and foremost at the institutional level but fundamentally at the grassroots level.

Because we have been living for decades, and even centuries, under a regime that largely reflects British values and precedents, we have a tendency to rely more on institutions than on the peoples for whom these institutions exist. However, when a people wants to achieve self-determination, there is a basic obligation to respect that fundamental choice.

• (1155)

On October 30, Quebecers said no to the question put to them. And it is with the utmost respect for democracy that everyone accepted that decision, even though it was, for all intents and purposes, made by the smallest of majority.

In a democratic system, the rule is 50 per cent plus one. In this case, it worked in favour of the no side. Had the results been reversed, the Prime Minister himself said that he might not have recognized them. But the rules cannot be set once the game is over.

These rules must be agreed on before the beginning of the game. For example, it would be preposterous if, during a final between the Toronto Maple Leafs and the New York Rangers, the governors of the league decided, at the end of the best of seven series, that the series would now be a best of nine, because Toronto won. Again, the rules are established before the game begins. And the rule here is that the people is sovereign.

I am pleased that the hon. member for Saint-Henri—Westmount, who is here and who supported Bill 150 in Quebec's National Assembly, which affirmed Quebec's right to self-determination, now sits in this House, because she will hopefully convince her colleagues from the Liberal caucus of the validity of these claims.

This said, I will have an opportunity later today to speak at the report stage on Bill C-110 and to talk more about the bogus veto the government wants to give every man and his brother.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Before giving right of reply to the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, under whose name the motion we are presently debating stands, I want it to be very clearly understood by all members of the House that his will be the last words spoken on the motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I consider our debate particularly rewarding. I believe the word “gall” will pass in parliamentary language, but I will use the word “nerve” instead. It takes a certain amount of nerve on the part of our colleague and continued friend for Calgary West for him to rise in this House and say we are not a people, because, as the people of Quebec watching will have understood, the member, in his sometimes unparliamentary spontaneity, clearly said that he did not consider Quebec was entitled to self-determination, because Quebecers were not a people. I find something extremely disquieting in the desire to engage in dialogue on this basis.

I realize that there has been a federalist movement in this House and throughout our history. It is entitled to be heard and to speak. I do not think, however, that you will find many in Quebec, whatever the family, who will not acknowledge that we are a people.

Quebec's parliament, the National Assembly, has in three official documents acknowledged that Quebecers are a people and, in doing so, has accorded the province the right to self-determination. These documents, which have been fairly unanimously approved are: the act to establish the commission to determine the political and constitutional future of Quebec, the act respecting the process for determining the political and constitutional future of Quebec and the motion of the National Assembly of 1991.

When I was a student, I read with pleasure, whether the reading was assigned or optional I read with equal pleasure, the writings of the member for Vancouver Quadra, who joined with Senator Beaudoin in writing a book. I thought he belonged to a school that recognized Quebecers as a people. It is true that our being a people does not automatically entitle us, under international law, to the right to secede. What prompted the five legal experts to conclude that we did have the right to secede was the rejection of the 1982 Constitution. There is a convention in international law which says that a people cannot decide by itself it has a right to self-determination unless that right has been recognized. As part of their grounds for determining the right to self-determination under international law they used the fact that Quebec did not ratify the 1982 Constitution through the most legal of channels possible.

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• (1200)

At any rate, as the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve I understand, as do my colleagues, that in a democracy one cannot be more sovereignist than democratic. One is equally sovereignist and democratic, but by virtue of being as sovereignist as we are democratic, we are well placed to understand our right to hold a referendum in the future. No smoke and mirrors on the part of the federal government can deny Quebec the right under a law passed by the National Assembly, a law on public consultation, to go to the people and offer them the opportunity to choose and to mandate their government to achieve to sovereignty.

When that day comes and there is a majority behind that mandate I am sure our colleagues, both in the government party and in the Reform party, will understand that they have no choice but to sit down at the negotiating table and engage in a dialogue on the basis of total equality, nation to nation, as should have always been the case.

**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.

[English]

Later today the House will go through the procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bill. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bill be distributed now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

On the Order: Government Orders:

December 1, 1995—Minister of Human Resources Development—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development of Bill C-111, an act respecting employment insurance in Canada.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill C-111, an act respecting employment insurance in Canada, be referred forthwith to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this motion is to refer the new employment insurance bill to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. By referring the bill directly to the committee, we signal our commitment to invite and engage the largest amount of direct public participation.

*Government Orders*

This bill was derived from the very extensive public consultation which has taken place over the past year. The work of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development has pulled together much of that information and has provided extraordinarily valuable input toward the development of the original legislation. It is our hope that by giving the committee the earliest opportunity to listen to Canadians and hear their various points of view, we can improve the legislation even further and ensure that we get an active and involved commitment and engagement.

We all recognize that this is important legislation. It affects the lives of millions of Canadians. It is a major restructuring and modernization of a bill which will provide for new opportunities for people to get work and to have a hope of once again being employed.

We have come up with an approach which has been carefully constructed and is balanced and fair. It may not satisfy one special interest or the other but it does provide a proper equitable balancing of interests across Canada. We believe the bill is consistent with what Canadians want. We listened very carefully to them and we listened very carefully to what the committee said.

What we have heard is directly reflected in many of the recommendations and parts of the legislation. It upholds our responsibility to ensure the program is based on solid insurance principles while at the same time provides a strong combination of incentives which enable people to get back into the job market. It is about jobs; it is about people. It is about jobs finding people and people finding jobs. It has shown that we as a government and as a Parliament can construct a new system. We can restore for many Canadians an opportunity to once again become full participants in Canada's labour market.

● (1205)

If it is shown, as I believe it can be, that legitimate improvements and constructive proposals are needed, we will look to the committee to bring those ideas forward and apply its judgment and wisdom in that application.

For example, in the last week or so we have heard that some areas are concerned about work patterns in parts of Canada. We hope that the committee will take a careful look at that.

Minority groups have expressed concern that they will not have full access to training because of the new development of transferring training to the provinces. Some are concerned that their rights be protected. We certainly hope the committee will take those matters into account.

We are also very interested in how the transitional jobs fund will work to create good, solid, long term jobs for people who are in high unemployment areas. Again, we expect and hope that the committee can provide major guidance in this area.

These are just some of the issues I believe the committee may want to look into.

We should not lose sight of the hard evidence that has been provided throughout the debate which has been encouraged over the last week. The House and the committee will be looking at how the new program will extend eligibility for coverage under the program to over 500,000 Canadians, something they have not had before. We demonstrated that the change of going from a weekly to an hourly based formula will be equitable, particularly for tens of thousands of seasonal workers who work long hours for short periods of time and who could not qualify under the old system, or who were not given full credit for all their hours of work.

We have also spoken about the innovative family income supplement which has been widely approved across the country. It will provide 80 per cent of benefits for families of low income, those earning under \$25,000, mainly single parents, by introducing a form of guaranteed annual income which has been talked about in this country for a long time. As a result, over 350,000 low income families will receive on average 7 per cent to 15 per cent higher benefits in the new program than under the old program. This is a true, progressive, liberal minded initiative.

[*Translation*]

I mentioned new partnerships with all levels of government and the opportunity for federal, provincial and municipal governments to concentrate their efforts where it counts, at the local level, in our communities, while respecting the responsibilities of all concerned.

[*English*]

In the brief time I have today I want to go back to the importance of developing this partnership for jobs, bringing the levels of government together to work in common, harmonize and work in partnership so that we can help create employment for Canadians in every part of Canada.

A key impact of this reform has to do with income. Not benefits but income. Providing ways for people to earn more money, to sustain themselves, their families and their communities is a key component of the objectives of the program. Many unemployed Canadians need more than just income support as a bridge between jobs. The new employment insurance system will build a better, stronger, wider bridge to help them make a more solid, long lasting connection to the work world.

The employment benefits we are proposing are made up of five new back to work measures and provide real, positive help to get people back into jobs. We have tested these measures and we know they work. We know that wage subsidies can help level the playing field for people facing a disadvantage in the workplace, especially women and young people.

I want to underline that we are seeing a 70 per cent to 80 per cent improvement in job retention, allowing 14 to 15 more weeks of work and up to \$5,000 more a year in income earnings. This is far more than would be received under a benefit program.

[Translation]

Self-employment assistance will help people start a business. During the past two years, this program has helped 30,000 individuals start their own business and thus has created 60,000 jobs for Canadians.

[English]

Also in these employment measures are the job partnership projects. For example, one in New Brunswick is now enabling 1,000 older workers who lost their jobs in the forestry industry to go back to work, particularly in reforestation, rebuilding a resource, replanting for the next generation. They are now involved in passing on their skills and doing so in a rewarding and satisfying way.

• (1210)

There is also the individualized skills, loans and grants which, if the provinces agree, will enable people to use the opportunity to upgrade themselves so that they can get the new jobs available in the new economy.

Another tool, the income supplements, will increase the incomes of people by encouraging them to take jobs sooner. For example, this will help unemployed single parents to get back on their feet and gain new skills and experience. The early analysis of a self-sufficiency project we have been running in British Columbia and New Brunswick shows that the average hourly starting wage during the first year was \$7.63 and that one-third of the participants were making at least \$2 more than the minimum wage. Thirty-five per cent of single parents offered supplements leave welfare to work within a year compared to an average of 2 per cent or 3 per cent under normal circumstances. Again it shows that the tools work and work effectively.

We will be investing \$800 million on these five extra tools of savings. This will be added to the existing \$1.9 billion of our programs. There will be a total of \$2.7 billion in helping people get jobs. Those who dismiss this reform as mere cuts should reflect on this number and what it represents in terms of new opportunities for Canadians. It means that 400,000 unemployed workers will get additional help to find a job. Therefore, those who are opposed to such reforms are basically saying to over 400,000 Canadians that they do not want to help them.

This legislation is designed to provide the opposite, to provide a new bridge and a new tool. I can only say we are very much looking forward to the active and engaged work of the committee. We hope it will provide us with an opportunity to

### *Government Orders*

hear the best judgments and accumulated ideas of Canadians and in particular, to let the committee help formulate the legislation in a way that can most effectively service its basic opportunity, which is to get people back to work.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I simply want to advise the House that for the purposes of this debate, hon. members are entitled to 10-minute speeches, without questions or comments.

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition deeply regrets that the government should resort to this exceptional procedure and thus deprive the public of information, of a debate, televised for the benefit of individuals across Canada, on this extremely important bill.

At this stage, according to the usual procedure in Parliament for dealing with bills, we would normally be at second reading, and the official opposition would be entitled to one 40-minute speech, followed by 20-minute speeches by as many members as wish to speak. We could then propose amendments and keep the public informed.

The official opposition and the third party play a crucial role in ensuring that citizens are aware of the subject and substance of a bill as important as these unemployment insurance reforms which, over the years, will affect hundreds of thousands of Quebecers and Canadians.

However, within the very short time frame we have been allowed, we will hardly have time to say that this bill, despite all the denials of the minister and his attempts to claim the opposite, and despite the improvements he will make in the bill, and we will certainly participate in that process, that basically this bill is aimed at making more savage cuts in benefits for the unemployed.

• (1215)

This \$2 billion in drastic cuts is in addition—I can never repeat it often enough—to this year's cuts of \$735 million in Quebec and \$620 million in the Maritimes. Quebec will lose another \$640 million by the year 2001.

Contrary to what the government implies, \$800 million of this additional \$2 billion will not be set aside for other active measures, as the information papers we have been given clearly specify. It is right there in black and white.

The truth is that this \$800 million from the UI fund will replace the \$600 million that used to come from the consolidated revenue fund, which means that, in reality, all of Canada will get only \$200 million more over five years. What is true is that \$600 million will come from the UI fund rather than the consolidated revenue fund, as indicated in the papers and information given to us by senior officials during the briefing.

*Government Orders*

The reality of this bill is that qualifying for UI will become much more difficult for women, young people, seasonal workers, new immigrants, and all those not already eligible. It will become much more difficult in a labour market of precarious, short term jobs that often arouse feelings of anxiety, frustration and despondency in those trying to make a living in such a market.

This reform targets certain classes of persons. It is directed at specific job markets, starting with the Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

Looking at the charts prepared by senior officials of Manpower and Immigration Canada, we are astounded to find that certain classes of persons, namely repeat claimants, seasonal workers and newcomers, are indeed larger in eastern Canada and Quebec.

I think it is safe to say, at any rate, this is not a matter of human nature because this would mean that human nature has special characteristics in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec that it does not have in western Canada. It is not human nature that is different, but the job market.

The official opposition will be participating very actively in this committee. Not only will we listen to every person or group of persons who want to come and tell us what is wrong with the UI plan and who expect this plan to really be an employment insurance plan but we will also denounce, every chance we get, this unhelpful attitude of hiding a deficit cutting measure behind fancy rhetoric.

• (1220)

The official opposition will make every effort to ensure that workers, in fact any person who may have to rely on UI, can have access to it in the way that is the most beneficial to them. Yes, some active measures are required, and we in Quebec have implemented such measures and asked for such measures to be implemented, so that people can have access to benefits derived directly from premiums paid by workers and businesses.

Having listened to the people of Canada and Quebec, we know that these active measures designed to help people find a job must not in any way take the place of jobs. We were told right across Canada, because we did tour the country, that the real issue is employment. It is not the will of people to work: it is employment.

Sure, we must do everything possible to help people qualify when there are jobs available. However, we must also stop making the jobless feel guilty by saying that it is their fault, particularly in light of the dramatic increase in the number of people actively looking for work, who can no longer tolerate not being able to live decently, have some hope, and have some stability in order, for example, to raise children.

This bill seeks to introduce twisted family policy measures, and we do not hesitate to say so. What is needed is a true family policy. As for the UI program, it should help by bridging the gap between jobs. Active measures should be left to the decision makers who are best able to decide. Quebec, as we know, wants to have total control over manpower policies.

It is unfortunate that the government withheld the information that would have put Canadians on track, in terms of the reforms needed, instead of merely making speeches that do not reflect reality.

[English]

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the history of unemployment insurance in Canada dates back to 1919 when the concept was first discussed. It finally became a legislated labour market institution under the government of Mackenzie King.

Let me read some of the quotes from that great debate in 1940 which focused on the original intent of unemployment insurance:

We recommend to your government the question of making some provision by a system of state social insurance for those who, through no fault of their own, are unable to work, whether the inability arises from lack of opportunity, sickness, invalidity or old age. Such insurance would remove the spectre of fear which now haunts the wage earner and makes him a more contented and better citizen.

I have a second quote:

How much unemployment there will be and over what period it will last is impossible to forecast. But, whatever it be, there must be a great deal of unemployment which can only be dealt with in one of two ways: either by a considered scheme of insurance or by state doles, hurriedly and indiscriminately issued when the moment of crisis arrives. There can be no question which is the better way. State doles lead straight to pauperization. A well devised scheme of insurance preserves the self-respect of the worker and assists and encourages him to supplement it by provision made industrially through an association.

• (1225)

I am well aware that we are debating a motion to refer this bill to committee prior to second reading and that the government will tell us that doing so is supposed to provide the committee with greater opportunity to make amendments to the bill. However, as we all know, the fact is that this mechanism which the government introduced into the standing orders shortly after taking power, has been consistently used to limit debate in the House and as a mechanism to speedily move controversial legislation through the parliamentary process in a manner which minimizes opposition.

I vehemently oppose sending the bill to committee prior to second reading. I believe that every member of Parliament should have an adequate opportunity to speak to the bill in the House of Commons, where they may both pose and respond to questions from their colleagues and opposition members. By drastically limiting debate, the government is demonstrating its complete disdain for such a parliamentary process.

Nevertheless, this is a House of free speech and I have written something which reflects my view of Bill C-111. Goodness knows, it is always a challenge to pique interest in House debates. In any event, I give the House my version of the 12 days of Christmas.

On the first day of Christmas the Minister of Human Resources Development, known as HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us one more long awaited non-reform. Carried along on the mantra of job creation, we received our year end Christmas gift: employment insurance.

On the second day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us two hard working Canadians who, despite their considerable financial contributions to UI over all of their working lives, died without ever having received a penny of benefits: taxed to the grave.

On the third day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us three French Canadian leaders who, to no one's surprise, babbled on incessantly about Quebec and how unemployment in Quebec was distinct from all other unemployment in the rest of Canada and who felt, as always, that no one understood them.

On the fourth day of Christmas, the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us four calling premiers from the Atlantic region; calling for this, calling for that and finally, completely worn out from all of the calling, the minister of HRD called it quits to reform and went back to tinkering.

Five suffering regions, formally known as ten equal provinces, are all demanding more from less. Regional development boondoggles remain an active ingredient in the magic of creating jobs, jobs, jobs.

On the sixth day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us six government strategists laying future plots for further tax grabs. After all, the implementation of the employment insurance scheme does not begin until July 1996, with a phase in period to full implementation extending to the year 2000.

On the seventh day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us seven assistant deputy ministers swimming in UI cash surpluses. These new found friends of the finance minister will help him meet his deficit target of 3 per cent of GDP in hidden taxes, EI premiums and not reduced spending.

On the eighth day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us eight milking tax collectors who targeted the part time worker, the working mom and the small business owner. So much for tax relief; just continued taxes on the tax oppressed.

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On the ninth day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us nine drumming seasonal workers who expressed outrage at being encouraged to accept available jobs in the shoulder season. The government forgot to mention that under the new rules, claimants can still receive UI benefits equal to as much as 110 per cent of their earnings from employment.

On the tenth day of Christmas the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us ten piping journalists who heralded the miracle of changing UI to EI and gave us the new meaning of "un".

• (1230)

On the eleventh day of Christmas, the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us 11 dancing parliamentary committee members who, as the good Liberals they are, followed Government Orders to limit debate and refer Bill C-111 to committee before second reading, another promise broken by a government whose promise was for openness.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, the minister of HRD, having no understanding of the meaning of insurance, gave us 12 leaping bureaucrats to promote jobs and growth. They called this new program the job fund. This \$300 million initiative is sure to sustain at least the 12 jobs enjoyed by these bureaucrats.

Merry Christmas.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the motion before us today, since it will allow us to consider Bill C-111, on employment insurance immediately.

With this motion, the government shows the importance of this legislative measure and the need to immediately undertake detailed consideration of its content.

The proposed reform is a very complex one. It has been discussed for months and months now, openly and publicly across Canada, and if there is one consensus that has emerged from these consultations, it is to give a new orientation to the entire unemployment insurance program.

It was quite a challenge: how to give a new direction to unemployment insurance? During these consultations, a number of ideas were proposed. What we have before us today represents a real change of direction, a major reform of what used to be unemployment insurance. It needs to be really well understood, which is why we shall need to take all of the time available in committee to study this change of direction and to ensure that the bill before us will really meet the objectives we have set.

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Those objectives are, of course, part of our overall job strategy. I believe that each and every person in this country understands just what a priority it is for all Canadians have jobs, to keep their jobs, or to create jobs. Unemployment insurance reform was considered in that overall context. It is but one element in this government's strategy for maintaining jobs and creating new ones, not a strategy in itself.

Over the years, we have seen that the unemployment insurance program as it existed led to a number of problems. First of all, we have seen how very quickly the costs have risen. Just think, in 1982 the program cost \$8 billion, while by 1995 it was up to \$16 billion. With the passing years we have seen the program being overused. When I say overuse, it is certainly not my intention to blame workers who receive unemployment insurance benefits, as the official opposition seems to imply, but it is a fact that over the years, the unemployment insurance plan had become more like an income support plan. We also found that the system was overused by employers to the extent that it influenced their hiring approach. That is why we had to get back to the basics.

• (1235)

We also found that over the years inequities had developed in the system. It was designed at a time when employment was widely available, when people worked from 9 to 5, 35 hours a week. That is no longer the case in 1995. So a number of inequities had developed in the system, and I am thinking more particularly of part time workers. Working part time has become a way of life, so how can we make the system available to part-time workers as well?

We also found that the system tended to favour those on higher salaries, when we looked at how benefits were distributed. Could we restore a measure of equity to the unemployment insurance system? That is why what we have here is a thorough reform. This is a new system that wants to give workers and employers an incentive to maintain jobs and create jobs.

So there are three important elements in this reform. Number one: unemployment insurance benefits; number two: employment benefits, and number three: a transitional job creation fund to help the most disadvantaged regions in our country. I think this reform is comprehensive in its approach to these dimensions.

I would like to say a few words about employment benefits, because since this reform was announced by my colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development, we have heard a number of views on these employment benefits, how they will be implemented, how we will work together with the provinces to give our workers an incentive to be on the labour market and our employers an incentive to maintain jobs.

I think it was very clear that in this reform the government was intent on developing pro-active employment measures. That is why it has specifically identified five employment benefit measures. The government intends to develop, implement and evaluate them with the provinces. So, imagine my surprise at discovering last week that the Bloc Québécois in its opposition day motion was criticizing the unemployment insurance reform, saying it increased overlap and duplication.

I must say that I could see our friends opposite had not yet read the bill, because the reverse is clearly true. We are in fact trying to avoid overlap and duplication. I also heard it said that the federal government wanted to supervise the provinces, because the bill defined requirements for employment measures. So, here again, you can imagine my surprise.

The bill talks of guidelines. There is nothing about national standards. It talks about guidelines. There are six different guidelines. Let us have a look at them and see how a provincial government could object to them. The first really aims at avoiding overlap and duplication. Clause 57 of the bill provides that we are to aim for:

(a) harmonization with provincial employment initiatives to ensure that there is no unnecessary overlap or duplication;

That seems clear. Every effort must be made to ensure that there is no overlap but rather complementarity when a province already has employment measures.

• (1240)

In this regard, as far as Quebec is concerned, I must tell you that it is quite a challenge, because there are now something like three service delivery networks in Quebec. There is the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre, which has offices in all regions of Quebec; the Travail Québec centres, which are scattered throughout the province; and the Employment Canada centres.

Even within the province of Quebec, there is an obvious need for harmonization between the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre, the Travail Québec centres and the Employment Canada centres.

This is one of the guidelines; there are five others that show our desire to be as flexible as possible. I cannot see how a province could object. But again, this bill will be referred to a committee for consideration and we will see how it can be improved.

Looking at the overall impact of this bill on all Canadian provinces and at Quebec's situation, I can tell you that Quebec comes out ahead. At the present time, for every dollar contributed, Quebec receives \$1.33. After the reform, for every dollar contributed, it will receive \$1.31. Quebec will still come out ahead.



In addition, like any other province, Quebec will have control over employment benefits, as it has always demanded over the years.

Both sides must show some goodwill. In this regard, I want to commend the open-mindedness of Quebec's Minister of Employment who, unlike the Bloc Québécois, agreed to sit down with us to determine how we can provide better services to Quebec workers.

In conclusion, I hope that the committee will help improve and enhance the bill before us.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is not how I had originally planned to start my speech and, even though we are given only ten minutes, I would like to share my first reactions with the Minister of Labour.

She claims to have been very surprised by our response. She did not look that surprised when I saw her on television over the weekend, as she addressed a group of Quebecers, including members of the Liberal Party of Quebec, who reminded her and the public at large of the consensus in Quebec in favour of seeing all the money earmarked for employability development and occupational training measures as well as all employment-related services be handed over to the Quebec government, which must be in charge.

In our view, being in charge does not mean being responsible for implementing national standards or reaching national goals imposed by the federal government. This is a clarification I wanted to make at this stage. In a way, the Minister of Labour tried to divert the debate onto that subject. I would like to come back to the substance of this bill, such as the objectives that the Minister of Human Resources Development outlined this morning.

He started by saying: "You know, we are taking a special measure in the House to ensure that this bill goes to committee as soon as possible". He made this appear to be positive.

It should be pointed out, and you know that it is, Mr. Speaker, that this is an exceptional measure, a type of measure that this government has used three or four times already over the past two years, supposedly to speed up the process. We must look at the context.

If consideration by the committee was so urgent, and I am putting the question to the government, why did it wait for so long after tabling the green paper and after last year's tour, to bring this bill back to the House? The government waited for something called the Quebec referendum on sovereignty.

• (1245)

It waited for the referendum, because it knew that introducing a bill that provides for cuts totalling some \$2 billion, including \$600 million in Quebec, might influence the outcome of the referendum. So, the government waited until after the referen-

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dum. Still, it could have tabled its bill a few days, or even a few weeks after the referendum. Instead, the government brings this legislation back to the House on the Monday of the last week before the Christmas recess.

Why? To get a better idea of what Canadians think of the bill. Oh, sure. The minister knows full well that December is like the summer months. The media are less interested in such debates, and the public does not read the papers or follow the media as much, because it is busy doing other things.

The government has the nerve to say that it is to make things easier. Come, now. The human resources committee will probably sit this week. What does that mean? Interested groups will be asked to submit briefs in January; in short, those wishing to present such a brief will have to take time during the holiday season to prepare a brief, have it approved by their officials, and make sure it gets here before the deadline. This is not democracy, it is just the opposite.

It is an old trick used by many bodies. I have seen it used by municipal governments, namely to present controversial projects during the Christmas or summer holidays. It is an old trick often used. It is not very clever, it has been done before, and anyone with any degree of critical sense can see right through it.

We are being presented with this and, of course, we will attend committee proceedings. But for the sake of this, we are sacrificing the debate which should have taken place in the House, starting with 40 minute speeches followed by 20 minute speeches by as many members as were interested in expressing their views, from both sides of the House, the official opposition, the government, and the third party.

But instead, the government wants to consult. The parliamentary secretary might remember the consultations we held last year in December. The weather was not very cold yet. We started in mid-November and kept at it until the Christmas holidays. We went all over the place, in every major city, and no one, no organization supported the government's position, on the contrary. Between 75 and 80 per cent of the people we heard were against the government's proposals.

And this is supposed to be a government that listens? No, Mr. Speaker, it does not. It does remember, though. Last year, in every city it toured, it was met with protests. It remembers and is thinking: "If we act faster, we might hold the hearings in Ottawa, and people will appear in committee there".

I challenge the government to go and present its UI project in major cities. I bet it will not do it, hoping to proceed unnoticed, in the deep of winter. The committee will get briefs from national organizations, but not from citizens. I remember the last hearing, last year in Bathurst, when Acadians came to tell us how difficult and dangerous it would be for this part of New Brunswick. They feared the worst, because of the cuts the government said it would make somewhere. This time, we are not going to do the same.

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As opposition critic for training and youth, I would like to take the last few minutes I have left to tell you how much damage this bill will do to young people in particular. The minister was saying: "This bill is very progressive". I say this bill is regressive. The minister was talking about fairness for everybody, I say that, on the contrary, it is unfair for young people. Why? Because from now on, to be eligible to unemployment insurance, you will need 910 hours of work, instead of the current 300 hours.

This bill is not only bad for young people, it is also bad for women who re-enter the workforce. After raising their children, many women would like to get a job, but they will be in the same situation as young people. This legislation is also regressive for new immigrants looking for jobs after landing in this country.

• (1250)

The 910 hours mean 26 weeks at 35 hours per week. This is a considerable number of hours.

Before that 20 fifteen-hour weeks, that is to say 300 hours of work, were enough for first time claimants to qualify for benefits. After the reform you will need 26 thirty-five-hour weeks, that is to say 910 hours of work, to be eligible for benefits.

Before the reform 12 fifteen-hour weeks, or 180 hours, were enough to qualify for benefits in areas of high unemployment.

After the reform 28 fifteen-hour weeks, or 420 hours of work, will be necessary to be eligible for benefits in areas of high unemployment.

Before the reform, people who were already entitled to unemployment insurance and who had worked 20 fifteen hour weeks, or 300 hours, were able to collect benefits in low unemployment areas. After the reform, they will be able to collect benefits if they have worked 20 thirty-five hour weeks, or 700 hours.

Here is another case of inequality. For frequent users, namely people who have been on UI three times in five years, there is an absolute guarantee that their benefits will be reduced by at least 1 per cent each year, which is at least 5 per cent in five years. This category of unemployed workers will definitely lose out. And the government says yes to equity? What the minister is saying about equity is that a number of people who were working less than 15 hours a week did not have to pay UI premiums. Now, everyone must pay from the first hour of work. However, there is no guarantee that they will be able to benefit from it, quite the contrary.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress, in 1970, 77 per cent of unemployed workers were covered by UI. This percentage would be less than 50 per cent today. The Canadian Labour Congress estimates that, with the reform, two unemployed

workers out of three will not be eligible for benefits. Is that equitable? Is that progressive? I say no.

Since you are inviting me to do so, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by pointing out that if this reform had been known in detail in the form of a bill and if a real consultation was still going on in an appropriate context and an appropriate period, and if this period had been established before the Quebec referendum, I tell you sincerely that we would now be talking about other things in this House, because this reform would not have been adopted.

[English]

**Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against the Bloc motion being debated today. The reforms of Canada's unemployment insurance are not only overdue. In many ways they do not go far enough and are too complex. While the reforms will impose hardship on some Canadians, they will at the same time bring much larger economic and social benefits to society as a whole.

I make this judgment after much study. In my career as a professional economist I was deeply concerned with the economic and social effects of unemployment insurance. In the mid-1970s I published a number of studies and organized an international conference that examined the effect of the level of benefits and ease of access to UI on recorded unemployment rates in Canada.

A few years ago I published a study that argued the large gap between Canadian and U.S. unemployment rates, which first appeared in the early 1970s, was caused by the increased generosity of our system initiated by Canadian reforms at that time. Incidentally the co-author of this study was Dr. Josef Bonnici, a former student of mine who is presently the minister of finance for the Government of Malta.

In February 1996 I will participate in a major conference of social scientists which will re-examine the issue of Canada-U.S. differences in unemployment rates to be held in Ottawa. My work on the effects of unemployment insurance on unemployment was fundamental economic theory which in turn guided reproducible econometric measurement co-authored by several colleagues and experts in this field.

• (1255)

Our results were verified by the economic council. It is fair to say that today even the left leaning part of the chattering class of academics, journalists and other intellectuals has accepted the validity of the basic premise.

Assar Lindbeck, a famous Swedish economist who is a strong supporter of social democratic policies, recently published a paper in which he noted that social support programs like unemployment insurance induce the creation of institutions and ethical norms which increase the demand for the support programs.

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The chattering classes in the past tended to infer from my analysis that I recommended the abandonment of unemployment insurance. I never did. The policy issue has always been the correct level of UI benefits and ease of access which maximize overall social welfare. There is no doubt the more generous the system is, the higher is the welfare of those receiving the benefits. However, on the other hand, the higher the benefits, the higher the unemployment, the higher the premiums payable by workers, the higher the risk of dependency of habitual users, and a host of other economic and social costs.

For a long time the political culture in Canada has resulted in the denial that these costs exist or, if they exist, that they are largely relative to the benefits received by unemployed.

About 15 years ago I was asked to be a guest on "Cross Country Check-Up". The views expressed during that period on the subject were most extreme. However, most important, as Claude Forget told me after he found that his report on the issue was ignored by the political system, the case for a less generous system has no political constituency quite simply because the economic and social benefits are diffused and poorly understood.

Those suffering from the reduction of benefits are clearly identified and well organized. No political party in Canada could afford to make the system less generous. This was true until recently when the Canadian debt and deficit began to threaten the very existence of all social programs.

The shift in the perceived political payoff from doing nothing and making UI less generous has not come easy to people like the Minister of Human Resources Development who used to deny vehemently even the existence of insurance induced unemployment and other costs. The timid and convoluted reforms to which his ministry gave birth reflect the struggle he had in admitting that these undesirable effects not only exist but are very costly to society.

Let me return to the Bloc resolution being debated today. It is true, as it states, that UI reforms will make some Canadians worse off, especially those in seasonal industries. However, my long and intense study of the UI system has convinced me that these reforms at the same time bring substantial benefits to many other Canadians so that overall welfare has increased. This certainly has been the finding of a number of royal commissions which looked at the question.

A basic theorem in economics is that under conditions like these, where some gain and some lose from a given policy, the government should offer assistance to those who have been asked to carry the burden of adjustment. After all it was a government created system, not their own fault, which caused them to enter these seasonal industries in excessive numbers and at non-economic wages. At the same time the rest of society

which benefits from the changes may be expected to pay for easing the costs of transition for those asked to bear them.

For this reason I take the opportunity to urge the government to stick to its reforms and possibly strengthen them while at the same time make more generous provisions to ease the pain of transition felt by those affected adversely and directly by the reforms.

• (1300)

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the motion made by the Minister of Human Resources Development to refer Bill C-111 to the standing committee.

We have every reason to move forward with a thorough examination of this bill by a committee of the House. We have every reason to allow an early public review of its provisions. We have no reason to hold back and nothing to gain by preventing the broad consultations necessary with such an important piece of legislation.

All members of this House recognize that this is a very important bill. It has been the subject of vigorous debate and intense questioning from all sides, yet throughout the debate we have seen something very rare: the unanimous agreement on the central point of this legislation. We all agree that we need to reform the old UI program. Throughout all the debate and questioning, no one has suggested that the status quo is acceptable. No one has suggested that we can afford to leave things as they are. Everyone has spoken of the need to find a better way to help unemployed Canadians.

This rare unanimity reflects a broad consensus throughout the country. More than 100,000 people who took part in the consultations said we need a better jobs system for Canadians. Almost nine out of ten Canadians told us we need a fundamental overhaul of the old UI program to make it work. Provincial leaders, business groups, professionals and community organizations have spoken clearly over the past weeks about the need for change. Bill C-111 presents a clear and progressive agenda for change.

Now we have an opportunity to hear from Canadians about this agenda. Members of the House have an opportunity to subject the bill to the rigorous examination of standing committee hearings. We have an opportunity to use our time well over the coming weeks to make the debate on Bill C-111 more inclusive, to open up the process, to consult and to listen before we proceed with the legislative process when the House resumes.

It would be inexcusable to delay these consultations. Every day we delay we put jobs and hope for thousands of Canadians on hold. Every day we delay we are perpetuating a UI program that is not only out of date but is actually hurting the people it is supposed to help. We are perpetuating a system that leaves too

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many Canadians stuck in the past when what they need is a springboard to help them change, adjust and adapt to the future.

The new jobs system, employment insurance, will make it easier for people at risk to work longer and encourage employers to keep people in their jobs longer. Think about what that means. Think about what it means to the 400,000 Canadians right now who find themselves stuck in a constant rut of getting from one benefit program to another.

If the new system can get those people just one additional work week, we will save the entire system \$50 million, money we can plough back into the system to turn that one extra week of work into two, two weeks into four, four weeks into eight. Instead of a cycle of joblessness we can create a new cycle of employment and hope for almost half a million Canadians who want to work and deserve an even break.

That is what this new jobs system is all about. Think what it means for the thousands of people who can move into new jobs created by small businesses across the country. Right now the old UI program is killing those jobs every day. A survey of small businesses in Atlantic Canada tells us that employers just cannot compete with the UI system for workers.

With our new jobs system we will cut insurance premiums, the tax on jobs, to assist them. We will create a system that supports employment and job creation instead of one that perpetuates unemployment. Think of what it means to the hundreds of thousands of job seekers who will get direct help through new employment benefits, help that is more effective, that is more flexible, that will get results faster than anything they can get now.

• (1305)

With wage subsidies, each year we will be able to help some 65,000 people get off benefits and into jobs. Studies show that these subsidies can help each one of these people increase their income and gain an average of 17 additional weeks of employment each year.

With earnings supplements we can help make work pay for some 75,000 workers each year, people who deserve more than the old UI treadmill. We know from joint pilot projects with New Brunswick and British Columbia that these supplements get results and help people secure their place in the workforce.

We will help thousands of Canadians each year create their own jobs through self-employment, a key driving force for job creation and growth in the new economy. Studies show that by providing the right kind of support at the right time, people who were without work can create businesses that last and create new jobs by hiring employees.

We can create new job creation partnerships, mobilizing the resources of the provinces, community groups and organizations across the country to help people adapt to the demands of the new workplace, increase their earnings and gain the independence that only a job can provide.

We can work with the provinces to help individuals through skills loans and grants, giving more opportunities for people to make a real investment in their own future, to get the kind of skills required to enter the job market of the 21st century from a position of strength.

We can make this kind of assistance, all of these employment benefits more accessible to more people: to some 500,000 part time workers who are not even covered by the UI program; to people who have simply been abandoned by the old system, marginalized by a system that does not reflect the realities of the 1990s.

Employment insurance is not just another version of the old UI program. It is truly Canada's jobs system for the 21st century. It is part of this government's agenda for jobs and growth. This agenda for jobs and growth is on track and it is working. We are getting the deficit under control in reality, not just in rhetoric. By 1997-98 the government's new borrowing requirements in relation to the size of the economy will be at the lowest level since 1969.

We are matching deficit reduction with an all out drive for job creation. Over the past year we generated almost half a million full time jobs, more than in any year since 1987. That is what this government was elected to do. We were given a mandate to get Canada and Canadians back to work. Bill C-111, employment insurance, is part of our agenda to fulfil that mandate.

Canadians need the opportunity now to review Bill C-111 through the kind of forum that only a standing committee of the House of Commons can provide. We can give them this forum now. We have no reason to put this very important review of an extremely important piece of legislation on hold. We owe it to Canadians to move forward. I urge all members of the House to support this motion so that we can look to the future.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is my duty to take the floor today to support the motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Mercier.

We are now seeing the aftermath of the Martin budget tabled last February. As we feared, and it is even worse in the opinion of many, the unemployment insurance reform hits the most vulnerable among us.

The people in my riding, Lotbinière, already have an axe to grind against the Minister, Mr. Axworthy, who, with his reform, has deprived them of the services of the Victoriaville employment centre. In the middle of July, thousands of my constituents

were by my side in an effort to save personalized services near their homes. We got the assurance that that minimum would be maintained.

However, since then, the minister has been avoiding me and any opportunity to meet with me in order to settle the issue. I can tell you this was a prelude to the harmful effects of the Liberal government's reform.

• (1310)

People were afraid, and rightly so, that their employment centre would become a mere booth, which would have forced them to drive over 100 kilometres to get person to person services; you can imagine their reaction now that the reform is truly coming to light.

Before dealing with manpower development, I would like to warn people against the series of measures that, for the most part, are to come into force on Canada Day, the 1st of July. It is already a sad day, the government chose the date well. The Axworthy reform will hit those most in need hardest—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Order, please. I can understand that it is a slight oversight, but we must always refer to our colleagues either by their riding's name or the name of their department, not by their family name. I would simply ask the hon. member for Lotbinière to abide by that rule.

**Mr. Landry:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An impact study by the federal government demonstrates that people whose income is under \$25,000 will be those hardest hit. This shift in policy by a supposedly Liberal government follows the lead of the Ontario and Alberta governments. It is hard to come to grips with the fact that the people opposite are not Conservatives.

The government resorts to policies that smack of the Reaganism of the 1980s, and are still being advocated by the American right wing. Apparently, some Canadians have been contaminated.

It is an understatement to say that the most disadvantaged among us will be affected. Women, young people, and part time workers will be subjected to a treatment that is far from benign. Considering that 1.5 million part time workers are women, that women make up 70 per cent of the part time working force, that one third of them would prefer to work full time, that 40 per cent of part time workers are under 24, you can tell which groups the Liberals are targeting. Eligibility criteria will drive them onto welfare.

The qualifying period will be increased from 12 to 28 fifteen hour weeks, or from 180 to 420 hours. Part time workers working from 15 to 35 hours a week will be hardest hit. This new eligibility criterion will impact most on women, young people

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and new UI claimants, that is those asking for assistance for the first time.

These people will have to work 26 thirty-five hour weeks, or 910 hours. In fact, eligibility requirements will triple for those who are filing their first application. As I said, this will greatly impact on women and young people, whether at the end of their schooling or when they return to the job market after a long absence.

Moreover, while the government is trying to make us believe it is ready to withdraw from any direct commitment in manpower training, it is in fact ignoring the consensus reached in Quebec about the transfer of federal resources and powers.

The minister and his leader claim they are withdrawing from manpower training, but in fact they are once again suggesting what the then Quebec premier, Daniel Johnson, a Liberal, had described as a bargain agreement back in 1994. Under the bill introduced last Friday, if there is no agreement with a province, the money invested in training could be given directly to individuals.

How can Quebec adopt an efficient manpower policy—which is what everybody wants, even the National Assembly, unions and employers—when Ottawa could go over its head and get away with it? In the previous legislation, the minister did not have the power to make agreements with one province or a group of provinces. From now on, it will deal with anybody it chooses. Provinces will be considered in the same way as municipalities or local organizations. Previously, under the national legislation on training, the minister had to consult with provinces before launching a program in this area of jurisdiction. Now, no limit is placed on federal actions. The sky is the limit.

If we look at the way the federal government does things, it seems highly improbable that it will eliminate overlap and duplication in the area of manpower training. The 1994 offer provided for the withdrawal of the federal government with financial compensation.

• (1315)

Under the Training Loans and Grants Program, Ottawa will bypass the Government of Quebec by giving directly to the unemployed funds that used to be transferred to the provinces. André Bourbeau, the Quebec employment minister in 1991, has condemned this tactic, declaring that what was unacceptable was that this approach was a total improvisation despite the fact that, more than ever before, government actions regarding manpower training must be planned and based on priorities.

Two years earlier, the Forum for employment had been a decisive step in the claims of Quebec regarding the transfer of responsibilities in manpower training.

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As I said earlier, it was at that time that partners in the Quebec labour market, namely unions, employers and the government, agreed to ask that Ottawa hand over all of the responsibilities regarding manpower training.

No later than last week, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously passed a resolution asking for the withdrawal of the federal government and repatriation of funds invested by Ottawa in manpower training.

Yet, both governments agree that changes are needed to manpower training programs. Minister Axworthy did declare, on page 30 of his discussion paper on the social program reform, the following, and I quote: "However, the system now is too hit-or-miss. That's why the results have been inadequate—There are too many mismatched programs, with inconsistent rules and too much red tape—Programs offered by different levels of government are often not coordinated. In short, the system must change."

In fact, the control that the federal wants to keep is only a pretext. Ottawa wants to use the \$5 billion UI fund surplus to meet its deficit reduction targets. This clearly means misappropriating premiums paid by employees and employers, nothing more and nothing less.

Last Friday, the Conseil du patronat du Québec, whose members are definitely not sovereignists, asked Ottawa to leave manpower training to Quebec. So, if one considers what has been happening in the past few years, one realizes that men and women from all parties, of all political stripes, are demanding control over manpower training. I say it once again, I believe that Quebec or the Yukon, or any Canadian province, is in a better position to really know what is needed.

So, I wish that one day the federal government, as well as the hon. members opposite, will understand that not only manpower training, but also all related areas should come under Quebec's jurisdiction. Money should not be given directly to the unemployed, but, for the sake of a consistent policy, we should be given all necessary tools and levers. When I say tool chest, of course I mean all the tools we have inside it as well. Not just the box, but the contents, are needed for the thing to really work. Like the tools in their chest, people too need to find a fit within a province, whatever the province.

Whether that province is Quebec or one of the maritime or western provinces, I think we are all grown up enough to do our homework on our own. Only this past week the Conseil du patronat du Québec submitted a document, the stated purpose of which was to prove that federalism can work very well with decentralized manpower training. I am not worried in the least; over time the federal government will learn, and our friends across the way will realize that there is a place for everyone. Let us give to each his due. Then those with jobs, those without jobs, everybody will be happy.

[English]

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to oppose Bill C-111 because I see this as the government playing political football with the UI system.

I had the opportunity recently of doing a householder questionnaire in my riding with regard to UI. Out of 1,110 replies, 608 said the government should get out of UI and turn the entire program over to joint management, as it is already being funded by employers and employees.

• (1320)

I have to go along with that when I look at the cost of administering the unemployment act today: \$1.2 billion taken right off the backs of the working people. It is too unmanageable.

If there are concerns in terms of the unemployment insurance program, it should be left up to the people who are contributing directly to it, the workers and the employers, not the government. This government, along with the other governments, has done absolutely nothing with regard to correcting unemployment.

Out of that survey, 436 or 39 per cent said to tighten up and streamline the existing programs; 675 said to give employers and employees greater say in how it is run; 633 said to have the same qualifying period across Canada and forget all these differences; 628 said to shorten the period people can collect; 608 said to establish a separate fund for fishermen outside of the UI program; 569 said there should be a longer qualifying period but only 369 or 33 per cent out of 1,110 said to lower the amounts people can collect.

From this survey there seems to be a widespread awareness with regard to seasonal workers. In my constituency there are a number of seasonal workers in agriculture, tourism and forestry. These are the three biggest areas in my constituency. These are the three biggest contributors to the UI program. They see nothing here that would do anything to help that situation in order to collect.

Families are hard pressed in Canada today. We look at what is going on. We wonder what has really happened here. We have forced both parents out into the work world in order to pay rising taxes. We have lost the total concept of family unity because of government policies.

I regard this tax grab by the government as just another policy, another penalty to put on the working people, another way to keep the government satisfied with the way it lives and not the way the working people of Canada have to live.

Why are so many people unemployed? What has the government been doing for two years? This is the question out there. We can talk to educated people coming out of our universities. They are the people looking for work. What has the government done? Its fancy spin doctors put in all kinds of things they have

done, this and that, but the bottom line is the unemployment level is still there and the people on welfare are still there.

There is a mine waiting to come into production in northern B.C. It is called Kemess. There has been a large amount of money spent on the exploration work of this mine. There are a lot of people waiting, a lot of jobs waiting. They went through the whole scenario, through the provincial jurisdictions. They went to every office they had to go to.

The province passed the environmental part of it. It passed everything. It signed off. It told these people to go ahead. Now comes the federal government. Here comes this caring, sharing, worrying federal government. It says: "We checked this lake out and there are nine pair of bull trout and so this mine cannot go ahead". Five hundred jobs this caring, sharing government has put on hold; \$350 million. It means nothing to the people in the House sitting over there. Do we really have much faith in any program regarding unemployment which the government can bring in? I think not.

• (1325)

Where has industry gone? What has happened to our jobs? We spend too much. The government spends too much so it has to raise taxes. When we raise taxes we drive industry out. When we drive industry out we have high unemployment.

We listened to the government. It made promises in its beautiful fancy red book. It was presented on a platter for the people to look at so they could judge the government. This was before the election. It mentioned the GST. The GST has hit employers something fierce. They spend a lot of their time after hours trying to collect taxes for the government while not getting paid for it.

They have no more holidays like they used to have. Again it takes away one or both from the family so the government can feed off the taxpayer. The government promised it was to get rid of the GST. Liberals stood on the platforms all across the country. They swore to the people out there because they wanted their votes. They said the GST will be gone within two years. If I remember correctly the Deputy Prime Minister offered to resign; another unkept promise and the GST is still there.

The big fear now is maybe the Liberals will try to introduce something else twice as expensive. They say they will change the name: UI to EI, unemployment insurance to employment insurance. I ask the hon. members on the other side, what is the cost to the taxpayer of the government's changing a lousy name in order to introduce this?

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Why could you not still call it unemployment insurance and make your changes, because one of you wanted to get a little star on a book beside your name? That will cost us another million dollars or so. You think people out there are stupid. They are not stupid. They know exactly what you are doing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I hesitate to interrupt any member at any time but I ask members for their co-operation to direct all their interventions through the Chair and not directly across the floor at one another.

**Mr. Stinson:** Mr. Speaker, I ask members on the other side if they really think the people out there, the taxpayers, the working people, the people who have to give up their home lives in order to support the government, do not know what is going on. I think they know full well what is going on. The government will have to answer to them in a few years, unfortunately. In Canada that is what it takes, years and years of trial and error.

Here is another example of government regulations. The cost of logging on the British Columbia coast has gone from \$67 per cubic metre in 1992 to over \$100 per cubic metre today. Does government, federal and provincial—we might as well throw it in because it is one and the same—forget these people have to be competitive in the world market in order to sell their product? I think it does. When jobs shut down, when companies shut down we have unemployment.

It is nice to sit here and talk about how concerned we are for the Canadian people as we chase their jobs out through regulations, through overtaxation. We can sit here and pat ourselves on the back and say what a wonderful country we have. It really makes one wonder what a wonderful country we have.

We have a government that does not know how to live within its means. It can only raise taxes in order to survive. It says "this is a big deal, we are cutting here. The employee will not have to pay as much". It forgets it jacked the prices up for two years running. It jacks them up 7 cents and cuts back 5 cents. It is a five-year increase no matter how one looks at it. However, the government thinks we will overlook it because of the 5-cent reduction. People have a long memory and the government will have to answer to them at the next election.

• (1330)

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament from Atlantic Canada, I am pleased to rise to speak to the motion to refer Bill C-111 to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

While the proposals to reform the UI system contained in this bill will impact on all parts of Canada, it is widely recognized that the new system will have a significant impact in the Atlantic provinces.

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By referring the bill to the standing committee, members of the House and many other concerned Canadians will have a full opportunity to review and discuss the legislation. For my part, I believe it is important that the special needs of Atlantic Canada be considered and understood and that the capacity of the measures presented in the bill to meet these special needs be understood. The standing committee will offer the appropriate forum to do that.

I am convinced that as Canadians better understand the new approaches being presented and the special employment generating measures contained in the bill, they will recognize that there are substantial advantages to be gained from this legislation, both individually and collectively, for our region. At the same time, the committee offers an opportunity to bring all our unique perspective to this debate to make sure that these changes look after the interests of Atlantic Canada and Atlantic Canadian workers.

In moving the new employment insurance act from the House to the standing committee, and in considering how we can best serve the needs of Canadians, there are a number of points that should be kept in mind by our colleagues in the House, by the members of the committee and by all concerned Canadians affected by this legislation.

To begin with, we should recognize the important role the Minister of Human Resources Development has had in developing this comprehensive new program. In particular, he should be congratulated for having already given Atlantic Canadians his full attention in these matters. He has taken the time to meet with us in the Atlantic Canada caucus. He has met with the provincial premiers. He has met with business and labour leaders from Atlantic Canada. He has met with many others who have asked to have their special needs considered.

There has been no shortage of consultation between Atlantic Canadians and the minister and his officials as they grappled with this very complex situation. I can only say that the minister's office has replaced my wife's phone number on my speed dial as the first call that I make for the last three weeks.

The minister has consistently shown a personal willingness to consider various and often directly conflicting points of view with an open mind and has demonstrated a capacity to understand and integrate them. It is my personal impression that he has shown a great deal of integrity in dealing with these issues and that he realizes there is a special concern for unemployed people in Atlantic Canada.

I would like to identify some of the very specific benefits of the new EI bill. First, the new bill will give broader coverage. According to the department as many as 500,000 more people will have access to employment insurance than had access to unemployment insurance. That is a huge improvement that

comes as a result of the shift from weeks of work to hours of work as the measure to establish eligibility for benefits.

Atlantic Canadians have a short season where people can find large numbers of hours of work. Therefore, it is very important that all of those hours receive credit when establishing eligibility for benefits. By using hours rather than weeks, all of those hours will count in establishing the minimum requirement for benefits and also in establishing the duration of benefits. That is a big improvement.

We also have low income protection so that those people who, through no fault of their own, cannot find enough work in the course of a year to establish an income that would sustain a family can get relief. This new legislation on the threshold of the child tax credit offers the opportunity for up to 80 per cent in replacement income which is another significant improvement over the unemployment insurance program of the past.

● (1335)

Also, there is going to be a clawback on the high income side. I am very supportive of this. Employment insurance is designed to meet two needs, to serve two purposes. First, if one loses a job, employment insurance is designed to give income while one seeks employment. A second function is performed by employment insurance. It sustains a workforce in communities, many of which are in Atlantic Canada, where there is not sufficient income through employment to keep a family year round. Through the employment insurance program incomes have been supplemented to keep that labour force in place and keep those communities alive.

The argument for income supplements cannot be applied to high incomes. It does not serve that function. Therefore I am very supportive of a graduated clawback and I am pleased to see it in the new bill.

The employment benefits that are unrelated to the income benefits of which there will be five replacing 39 will be locally administered. The department in Ottawa will not be deciding on a whole series of programs, budgeting for those programs and then sending the package, in my case, to the local office in Fredericton. Rather it will be determined what are the criteria for those five programs and the local office can decide which of those five programs makes the most sense in my community and in my region. That is a big improvement. It will mean a lot more flexibility for the local office.

Another important point is that by distinguishing between eligibility for income benefits and eligibility for employment related benefits, many people who were ineligible for benefits in the past will be eligible if they have been on employment insurance over the last three years or the last five years in the case of maternity benefits. This is a big improvement.



*Government Orders*

In the past people would exhaust their benefits while they were in a training program, or in some other kind of a program and they would no longer be eligible. Now they will be eligible for the duration of that program.

In many cases the workers exhaust their benefits before their seasonal jobs start again. If someone is working in a park, in the woods or in a fish plant and draws a certain duration of benefits those benefits are exhausted but the fish plant does not open again for three weeks, four weeks and in some case ten weeks. Those people will now be eligible for the employment benefits in the package. They will have the opportunity to receive other kinds of programs that will allow them to supplement their incomes and therefore not have to go on income assistance.

Probably most important is that all members will have the opportunity to speak to additional improvements to this legislation. That is why I believe it is going to committee before second reading, so we can express to the committee the needs of Atlantic Canadians. I would like to speak specifically to the question of consecutive weeks as the method by which the rate of benefit is calculated.

I would make the suggestion to the committee when the bill gets there that all the weeks where work is involved should be considered when establishing the rate or the income level against which the benefit should apply. It is very important to recognize that in Atlantic Canada very often work comes in pieces. There are spaces in between those pieces of work. People could work in the spring, have the summer off and then work again in the fall. All of that work should be considered. Otherwise many people will be paying premiums on employment that will not be factored in when calculating income to establish benefits. That is very important. I hope the committee will be sensitive to this issue. I understand the minister made reference to it when introducing the bill. I see that as a good sign. I hope the committee will take it under consideration and make that improvement in the bill.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take part today in the debate at second reading of Bill C-111, an act respecting unemployment insurance in Canada. I should point out immediately that I and the rest of the Bloc will be voting against this bill, which is underhanded, unfair, regressive, anti-social, anti-worker and above all anti-unemployed.

This new program will be called employment insurance instead of unemployment insurance. It could just as well be called poverty insurance, or destitution insurance. The government has finally tabled its unemployment insurance reform, which it kept hidden until after the Quebec referendum on October 30.

Basically, as a result of this bill, eligibility criteria will be much stricter and frequent users will be severely penalized. The first victims of these cutbacks will be young people, women,

seasonal workers and immigrants. Program cuts will total two billion dollars annually, including \$640 million in Quebec.

The bill, which is to come into force on July 1, 1996, is worse than was implied in the leaks that appeared in the media. It is particularly hard on part time workers, in other words, individuals who work fewer than 35 hours per week. These wage earners will now have to work from 420 to 700 hours to be entitled to benefits or 910 hours for first-time recipients. I was a referee with the Unemployment Insurance Commission for eight years, from 1984 to 1992, and people kept telling me—benefit recipients, the unions and counsel—that the Unemployment Insurance should be improved, not dismantled as the Liberal government is doing today.

As a result of this bill, the number of people eligible for benefits will be considerably reduced. Consequently, the number of people on welfare will continue to rise over the years to come. In fact, stricter eligibility criteria result in a transfer from unemployment insurance to welfare. In Quebec, more than 40 per cent of new welfare recipients have a connection with unemployment insurance. They are on welfare because they are not eligible for unemployment insurance, or because they have already exhausted their benefits.

The maximum duration of benefits will be reduced from 50 to 45 weeks. This measure will further accelerate the shift from unemployment insurance to welfare. I repeat, the federal government is offloading its responsibilities on the provinces. And I may add that since this Liberal government was elected on October 25, 1993, the number of welfare recipients in Quebec has increased by nearly 50,000, which means more than 800,000 altogether.

In my own riding, Bourassa in Montreal North, one third of the population is either on welfare or on unemployment insurance. Nearly 70 per cent of part time workers, in other words, 1.5 million, are women. I may point out that one woman out of three who works part time would rather work full time. Almost 40 per cent of part time workers are under 24.

As we might expect, the reaction of the union movement was quick, critical and utterly opposed to this bill.

• (1345)

The CSN and the FTQ, the two largest union federations in Quebec, launched a strong appeal to union members and the public to mobilize against the social upheaval currently taking place in Canada.

They criticized the bill in the following terms: "It is no reform, it is the blatant destruction of the thin net of this social protection plan. The situation is now very clear. Workers in Quebec can expect nothing more from the federal government, which has axed one of the main tools for distributing wealth in Canada. Ottawa is now making those in the most precarious situation, women and young people, bear the burden of deficit reduction. The worst and most unacceptable part of this whole

*Government Orders*

destruction operation is that it will not resolve Canada's financial problems. Enough is enough".

The two federations are demanding Ottawa return to Quebec its share of the unemployment insurance fund and they are asking Quebec to take every possible measure to recover all of its jurisdiction in the area of unemployment insurance. They point out that, since the federal government's withdrawal in 1990, the unemployment insurance fund has been financed solely by the contributions of workers and employers.

The FTQ and the CSN have decided to organize resistance and a strong and solid fight against this reform together with community and popular groups and in co-ordination with the union movement in Canada.

I take this opportunity to salute the thousands of workers in London, Ontario who are striking today to protest against the cuts proposed by the Harris government.

[English]

According to the CLC, unemployment insurance changes promote a low wage economy. Executive vice-president Nancy Riche said: "The federal Liberals are bent on dismantling and destroying our unemployment insurance program and they do not care what happens to thousands and thousands of unemployed Canadians".

[Translation]

This last series of cuts will reduce UI benefits by \$2 billion, in addition to the \$5 billion already chopped by the federal government.

The vice-president of the CLC went on to say:

[English]

"This legislation will take money from unemployed workers and put it directly into the pockets of business. It is an obvious response to business demands for lower unemployment insurance premiums".

[Translation]

The percentage of unemployed Canadians receiving UI benefits has fallen dramatically over the past five years. In 1990, 87 per cent of unemployed workers were eligible to benefit. In 1993, after the changes made by Mr. Mulroney's Tory government, this percentage was 64 per cent. When the Liberal Party came to office, this percentage dropped again to 50 per cent. With this reform, the CLC estimates that two thirds of the unemployed could be deprived of their right to collect UI benefits.

It must be noted that the UI program is fully self-financed. The federal government does not fund this program in any way. Furthermore, the UI fund runs very large annual surpluses. The accumulated surplus will reach \$7 billion to \$8 billion by the end of the next fiscal year.

[English]

Nancy Riche stated: "This legislation is just a way of robbing Canadians of their unemployment benefits. The finance minister wants to meet his deficit target and he wants to do it on the backs of the unemployed. It is all quite dishonest and very, very heartless".

[Translation]

For all these reasons, I am opposed to this bill and will vote in favour of the motion tabled by the Bloc Quebecois.

• (1350)

[English]

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has tabled two bills amending the Unemployment Insurance Act. It is trying to make it better, trying to improve it to make it something that holds hope for all Canadians. The government is trying to show Canadians that it is being responsible.

In my role as an opposition member and as an individual who has employed a lot of people and has seen how the unemployment insurance system works, I am sorry to report that upon evaluation of all the items, clauses and elements in the bill, basically the minister of human resources has taken a 12 or 15-year old idea, brought it to the surface and finally has his way. Instead of making it simple, he has proceeded to make it even more complicated, more confusing and more convoluted than the Income Tax Act. He has done nothing to make it sound and appear in language that people can understand. He had a choice between using the KISS method in accounting, keep it simple stupid, as opposed to what he has done.

I have a number of concerns about this. The minister had the opportunity to make unemployment insurance truly a program for which it was designed: an insurance program against the time when someone is unemployed. The payments should be equal between employer and employee. I do not know why the minister has allowed the practice to continue where an employer has to pay almost 1.4 times that of an employee. This is what kills jobs. This is why payroll taxes are called job killers. The minister has not listened to this.

If this were a true insurance program, there would be no need for the minister to use moneys from UI for five development tools; \$800 million for targeted wage subsidies; targeted earnings supplements; self-employment; job creation partnerships; skills loans and grants. This is nothing more and nothing less than a vote getting method of spending money. It is old style politics. It reeks of self-service, reeks of missing the point.

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The money should go to reduce UI payments for both employer and employee instead of being used for these programs. Then if we want job training programs or to subsidize businesses to hire people, it should be a separate envelope and spending should be made visible instead of invisible.

We are giving the human resources development minister \$19 billion to play with when all we are spending on UI benefits is \$11 billion. All the other programs amount to approximately \$3.1 billion and there is still a slush fund of about \$5 billion left over. Why?

We could lower taxes, offer tax relief to the Canadian public through relief of payroll taxes. Employers and employees would be happy with that. But no, the minister wants to be king. The minister wants to hold out a carrot on a stick to say he will help all the unemployed people.

I do not understand why there are different rates of payment across the country for people who collect benefits. Why did he not address that problem? In an area of high unemployment, 16 per cent or higher, why do people get more for staying there than if they moved to an area where there is low unemployment of 6 per cent or less, and get less money for staying there? People are not being asked to look for a job. They are being paid to stay put and are paid more money to stay put than to go and look for a new job. That does not solve the problem. It adds to it, just like the Minister of Finance keeps adding to our debt by setting targets which add to the problem instead of solving it.

The name change is serious. Changing the name from the unemployment insurance program to employment insurance program is really serious. What does that mean to the Canadian taxpayer? People will say they paid into it and when they are unemployed they expect to get their money from unemployment insurance. Fine, they get it. Some people have abused the system and we are trying to weed them out.

● (1355)

If the name is changed to employment insurance people are going to think: "I am paying money into a program which will guarantee me a job if I lose my job". That is what employment means. The minister is toying with people's minds. He is toying with a name change which will have a serious impact. The people will be disappointed if they do not get what they want. It is ridiculous. Once again it is all about politics.

Why not address the problem and solve it? Let us use the unemployment insurance program as such. We should not use it for other things which will increase the costs and allow the minister to waste taxpayers' money. It should be used for the purposes for which it was intended: strictly for payment when people are unemployed.

Supposedly somewhere along the line the minister tested a trial balloon on a voucher system. If the provincial governments do not offer training the way an unemployed individual would like it, if they want to be retrained, if they want to receive an income supplement, if they want to become self-employed, if they want a loan or if they want to create a partnership, they can go to the federal government with the voucher and it will give the individual what they want. Does that not add to the problem? Is that not overlap and duplication of services? Is that not what we are trying to avoid with decentralization?

The Prime Minister promised the province of Quebec that he would transfer manpower training to it. With this bill he has not let go of the strings. He has not let Quebec take care of manpower training. With this bill he is still involved in job training. He is still looking after the training of the people of Quebec. That does not solve the problem. Once again it is adding to the problem. I do not see the difference between job training and manpower training. C'est la même chose, n'est-ce pas?

Where would we go? What would the hon. member for Calgary Centre do if he happened to be lucky enough to have the job of the Minister of Human Resources Development a couple of years from now? With all due respect to our current critic, the hon. member for Calgary Southeast who is looking forward to that job, I do not want it. However, if I had the job the first thing I would do is make it a true insurance program. I would establish matching funds for employers and employees, not accelerate the payments made by employers. That might create tax relief which might enable companies to hire more people.

The second thing I would do is have everyone pay the same rate, qualify the same way and receive the same amount of money wherever they are. I realize there are some differences. Perhaps in tougher areas they might be allowed an additional week of benefits, but that would be it. Everyone would receive the same benefits. That would make people move around the country to find jobs, rather than staying put, staying cushy and saying thank you very much.

I would also change job training. I would not have human resources development looking after job training. The hon. member for Calgary Centre would have the Minister of Industry look after job training, if in fact we wanted to offer job training to people and if in fact the industry was reluctant to provide opportunities for people to learn, to obtain jobs and to become skilled.

The government should get out of the business of being in business. It should lower government spending to the point at which it is only collecting money to do the things which Canadians want. This is not a program which Canadians want; this is a program which the human resources development minister and his bureaucrats want.

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We are collecting \$5 billion more than we need. It might be more than \$5 billion because there are other programs we could abolish. We might be collecting \$6 billion or \$7 billion more than we need. That is why our taxes are so high.

It used to be that the bureaucrats in unemployment insurance who worked in the towns and cities across the land helped the people who were unemployed. They would look in the papers, they would get on the phone and they would find employment opportunities. There was a three-strike rule, which is something the minister has not addressed.

For example, a plumber is out of work and cannot get a job. He collects unemployment insurance. The agency in the old days when it wanted to help, would say: "We cannot get you a job in your trade right now, but there is an opportunity over here. Would you like to learn something new? Would you like to try something else?" The plumber would reply: "No. I want a plumber's job". The second time it was: "We have something over here working in a school. If you are on the spot and the pipe bursts you might be lucky". The reply was: "No, I don't want that". The third job they offered was paying relatively the same amount of money he was making or something close to it. Even if it was not close to it, they told him to take the job because he is the available person who has some skills they need.

Many jobs are going unfulfilled. We talk about our high unemployment levels but we never talk about the number of available jobs. We never correlate the two. I believe the three-strike rule should be reintroduced as well.

**The Speaker:** It being 2 p.m. we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### VOYAGEUR FESTIVAL

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, like every year, I would like to invite all my colleagues to attend the Voyageur Festival in St. Boniface next February. This festival celebrates the history, traditions and culture of the French and Metis people.

We offer an impressive line-up of activities such as exhibitions, dancing, singing, music and theatre, all in French. Thousands of people from all over the world come to the festival to witness this joie de vivre. This year, the Voyageur Festival was voted one of the best 100 tourist destinations by the American Bus Association. It is the second time that the largest winterfest in western Canada has received this honour. The Voyageur

Festival was also awarded three prizes by the international association of festivals and events.

I therefore invite you, Mr. Speaker and all my colleagues, to be our guests at this festival showcasing the tenacity and richness of the French and Metis cultures.

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### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the steam roller of cuts imposed by the federal Liberal government, that posed not so long ago as the great defender of culture, is on the move. The first target is unquestionably the CBC and Radio Canada International.

Over the weekend, more than 600 layoffs were confirmed at the CBC. These layoffs are to be distributed equally between the French and the English networks, which is unfair.

Last week, the Prime Minister said that there was no Quebec culture. So why protect it then? That seems to be the reaction of CBC senior management, even though the French network has demonstrated that it is more efficient, popular and less costly than its English sister network.

And what about Radio Canada International, which they are about to wipe off the face of the earth without even waiting for the Juneau report?

These cuts will have a devastating impact on the people and artists of Quebec and Canada.

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[*English*]

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the justice minister stood in the House when Reformers demanded recognition for victims of crime and told all how he listened to victims groups, police associations and chiefs of police. He has heard from every victims group in Canada, from police officers, police associations and chiefs of police that section 745 of the Criminal Code reducing parole eligibility for murderers should be repealed.

Angry Canadians have told me this justice minister rams through legislation that divides Canadians, but when it comes to legislation that would unite Canadians like repealing section 745 he does nothing.

A private member's bill is languishing in committee because the justice minister does not have the courage to follow the wishes of every victims group, police and the vast majority of Canadians.

The justice minister will prorogue the bill that will repeal section 745. He will allow first degree murderers a statute of limitations on their heinous crimes. He will continue to follow the wishes of a few instead of the many and will continue to divide Canadians instead of unite them.

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### IRAQ

**Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Food and Agriculture Organization, an agency of the United Nations, released a shocking report on the implications of the economic sanctions against Iraq.

In the four years since the Persian Gulf war more than 560,000 Iraqi children have died as a direct result of the sanctions. Present day suffering is intolerable; food prices are extremely high; and the water and sanitation systems have rapidly deteriorated.

Most important, hospitals are functioning at 40 per cent capacity and many serious operations are being performed without the proper medical supplies. The bottom line is that literally thousands of innocent children are dying every day.

In the true spirit of the upcoming holiday season I call upon the government to support the elimination of the UN embargo and support the giving of humanitarian aid and medical supplies to the people of Iraq.

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• (1405)

### CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the commitment by the minister of defence of the Canadian Armed Forces to the new international force that is to maintain the just concluded truce between the three warring parties in Bosnia—Hercegovina remains within the parameters of the United Nations charter.

NATO is a regional security organization within chapter VIII of the charter. Its military commanders and political governors are thereby placed under the aegis of chapter VI of the charter on peacekeeping and on international law under the charter, including the contemporary laws of war.

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### ARMENIA

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the seventh anniversary of the terrible tragedy of the Armenian earthquake.

On December 7, 1988 nature unleashed its fury and hundreds of thousands of lives were changed forever by this tragic event. The magnitude of this natural disaster is almost unimaginable. The death toll has never been firmly established, but estimates

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range upward of 100,000 deaths and over 500,000 additional people injured.

In response to the tragedy the Government of Canada provided over \$6 million in aid to Armenia through the Red Cross and Canadians from all regions of our nation donated an additional \$2.5 million in humanitarian relief.

When I was in Armenia last year I was told again and again that the people of Armenia are forever grateful to Canada and Canadians.

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### SACRED ASSEMBLY

**Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week thousands of Canadians from all walks of life gathered in Hull for a sacred assembly. We brought together spiritual leaders of many faiths, aboriginal leaders from coast to coast, youth, elders, political leaders, as well as guests and visitors from South Africa, Brazil, the United States and Central America.

I am happy to tell the House that the assembly was a success. We came together in the spirit of faith and reconciliation and agreed on a new vision for Canada as a whole. We have laid the groundwork for reconciliation and healing in this land.

I thank members of the House who joined us in Hull last week, especially the member for Saint-Jean who represented the official opposition, the hon. minister of Indian affairs and the hon. Prime Minister. They all made valuable contributions. I hope they will continue to work with us as the process of healing and reconciliation continues for all Canadians. God bless.

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[Translation]

### THE CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's bill to give five regions of Canada a right of veto on any eventual constitutional amendment is worse than the amending formula contained in the Constitution imposed on us in 1982.

In less than two weeks, the Liberal government will have imposed distinct society on Quebec against the will of the Quebec National Assembly and given a veto to two provinces that do not want it or would prefer something else.

The amending formula for the Constitution that requires the consent of seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the Canadian population was already considered particularly coercive. Now consent will be required from seven provinces representing 92 per cent of the population.

As Jean Dion writes in today's *Le Devoir*, we can just imagine some smart alecs inferring that the consent of 14 provinces representing 142 per cent of the population will be required in the future.

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[English]

### HMCS CALGARY

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian military performed a miraculous rescue at sea recently when five air crew aboard an aging Sea King helicopter rescued 30 people from a sinking cargo vessel during a raging mid-Atlantic storm.

Thirty times during that terrible storm, Master Corporal Rob Fisher was lowered on to the heaving deck of the bulk carrier *Mount Olympus*, epitomizing the best traditions of brave men in fearful conditions.

Piloting that chopper was Captain Dan Burden, a 36-year old naval officer from Salmon Arm in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap, where he attended elementary and high schools and where his proud parents, James and Norene Burden, still make their home.

Captain Burden recently spent six months in the Persian Gulf. Over Christmas he plans some *r* and *r* with his wife Catherine, four-year old son Alexander and infant daughter Elizabeth.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Canadian Navy and especially the officers and crew of HMCS *Calgary* for their heroic efforts.

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• (1410)

### STORA FELDMILL LTD.

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to inform the House today that STORA Feldmill of Sweden will be carrying out a \$650 million expansion of its pulp and paper facilities in Point Tupper in my riding of Cape Breton Highlands—Canso. The company made the announcement today.

The investment in a new paper plant at this location will create 800 construction jobs over the next two years. Just as important, the expansion will secure newsprint and paper production jobs over the long term in eastern Nova Scotia.

The government, along with its provincial and municipal partners, has pursued the expansion vigorously. Once again we have proven that Nova Scotia can attract international investment.

The location of the facility on the Strait of Canso on our east coast offers competitive transport costs to both the United States and Europe. The new facility is scheduled to be in operation early in 1998 and project planning has already started.

The government has proven it can be aggressive in attracting and keeping international investment in Canada.

### HIGHWAY 416

**Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the announcement that federal and provincial governments have agreed on a plan to finance the construction of highway 416 south from Ottawa is being applauded throughout eastern Ontario.

Besides providing hundreds of construction jobs, the new four-lane route will connect the nation's capital with the nation's busiest highway.

Dozens of accidental deaths and injuries over the last few years have been attributed to a highway that is simply inadequate. Canadians and visitors alike can look forward to a modern, state of the art highway in and out of the nation's capital by the year 2000.

I congratulate both levels of government for finally giving the project the priority it deserves.

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### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in a recent Ekos poll Canadians were asked what values they wanted their federal government to uphold. Responses were collated and presented in two groups. One of the top three values identified by Canadian elites was minimal government.

What did the Canadian public say was their top three values? They were freedom, a clean environment and a healthy population. Minimal government was last on a list of 23 choices for Canadians.

What does the Reform Party want? It wants to cut, to gut and to eviscerate the federal government. Canadians want a strong federal government with strong national standards. The Reform Party is not the party of the people as it says but a party of limited special interests, a party for the elite and not for the people.

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[Translation]

### JUDGE JEAN BIENVENUE

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, judge Jean Bienvenue of the Quebec superior court made unacceptable and revolting comments regarding the victims of the Holocaust and women in general. The judge said that women were capable of committing acts more despicable than those of the vilest man.

I ask the Minister of Justice to order without delay an inquiry by the Canadian Judicial Council. Unfortunately, the council rarely reprimands a federal judge. In fact, the whole disciplinary process concerning federal judges must be reviewed, and a detailed code of ethics must be implemented.

The real scandal regarding this incident is the federal process of judicial appointments, which is based on partisanship. I still wonder how a Liberal federal government could ever appoint Jean Bienvenue as a judge.

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[English]

### QUEBEC

**Mr. Cliff Breitreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, just over one week ago 1,000 Albertans attended a public rally in Edmonton and the people overwhelmingly rejected the notion of giving a veto to the separatist Quebec government and turned thumbs down on the open ended distinct society clause.

However this top down government is bent on ramming these Quebec appeasements down Canadians' throats. The Liberals have the gall to invoke closure on the distinct society motion, once again trampling on the democratic process. This is 1989 all over again when the Mulroney Tories rammed the GST down our throats. Now look at the federal Tories.

To the four Liberal MPs from Edmonton we say Canadians are tired of politicians lacking the backbone to represent them in Ottawa. When this mixed Liberal quartet votes on the veto and distinct society bills, Edmontonians will be watching and they will remember.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, two announcements in the past week demonstrate that the government's approach to reducing the deficit protects the rich and punishes the poor.

The Minister of Human Resources Development picked the pockets of unemployed Canadians to the tune of \$1.9 billion, yet all the top banks in Canada have announced billion dollar profits for the last year. Clearly the federal government is forcing the burden of paying the huge debt, which it and the Conservatives have created, on the least affluent in Canada.

The federal government provides absolutely no funding for the UI program and one wonders what moral authority it has to attempt to reduce the deficit with money contributed to the UI fund by ordinary Canadians. Ordinary Canadians are being forced to do more than corporate citizens to reduce the deficit. With obscenely high bank profits, the government is not taking any measures at all to ensure that they too are paying their fair share of the deficit.

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These two contrasts simply show how natural it is for the Liberal government to look after its corporate friends. Maybe some day we will have a government for the people, by the people.

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[Translation]

### MOUVEMENT DE LIBÉRATION NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Mouvement de libération nationale du Québec held its first public meeting yesterday, in Montreal. As you know, the primary objective of that movement presided by Raymond Villeneuve, a former FLQ member who was in exile for 16 years, is to promote Quebec's independence.

Depicting Quebec's English-speaking and ethnic community members as "enemies of the Quebec people", the movement, through its president, intends to take all the means it deems necessary to implement the distorted ideas expressed in its manifesto.

The values and the ideas of the Mouvement de libération nationale du Québec are totally incompatible with the democratic and peaceful traditions of Quebec and Canada. Therefore, I urge members of this House to strongly condemn this group of extremists for its barely veiled incitement to violence.

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### LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the leader of the Conservative Party came another step closer to the politics of the Reform and the Bloc Québécois with the statement that he would like to see the end of Canada's multiculturalism policy.

This statement by the Conservative leader suggests that he would be ready to dump all of the multicultural policies and the multicultural heritage of his party in order to snatch the votes of a few intolerant people from the Bloc and the Reform.

At a time when the winds of intolerance blow across Canada, the Conservative member for Sherbrooke is giving in to an easy fix, and he too has started making political hay at the expense of the cultural communities.

It is a pity to see that the political ambitions of the Conservative leader have led him to turn his back on the sacred principles of multiculturalism, principles he defended tooth and claw when a minister in the previous government.

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

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

This morning during a recorded interview for CBC-TV, the Prime Minister said he would like to use the federal government's constitutional powers to maintain peace, order and good government to prevent another Quebec referendum if he judged it was based on a vague question.

Are we to understand from the words of the Prime Minister that, on the very day he feigns recognition of the distinct society in a motion, he is announcing his intention to impose his wording on the next referendum question?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, anyone respecting democracy respects the outcome of the referendum that has already been held in which Quebecers stated categorically that they do not wish to separate Quebec from Canada.

The Prime Minister himself knows that the wish of the people of Quebec is not for a referendum but economic action. That is the area on which we will be focussing.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister takes a very short view of history. We know that Newfoundland held more than one referendum before becoming part of Canada. In that case, it was all right, but in Quebec's case, the usual double standard applies.

Since the Prime Minister must be aware that the vast majority of Quebecers have massively rejected his so-called offers, are we to understand that the only way the Prime Minister thinks he can win the next referendum is by taking control of the process himself, thus ignoring the National Assembly?

• (1420)

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this was not the first referendum. There was another referendum before that. The hon. member may want to talk about respect for democracy, but it was not the Prime Minister who said he would keep having referendums until he won. Respect for democracy is uppermost in the minds of the majority of Quebecers, who do not want a referendum. They want economic action, something the Leader of the Opposition admitted in his speech two weeks ago.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, respect for democracy means to recognize, in a democratic exercise, what people want, and if people change their minds, if they make a democratic decision, that should be

recognized. The Prime Minister is saying he will not recognize the democratic process. It is all right when he wins, but only then. Some democracy.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the Prime Minister can reconcile the honeyed words he spoke to Quebecers before the referendum with the statement made this morning in which he denied the Quebec people the fundamental right to determine their own future.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is really interested in respecting the will of Quebecers, let him come here tonight and vote with the government of Canada to enshrine recognition of the distinct society in this government, because in so doing, we will respect the desire of Quebecers for real change within Canada.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE JEAN BIENVENUE**

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. On Thursday, December 7, in sentencing Tracy Th  berge, found guilty of second degree murder, Justice Jean Bienvenue of the Quebec Superior Court at Trois-Rivi  res made shocking remarks about the victims of the Holocaust and about women in general, who, according to him, are capable of reaching a level of baseness the vilest of men could not reach. This sort of petty and vile remark represents a grave dereliction of a judge's duty.

How does the Minister of Justice intend dissociating himself from Justice Bienvenue's remarks?

*[English]*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right to raise this matter in the House. I was shocked and offended by the statements attributed to the judge in the case referred to.

I have asked that a transcript of the judge's remarks be prepared. When I receive that transcript, which I expect will be in the next couple of days, I will review it. I have options available to me under the provisions of the Judge's Act. I will consider all those options when I have read the transcript and I shall take what I deem to be appropriate action in the face of these shocking remarks.

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given that these remarks are so revolting and that this is not the first time Justice Bienvenue is at the centre of controversy, will the Minister of Justice take the measures necessary to have this judge removed by the Governor General on address of the two Houses, as provided in section 99 of the Constitution Act, 1867?



*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will know, the process provided for in the Judge's Act requires steps to be taken before any such result is arrived at.

What is first required is for me to receive and examine the transcript of the judge's remarks and then determine how to proceed from there.

I shall keep my hon. friend and the House advised so they can be fully aware of the action we take when we have the transcript in hand and have an opportunity to examine it.

\* \* \*

**THE CONSTITUTION**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, when Canadians gave Brian Mulroney his walking papers I thought I had seen the last of his top down constitutional change, but I was wrong.

What the current Prime Minister has done is worse than anything Mulroney ever did. The Prime Minister scribbled down constitutional changes on the back of a napkin without consulting Canadians, without consulting the premiers, without even consulting his caucus. Now he has resorted to refusing debate in this place and shutting Canadians out of the process completely. Even Brian Mulroney was more of a democrat than this Prime Minister.

• (1425)

Why is the government breaking its 1993 election promise in the red book of open government and greater public consultation?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member really wants to resolve the constitutional question she will come to the House today with her party and support the motion the government has put on the table which permits the Prime Minister to meet the promise he made to Quebecers and which will also provide the basis for a better Canada, something I hope she and her colleagues are actually looking for.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, distinct society status for the unity of the country takes more than a vote in this place. It takes the public will and support of the people from sea to sea.

The phrase "begin damage control" seems to be the only advice coming out of the Prime Minister's office these days: a last minute veto thrown to B.C. as opposition to the Quebec package began to mount, and now a token town hall public

relations exercise on CBC to try to breath life into a unity strategy that is dead on arrival. The Prime Minister is out of touch, out of control and out of ideas.

If the government is truly serious about public consultation and if it really plans to listen to Canadians on CBC, will it abandon all attempts to ram this Quebec package through the House of Commons and submit it to a full debate before Parliament and Canadians right across the country?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again we see how out of touch the Reform Party is. It believes a cross-country constitutional tour is what Canadians are looking for. Canadians have expressed in the province of Quebec, in the province of British Columbia, in the province of Alberta and across Canada that they want us to focus on getting Canadians back to work. That is the agenda of the government and that is the agenda we intend to pursue.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that is its focus, why did it get us into this mess for the last two months? Why has it not talked about jobs?

Nobody asked for this business to come through the House like this. What part of consultation does the Prime Minister not understand? It is not that difficult. Consultation is when you ask ordinary Canadians, business people, community leaders and politicians for their advice and listen to what they have to say; that is before the decision is made, not after, as the government is doing.

Will the government take the advice of the Reform leader, step aside and listen to the national unity action plan developed by a reconfederation conference of premiers, business and community leaders and ordinary Canadians, not this stuffy place here that thinks it knows all the answers?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party may hold the Parliament of Canada in contempt in calling it a stuffy place of people who do not know what is going on.

If Reform members talked to two or three people in their constituencies they would discover it is almost unanimous that Canadians do not want a cross-country constitutional road show. Canadians want the Prime Minister to meet his commitment, deliver on his promises quickly and expeditiously, and develop a Canadian consensus on getting Canadians back to work.

**An hon. member:** What day is it?

**Miss Grey:** Hallowe'en.

**Ms. Copps:** The member may call it Hallowe'en. We call it nation building.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***COPYRIGHT**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

Last week, the Minister of Canadian Heritage did not indicate when he intended tabling legislation on copyright. However, last December 22—and I do mean last December 22—the industry and heritage ministers made a commitment to have the bill tabled in early 1995. The increasingly persistent rumour would have it that the Department of Industry and not of Canadian Heritage is holding up the tabling of the bill.

Could the Minister of Industry tell us today whether he intends honouring the commitment he made with his colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and tabling the bill on copyright before the end of the present session?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously such a bill will be introduced as soon as possible.

• (1430)

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that his reluctance to go ahead with the copyright bill is due to opposition from the Ontario Liberal caucus, which has been lobbied by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters in connection with related rights?

*[English]*

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Parliament has waited a long time for a substantive bill on copyright. The hon. member will know that decades have passed as governments have wrestled with some very difficult and complex issues. We will present a bill on copyright as soon as it is ready.

\* \* \*

**QUEBEC**

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said today that he would consider disallowing a future Quebec referendum if the question was not honest. I quote: “I say that we have powers and we have to use the powers to make sure that the question would be fair to Quebecers and would be fair to the rest of the country”. He also said: “The Constitution has a lot of powers to act under peace, order and good government”.

I will put my question to the Minister of Justice. Is it the government’s position that it could legally forbid the next referendum if it viewed the question as being dishonest? Is the government actively considering that as a policy option?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the residual powers to the Canadian government under the peace, order and good government provision in the Constitution are considerable. They are there for the purpose of ensuring that a national government can act in the national interest on matters of fundamental importance.

Let me simply say that the Prime Minister has simply observed, if I may say so, that the power is in the Constitution and can be invoked for the kind of proper purpose to which he referred.

I should also add that the focus of the government is not so much on some future possible referendum. It is on ensuring that no such referendum is held because the people of Quebec see for themselves that their future is far better within a united Canada.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that nobody thinks the Government of Canada is going to hold a referendum on this topic. It may be the Government of Quebec that will decide to hold a referendum on this topic.

Would the government also consider a less draconian alternative which, if the government is not prepared to live with the question or with the result, would be for the federal government to simply not formally participate in a future referendum held on an unfair question?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can only say the Government of Canada is focusing on providing good government and fulfilling our commitments. As the Deputy Prime Minister emphasized today, we are focusing on our agenda of jobs and growth with the intention of ensuring that no future referendum will be held by any government in Canada because there will be no need to do so.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***TOBACCO USE**

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

This morning, the Minister of Health tabled a master plan to reduce tobacco use in Canada. This plan follows last fall’s Superior Court ruling that a total ban on advertising contravenes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The minister stated this morning, and I quote: “I hope that we will not spend as much time in court with this bill”. Are we to understand from the minister’s comments that she did not even bother to ask the Supreme Court for an opinion on the validity of her action plan before submitting it to us?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court has handed down its ruling. We are following its directives. What we put forward meets the Supreme Court's requirements, and we will gather the evidence required to go ahead with our project.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that, by not taking immediate steps to ensure that her bill will be acceptable to the Supreme Court, she runs the risk of another miserable and costly failure, as she experienced with her other initiatives against tobacco use?

• (1435)

[English]

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the evidence is there to support a full ban on advertising. We are going to gather that evidence. Meanwhile, we will be going through a series of consultations early in the new year in the hopes of having everything finalized so we can introduce legislation in the spring.

\* \* \*

**THE DEFICIT**

**Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Minister of Finance will meet with his 10 provincial counterparts, eight of whom have announced definite dates for wiping out their deficits. Will the minister listen to them and learn how to balance his budget, or will he bring them more bad news about downloading and his own inadequate interim targets?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, we have set out a very clear procedure to arrive at deficit elimination. The government is on track and continues to follow that track.

As far as my preparedness to listen to my provincial counterparts, I can assure the hon. member that is indeed one of the major purposes of tomorrow's meeting. I look forward to hearing what they have to say.

**Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the news is out that the government's 2 per cent of GDP deficit target for 1997-98 can be reached with further negligible cuts. The minister blinked and lost his courage to do what is right for Canada. Will the minister go back to the drawing board, lower his deficit target, cut spending more and offer Canadians what they want and what they so richly deserve: a hope for tax cuts before the end of the century?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Develop-**

**ment—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there will undoubtedly be a requirement for the government to make further cuts in government spending to ensure that we hit all of our targets: this year's, next year's, the 2 per cent and any targets which may be set thereafter.

If what the hon. member is saying is that it is very clear the action taken in our first two budgets has obviously set us on the right track, which is indeed the very clear implication of what he has just said, then I will take that as congratulations for the government on its first two budgets.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Over the next two days, federal and provincial finance ministers will meet to discuss the criteria to be used to distribute among the provinces the major cuts relating to the Canada social transfer.

Will the Minister of Finance tell us what criteria he intends to propose at that meeting to distribute the \$4.5 billion cut in the Canada social transfer, shown in his last budget and relating to 1997-98?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is well aware that there are several options. The government has yet to make a decision. It is truly our intention, tomorrow and Wednesday, to listen to the provinces and see what they think.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance pledge to reject the criterion based on population, which was included in his budget speech and also mentioned by his colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development, by virtue of which Quebec would absorb 42 per cent of all federal cuts in that regard?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government did not indicate a preferred option. As I just said, it is our intention, tomorrow and Wednesday, to discuss with the provinces.

Surely, the provinces will express their views, and these will probably differ from province to province. The best that we can do is to reach a consensus.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL CAPITAL**

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

*Oral Questions*

• (1440)

[English]

As the minister is aware, Canada's national capital region is currently struggling under the negative economic impact of government downsizing.

Will the minister tell us why it was important to support the highway 416 project? What else is the government doing or proposing to do to help the economic development of the national capital region?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. In light of the reductions in the size of the public service, the national capital region has taken a large share of the cost of reducing government costs.

I am sure the member will also agree that public servants who are leaving the public service have been offered generous packages. As well there is the government's support under the industrial assistance strategy for the REDO effort to help with economic diversification in the region. Even more important is the announcement made last Friday on behalf of the Minister of Transport concerning the federal government's participation under the strategic transportation initiative program to complete the construction of highway 416. This was something our party had committed to in the last election.

The support of the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville was crucial in seeing this completed. There is also the support the Minister of Transport has given to the acquisition of the right of customs preclearance at Ottawa international airport which we hope we will be able to announce later this week. This will be of special benefit to this region as a result of the open skies agreement which again the Minister of Transport was finally able to negotiate last year.

\* \* \*

### TAXATION

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Finance stated in this House that the most important kind of tax relief this country should look to is a reduction in interest rates. Is that all? Is that the reward for his tough, tough budget and his two-year revolving target? Is that all this government has to offer to overtaxed Canadians?

I ask the Minister of Finance when, if ever, can Canadians expect to pay less in taxes than they did the year before?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the reaction around the world as governments have talked about high deficits and high debt and have talked about tax decreases, in fact the money markets have said to get the deficits down and get the

debt down. That is very clearly the course we have decided to take.

I must say I find it incredible that the member stands up and simply dismisses reductions in interest rates. I would suggest he go back to his riding and talk to people who have to pay mortgages. He should talk to people who are buying cars and refrigerators. He should talk to people who want jobs. Maybe then he will understand how important it is for ordinary Canadians to have low interest rates.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not here to compliment the minister. I am here to criticize the finance minister for not listening to the leading economists in this country and for not listening to the taxpayers. They are overtaxed and overburdened. They want fewer taxes and lower taxes.

The economists say we should get to 0 per cent of GDP a heck of a lot quicker than what the minister has put forward. He obviously does not understand what is ticking people off. He is too busy praising himself.

Why will the minister not do what is right, do what the people want and commit today to presenting a balanced budget within two years, keep his promise of eliminating the GST, thereby setting the stage for true tax relief?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that every time this member stands up he does express the Reform Party's economic policies. He said we should follow their budget. He then asked when this country was going to get to 0 per cent of GDP. I will tell you exactly when. When we follow your budget.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### TAX CREDITS

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

In his last budget, the Minister of Finance announced plans to replace the capital cost allowance for Canadian film and television production with a refundable tax credit.

Given that Quebec film and television producers were sure that this tax credit would apply to the funding of their 1995 productions, could the Minister of Finance undertake to table a bill instituting this tax credit before the end of December?

• (1445)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we do intend to introduce a bill shortly.

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that the lack of legislation translates into a \$20 million shortfall at the very least for the Quebec independent production industry, jeopardizing the very survival of several production companies?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that the change that the hon. minister and myself have initiated had been requested by the industry and that the industry will greatly benefit from it.

That is why we made this change, and I can assure you that we will implement it as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General of Canada.

In 1992 Kim Campbell, then Minister of Justice and Attorney General, advised the House that an investigation into the activities of certain individuals and Hockey Canada was under way. She said: "The solicitor general has indicated that this matter is currently being investigated by the RCMP". In fact, the investigation did not commence until 48 days later.

Has the solicitor general initiated an investigation into the cause of the foot dragging by the RCMP under the previous Conservative government to determine if there was any political influence or interference in the RCMP investigation?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have told the House on a number of occasions that it is the custom or convention that solicitors general do not get directly involved in operational matters. This is particularly the case when it comes to investigations undertaken by the RCMP.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the problem, Mr. Solicitor General, is that Canadian—

**The Speaker:** I know it must have been a slip. The hon. member will address his remarks to the Chair.

**Mr. McClelland:** Mr. Speaker, the problem is that it was American law enforcement agencies that had taken the ball and were running with an investigation of what was essentially a Canadian problem.

In relation to the Eagleson investigation, in 1992 a request was made by American law enforcement agencies that the RCMP execute two search warrants to seize the records of All Canada Sports Promotion Limited in Toronto. The search was

not carried out for a full two years after the U.S. agency requested a search warrant be executed.

Canadians have a right to know the reason for the delay. Will the solicitor general commence an investigation to determine if the delay was caused by political interference by the previous Conservative government?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the spokesman for the Reform Party is asking that the solicitor general involve himself directly in police investigations.

I want to reflect on the implications of the hon. member's question. I will see what information I can properly provide to the hon. member in light of the convention I have mentioned that police investigations are carried on at arm's length from ministers.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who I would like to congratulate for his achievement at the United Nations last week.

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

**Mr. Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, because of transboundary pollution, Canadian freshwater scientists are reporting that airborne toxic substances from other countries are seriously damaging our lakes, threatening both the environment and health.

Can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans tell us whether he intends to maintain Canada's freshwater research capacity despite recent budget cuts in his department?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Davenport for his question, especially as he has long established himself in the Chamber as the leading environmentalist of our time, second only of course to the Deputy Prime Minister.

• (1450)

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

**Mr. Tobin:** Of course, Mr. Speaker, you have been known as a green thumb around here.

**The Speaker:** I had better intervene before the hon. minister names everyone in the House.

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker, the program review has reduced the budget of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans by 40 per cent over the next three to four years. It is quite a deep cut but is in line with what other federal departments are doing to meet the deficit projection targets of the Minister of Finance. Difficult decisions have been made all through the department.

*Oral Questions*

I assure the hon. member no final decisions have been made with respect to fresh water. However, we will be maintaining the Freshwater Institute and the programs in the central and Arctic regions, including the experimental lakes program of which the member makes mention.

Notwithstanding our deep commitment to deficit reduction, we on this side of the House remain committed as well to ensuring quality of life for Canadians, unlike our friends in the Reform Party opposite.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADA PENSION PLAN**

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the discussions taking place at the federal level concerning the Canada pension plan, as reported on Saturday morning, are making me fear the worst. One of the scenarios contemplated would increase the retirement age from 65 to 67 and cut pension benefits by 10 per cent while at the same time increasing pension contributions.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Are we to understand that, after going after the unemployed, this government intends to hit seniors by raising the retirement age to 67 for CPP pensioners?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that any changes in the Canada pension plan require the joint consultation and agreement of both the federal government and the provinces.

The Minister of Finance is holding meetings with his counterparts this week to listen to their points of view of what they consider might be an acceptable regime, in order to ensure that the Canada pension plan is sustainable and viable for generations in the future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, would the minister confirm that one of the cutback scenarios he is considering consists in reducing pensions by 10 per cent and raising contributions to the plan for those who are not yet beneficiaries under the Canada pension plan?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Human Resources Development just explained, we intend to discuss the whole issue of pension funds, the Canada pension plan and the

Quebec pension plan tomorrow and the day after with the finance ministers.

The hon. member should realize that in both cases, we share the problems and also the possibilities for solutions. However, it would be very premature to discuss the options today. This will have to be done with the finance ministers.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BILL C-226**

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, section 745 of the Criminal Code could allow the likes of Clifford Olson and other lifers to get parole in only 15 years. Bill C-226 is a private member's bill on the table waiting for approval to remove section 745.

Is the justice minister prepared to support all Canadians regarding this removal, or does he want it to die on the Order Paper like I suspect he does?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member creates the impression that section 745 is a provision which results in the automatic release of people who have been convicted of murder.

Section 745 simply provides that such people can apply to a court, composed of a judge and a jury picked from the community, to decide the question of whether that person should be permitted to ask for an opportunity to have parole.

● (1455)

When the private member's bill was before the House there was in effect a free vote on that bill. As a result it went to the justice committee.

I have written to the justice committee and I spoke to its then chair to ask the committee to deal with this matter as one of priority. I want the committee to deal with it. As I told the House last week, I shall be making submissions to the justice committee about the broader context in which it should look at this single important issue.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it perfectly clear that I said section 745 could allow the likes of those people to be released.

This minister has brought in legislation that has divided Canada rather than unite Canadians. The gun law, the sentencing bill and sexual orientation inclusion and the unity bill are some examples of how this minister is working.

When is the minister going to support bills that victims, police, police chiefs and all other Canadians want, like the removal of section 745 from the Criminal Code?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no matter how the hon. member may choose to pronounce his words, from day to day in the Chamber he makes a career out of creating the spectre of public danger because of this section in the Criminal Code.

The far more responsible approach to criminal justice is to first look at the facts and that is exactly what I have asked the justice committee to do. That is what they will do.

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**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

In the rush to fulfil the Prime Minister's referendum promises to Quebec, the government has hastily assembled a unity package that aboriginal leaders say does not recognize their historic self-government, land and treaty rights and would make it absolutely impossible to obtain further changes to the Constitution to clarify those rights.

Will the government stop ignoring the aboriginal issues in these constitutional initiatives and make a commitment today; first, to consult with the Assembly of First Nations; second, to honour Canada's constitutional obligations to aboriginal people; and third, to recognize First Nations as full partners in Canada?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the member, who spends a lot of time on the aboriginal file, did not hear the speeches of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice or myself.

If he had, he would have heard that the words were very similar in each one of the speeches. They were very clear that the distinct society clause does not derogate one iota from either the inherent right or the treaty rights of aboriginal people.

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the speech to which the minister refers there was a commitment to a national aboriginal day, a holiday.

I am wondering if, instead of a day off, we might find a day to actually sit down and get some work done on some of the things for which the aboriginal people have asked, particularly the extinguishment clause that aboriginal people have talked about.

Will the minister give us a commitment today that as the fact finder Justice Hamilton has requested, the extinguishment clause will be extinguished?

**Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, not only does the hon. member have the wrong speech but he has the wrong day. I am referring to the speeches that the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and I initiated at the start of the debate on distinct society and the veto legislation.

We were not talking about a holiday per se. We were talking about a recognition. It is in place now in the sense that the AFN has a unity day on June 21. We can build on that because at the spiritual gathering, all the churches were there: the Mennonites, the Anglicans, the Roman Catholics, all the spiritual leaders.

All the parties were there except unfortunately the NDP and the Reform. I am looking at both of them. Maybe if they had been there they would understand what we are trying to do collectively as far as putting some spiritualism and recognition into what the aboriginal people have done for this country and continue to do.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland, as in most other provinces, seasonal work is very important to the economy. Would the Minister of Human Resource Development assure me, the constituents of St. John's West and the rest of Canada, that the particular circumstances of seasonal workers have been taken into account in considering the new employment insurance legislation?

• (1500)

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

One very important change, as the member knows, is that we have shifted the basis of eligibility to hours. That will be of substantial benefit to seasonal workers. It will mean that many seasonal workers qualify much sooner for benefits than they can now and that many seasonal workers can extend their benefits much further. In other words they will be able to extend their weeks.

To give a working example, today with the new system 45,000 additional seasonal workers who are not eligible under the present system and who now pay premiums could become eligible under the new system. More important, 270,000 seasonal workers today would be able to extend their benefits a minimum of an additional two weeks beyond that which they have now under the old system. In other words, they could establish their claim earlier and have their claim last longer because we are recognizing and giving them full credit for all the work they do.

*Routine Proceedings***ALLIANCE QUEBEC**

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage recently signed an umbrella agreement to provide Quebec anglophone groups with \$8.4 million. Although Reform is against such expenditures generically, if the government is to do it we hope it will do it in a fair way.

Will anglophone groups that did not sign the deal continue to receive funding? Or will it be channelled entirely through Alliance Quebec?

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Official Languages Act of Canada recognizes minority groups, francophones outside Quebec and anglophones within Quebec.

The official languages office has been in the process of negotiating with a variety of different groups based on principles of equity and gender. It will certainly not cut out other groups at the expense of Alliance Quebec. Nor would Alliance Quebec expect that to happen.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADIAN AIRLINES INTERNATIONAL**

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

In reply to an opposition question, the minister said that Canadian Airlines International and its partner, Alitalia, had ceased operations at Mirabel because of insufficient passenger volume between Montreal and Rome. However, Air Canada has applied for permission to operate this route.

Considering the sizable Italian community in Montreal and the fact that there is a real market for flights between Montreal and Rome, does the Minister of Transport intend to make an exception to his policy for allocating international routes and accede to Air Canada's request so as to provide a direct link between these two cities?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of changing the current existing rules for allocating routes to these two airlines. However, I understand the hon. member's question and his emphasis on the importance of the service between Montreal and Italy. In fact, a number of ministers and members on this side of the House have already raised the matter.

However, we must realize that often the other airline applies for a route, not because it may be very successful but because it wants the international prestige.

We should realize, as the hon. member pointed out, that Canadian Airlines International is not alone in thinking there is not enough passenger volume between Montreal and Italy, since Italy's national airline, Alitalia, has also suspended operations on this route.

However, we will continue our negotiations. We have scheduled meetings with Canadian Airlines International to try and find ways to solve the problem.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

• (1505)

[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 four petitions.

\* \* \*

**CONTRAVENTIONS ACT**

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-114, an act to amend the Contraventions Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES ACT**

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-115, an act respecting fisheries.

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

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## NATIONAL SECURITY CERTIFICATES

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition, certified by the House and signed by 163 residents of Scarborough and east metro Toronto.

The petitioners call on the government to reconsider the national security certificate issued jointly by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Solicitor General of Canada in relation to Mr. Manicavasagam Suresh. This proceeding has caused concern among Tamil Canadians.



*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

## CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on Canada Post signed by 200 constituents of Lac-Saint-Jean, which reads as follows. Whereas the Canada Post Corporation moves home mail boxes around as it sees fit, which forces a number of citizens to use the services of an intermediary to get their mail, we are requesting that Canada Post put an end to its plan to move home delivery mail boxes around as it sees fit, and to respect vested rights to postal services.

[English]

## OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have five petitions to present today.

The first petition is on behalf of 400 of my constituents from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt and from people across the country.

They call on Parliament to preserve Canadian unity and parliamentary tradition and to protect the rights of all people of Canada by prevailing upon the Speaker of the House of Commons to recognize the Reform Party as the official opposition during the remainder of the 35th Parliament of Canada.

## THE DEFICIT

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from 75 constituents.

They call upon Parliament to reduce the federal deficit by reducing government spending and by refraining from any form of tax increase.

## VIOLENT CRIMINALS

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from 25 concerned constituents.

• (1510)

They call on Parliament to support laws which severely punish violent criminals who use weapons, to support new Criminal Code firearms provisions which protect the law-abiding gun owner, and to repeal existing legislation which does not improve public safety and has not been proven to be cost effective.

## CHILD OFFENDERS

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition is on behalf of 60 constituents from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

They call on Parliament to protect our children through stringent enforcement of our existing laws by imposing maximum sentence if an offender preys upon children, by denying early release in such cases and by bringing in new legislation to specifically protect children.

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the final petition is from 110 of my constituents from Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

They call upon Parliament to end the legal approval of spanking children by repealing section 43 of the Criminal Code.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition today on behalf of the little brother campaign sponsored by Tom and George Amba of Scarborough, Ontario. The signatures are from in and around the area of Wild Rose.

The petition prays and calls upon Parliament to amend the Young Offenders Act to provide that young offenders charged with murder be automatically tried in adult court, that if convicted they may be sentenced as adults, and that identities should not be hidden from the public.

I am very pleased to present the petition on their behalf.

## RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions under Standing Order 36 to present. The first is from the residents of Smith, Alberta.

The petitioners request that Parliament amend the Divorce Act to include a provision similar to article 611 of the Quebec civil code which states that in no case may a father or a mother without serious cause place obstacles between the child and grandparents. Failing agreement between the parties, the modalities of the relationship are settled by the court.

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

## VIOLENT OFFENDERS

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from the residents of Fort McMurray in my riding.

They ask that Parliament support laws which severely punish all violent criminals who use weapons in the commission of a crime; support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions which recognize and protect the right of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms; and support legislation which will repeal or modify existing gun control laws that have

*Government Orders*

not improved public safety, have proven not to be cost effective or have proven to be overly complex as to be ineffective or unenforceable.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 224.

[Text]

Question No. 224—**Mr. Cummins:**

With regard to work contracted for involving the Department of Fisheries, (a) does the Department of Fisheries have a contractual relationship with Bristol Communication, if so, what is the service provided, (b) what was the billing in the fiscal years 1994–95 and for the first half of 1995–96, and (c) what is the policy or regulation governing contracts with companies in which departmental officials or minister's staff have an interest?

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** I am informed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Treasury Board as follows:

(a) The Department of Fisheries and Oceans no longer has a contractual relationship with Bristol Communications.

(b) \$63,493.19 was invoiced by Bristol Communications in 1994–95 and \$5,382.19 was invoiced in the first half of 1995–96.

(c) Departmental officials (employees) are subject to the provisions of the conflict of interest and post-employment code for the public service (public service code). This code does not make any specific statement “governing contracts with companies in which departmental officials—have an interest”. However, there are provisions relating to assets held by employees.

Pursuant to sections 21 to 23 of the public service code, employees must make a confidential report to the designated official of all assets and of all direct and contingent liabilities, where these might give rise to a conflict of interest in respect of the employee's official duties and responsibilities. Such assets might include “interests in partnerships, proprietorships, joint ventures, private companies and family businesses, in particular those that own or control shares of public companies or that do business with the government”.

Employees must divest assets where it is determined by the designated official that they constitute a real or potential conflict of interest in relation to the duties and responsibilities of the employee. Divestment of assets is usually achieved by selling them in an arm's length transaction or by making them subject to a trust arrangement.

Minister's staff are subject to the provisions of the conflict of interest and post-employment code for public office holders (public office holder code). This code does not make any specific statement “governing contracts with companies in which—minister's staff have an interest”. However, there are provisions relating to assets held by public office holders, which includes minister's staff.

Section 9(1) requires a confidential report to the ethics counsellor of all assets and of all direct and contingent liabilities.

Pursuant to sections 10 to 14, the public office holders then make a public declaration of certain types of assets (such as interests in businesses that do not contract with the government and do not own or control publicly traded securities), and divest themselves of other types of assets which could be directly or indirectly affected as to value by government decisions or policy (such as publicly traded securities and businesses which contract with the government). Such divestment is by sale or by establishing a blind trust or management agreement approved by the ethics counsellor.

For more detailed information on conflict of interest and code of conduct, please refer to the codes.

[Translation]

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-111, an act respecting employment insurance in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Centre has the floor and has a minute left in his intervention.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to finish my intervention with about 60 more seconds of words of wisdom for the government on its unemployment insurance efforts.

It collects \$19 billion and it pays out some \$11 billion. The other billions of dollars are just to get votes. The government has the opportunity to truly reform unemployment insurance, to truly push it down to the level of government that is closest to the people and let it serve them, to truly eliminate overlap and duplication of services, to save the taxpayers \$5 billion, and to lower government spending. If it is a matching fund between employer and employee it should never go into a deficit whatsoever.

The government had the opportunity to offer some hope and tax relief to corporations through a reduction in the payroll tax. It has chosen not to do any of those things that stimulate the economy. It has chosen not to do any of those things that would benefit taxpayers. Instead it has chosen to continue taxing on the side and overburdening us with more and more taxation.

• (1515)

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, listening to the member for Calgary Centre I feel we are reading two separate acts. One of his concerns was that we were changing the name of this bill from the Unemployment Insurance Act to the employment act, and even that bothered him. Imagine trying to take a positive stance on getting Canadians back to work; this is just another thing they object to.

Canada works when Canadians work. This is the essence of Bill C-111. The previous Unemployment Insurance Act was basically a passive support system. It in many ways encouraged people not to seek employment in other areas. The Canadian economy is very much evolving from what some economists would like to call the old economy into a new economy. It is very appropriate that as Canada approaches the 21st century it attempts to evolve its legislation in the area of encouraging skills and skill development in our workforce.

There is always the question of cause and effect when we get into the issue of unemployment or employment benefits. Many of our younger people are joining the workforce. Alarming, over 60 per cent of new entrants have received only a high school education. It is apropos that the government has recognized that and wants to upgrade the basic qualities of skills in the labour market.

Many of us can relate stories from their own ridings, anecdotal or whatever, of people who have purposely chosen not to work because the incentive to work was not there. In other words, they received unemployment insurance benefits and for them to take a job, with possible babysitting costs or whatever other costs attributed to going to work, it was cheaper to sustain themselves on unemployment insurance.

I do not believe unemployment insurance was ever intended to be an income support system. It was basically supposed to encourage and develop skills so that people would seek employment.

It is interesting how Canadian economist Nuala Beck said the economy in Canada has been changing over the last number of years. More people work in the sophisticated electronics industry than in pulp and paper. This is even true in British Columbia. More Quebecers have jobs in health and medical care than in the traditional sectors of construction, textile, clothing, furniture, automobile, forestry and mining combined.

### *Government Orders*

More Nova Scotians work as teachers and university professors than in fish processing, forestry and construction put together. The province has the largest number of universities per capita of any province, making it one of the best knowledge intensive regions in the country. Why I submit that information during this debate is that sometimes we forget how our economy has been changing. We often look at the unemployment statistics and they also follow some of what people would call the older economy.

Basically we want to not subsidize and underwrite people staying with an old economy that possibly is leading to dead end jobs. Rather, we want to give them the skills and the incentive to move along within the workforce.

Canada has one of the highest benefit plans of unemployment insurance in the world. Many have suggested this has created a situation in which people have been reticent about seeking new employment in other areas. In a sense it has actually contributed to the immobility of our workforce and has possibly made it not as dynamic as it should have been.

We have watched the unemployment insurance system change in the last 12 years. In 1982, 15 per cent of workers were repeat users. By 1994 over 40 per cent of the people who accessed the unemployment insurance system have also done so at least one other time in the last five years, which tells us that more and more people have been using the unemployment insurance system not so much as an avenue for getting back to work or looking for new work but as a way to maintain their income levels.

• (1520)

Another aspect affecting our economy is a tremendous change in the remuneration for young people. Those under 24 years of age are today earning less than a similar age group in 1969. Many of these younger people are finding it difficult to access the labour market. Many aspects of this legislation create an open door which allows some of our younger people to get work experience.

How is this new act better than the old unemployment system with the problems I have mentioned? It is better in a number of ways. It assists employers in keeping assistance to small and medium size businesses. Premiums for workers will drop from the current level, which the previous speaker neglected to mention, of \$3 to \$2.95 in 1996, while employers will pay \$4.13 per \$100 of employee insurable earnings compared with the current \$4.20. This combined with a reduction in the annual insurable base from the current level of \$42,380 to \$39,000 means employers could save as much as \$170 per worker in 1996.

*Government Orders*

Time and again employers have told us as a government that payroll taxes kill jobs. Payroll taxes, whether unemployment insurance or Canada pension plan and other benefits paid to employees, mean a cost to the employer to hire that extra employee. The government has realized that, has heard those concerns of employers and has changed the legislation to give employers more of an incentive to hire new workers.

This new system will streamline paperwork and simplify reporting requirements facing employers, thus reducing administrative cost. The elimination of weekly minimums and maximums to determine insurability means employers will save in the order of \$150 million in administration costs.

The old system basically made people account by weeks with I believe 15 hours per insurable week of employment. One can imagine where an employer who had employees, some working 15 hours, some working 12 hours, some working more than that, would have a horrendous accounting procedure trying to figure out who was insurable and who was not. It also created a barrier. Some people wanted to get 15 hours in so they could have insurable employment. Many relationships between employers and employees were about who could get these hours and so forth.

It created an administrative nightmare for small business. It also created abuse in the relationship between employers and employees. The government has recognized this impediment to hiring people and has changed it in this legislation.

It is estimated that 60 per cent of small firms that currently contribute to the unemployment insurance system actually pay less under the EI while another 16 per cent will pay the same amount. This is a significant factor. Remember, small and medium size businesses are the employers of the future and have been almost the sole creator of jobs in the past. Over 76 per cent of small businesses will realize a significant reduction in their payroll costs. This will give them an incentive to hire more people.

In addition, further relief will be provided by a temporary premium refund for those small businesses that experience a significant premium increase over the next two years. Some 300 small businesses will be eligible for these rebates. This is another area where the government has heard the concerns of small and medium size business and their desire to create new jobs and a new economy.

• (1525)

In addition, we have recognized the importance of people being able to find that new job. Often the problem has been with the changing workforce and also a changing economy. In moving from the old economy to the new economy people have been displaced. Their displacement has also created a situation

in which they were reticent about accepting lower paying jobs which may get them into a new labour force.

This legislation provides up to a \$5,000 a year subsidy over a three-year period to allow them to access those new jobs. Eight hundred million dollars will be spent for new employment benefits, and on and on.

There is also the recognition of low income families. It was often cheaper for them to go on welfare than it was to work. The government has recognized that by subsidizing the child tax benefit provisions of the unemployment insurance system to providing more benefits for those young families trying to find a job, find a career. This is only a part of what is a very excellent piece of legislation.

These changes will assist Canadian corporations and their workers in providing new jobs for the young and for all workers in Canada in the new economy and putting the old economy behind us.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-111 runs counter to the historical demands of Quebec and to women's rights to equality.

Let us travel back in time, stopping in the year 1864 during the discussions leading up to Confederation. The future central government wanted to have jurisdiction over higher education. It would appear that this did not suit a good number of participants, because the provinces ended up with full jurisdiction over education.

Now, after a long jump forward in history, let us stop in 1940. This is the year, you will remember, in which, after an unsuccessful attempt to legislate on an unemployment insurance proposal, the government succeeded in having the constitution changed by the British Parliament and was accorded a new jurisdiction—unemployment insurance.

This jurisdiction over unemployment insurance was interpreted by the courts, and the decisions are very interesting indeed. The well known constitutionalist, Mr. Beaudoin, covered the subject briefly in his *La Constitution du Canada*.

The courts decided the federal government's jurisdiction over unemployment insurance included the right to determine the types of jobs that were insurable, the sorts of jobs that involved a risk of unemployment and could perhaps be covered by the program, the sorts of income that could be taken into account in calculating unemployment insurance contributions and, finally, the eligibility criteria for benefits.

From these powers, one conclusion is obvious: Parliament's jurisdiction covers unemployment insurance solely. That is, like all other forms of insurance—life insurance, fire insurance, disability insurance—the risk is insured, period.

This leads us to the question of where Parliament got its so important authority over job training, because it has none over education. Training, education, are we not talking about the same process? Basic logic would say we are, and yet, in reality, quite the opposite is true.

The question is simple and so is the answer: Parliament's power is not derived from any formal document. No province has ever said to the federal government: "Here, you have control over unemployment insurance, you should also have it over job training. Take it, we give it to you".

It did not happen that way at all. It happened surreptitiously. The federal government said: "Since I am the one collecting the money and redistributing it among those meeting the criteria, I think I should also arrange it so that I do not have too many clients. I will look after their training. I will provide nice programs, special courses, counselling centres, all kinds of goodies. I will see to it that they do not come back begging too often, so that I can use the money for other purposes as I see fit".

• (1530)

That is what happened. All thanks to the famous federal spending power. There was a hitch, however: Quebec, this king of spoilsports, according to the Deputy Prime Minister, protested.

Quebec society as a whole said no to federal control over job training. We told the federal government: "Leave our jurisdictions alone. We have a very good idea of the kind of job market we want to develop. We know what kind of society we want, what our economic priorities are, what family policies we want to include in our programs, what markets we want to open".

In short, Quebec society told the federal government: "We know where we want to go. We have the skills needed to do so. Get out of here and do not take the money with you; it belongs to us".

Again, as history has shown on many occasions, the federal government does not understand anything. It continues to deny us through this bill. Worse yet, it has broken all records by changing the name of its constitutional jurisdiction, an amendment adopted in 1940 when the federal government was given jurisdiction over unemployment insurance; it has now decided to call it employment insurance. This throws the door wide open to new encroachments, since any new initiative can be justified in the name of a so-called jurisdiction over employment insurance. The government is acting in bad faith, in obvious bad faith.

I do not know where this bad faith comes from. What I know is that overlap and duplication will not stop there and will continue.

### *Government Orders*

I also know that the federal government is maintaining and even increasing the amount of duplication and overlap. And it does so in many areas, such as health, education, agriculture, culture, communications, the environment, natural resources and fisheries, just to name a few.

I also know that the 10,000 unemployed workers living in my riding are no better off with the HRD minister's new UI reform; in fact, they are being penalized. They have nothing to gain from this reform. In my riding, the unemployment rate hovers around 20 or 25 per cent, with a welfare caseload of 28 per cent. This percentage will keep growing as the number of people looking for work who no longer qualify for UI increases. What choice will they have other than going on welfare?

I also know that the 2,000 people who gave up looking for a job in the Quebec City area last month and were therefore struck off the UI rolls as they joined the ranks of the welfare recipients have nothing to gain from this reform.

Women and young people in particular have nothing to gain from the minister's reform proposal. With this bill, women continue to be penalized. For example, the new conditions to qualify for benefits will penalize women, since 70 per cent of part time jobs are held by women and since women are the ones who re-enter the labour force after extended leaves of absence for child rearing purposes.

It is so unfair for a government to add to the negative impact that being away from the labour market had on the careers and financial position of women, instead of recognizing the value of the work these women have done with their children. Such an attitude is far from promoting equal opportunities for women.

I ask the government: whatever happened to the funds that were going to be used to create daycare spaces? Where is that money? The government promised 100,000 new daycare spaces. This is another election promise that was quickly forgotten because it did not affect the interests of wealthy contributors to the party's election fund.

After promising to create massive employment, get rid of the GST and eliminate overlap, this is yet another unfulfilled commitment that will adversely affect women.

History will soon show that the federal government should have been content with its already large powers under the original constitution. History will also show that Quebec women have become tired of being treated like second class citizens.

• (1535)

They stopped believing in nice rhetoric a long time ago. They only believe what they see now, and that is a bleak future for them, a future without work, which will hurt the poor in particular, a group with which women can identify.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to enter into the debate on the bill today and on the motion before us.

I will begin by talking briefly about the problems we will have if we send the bill to committee prior to second reading. It is a problem for me because I was a member of the committee when Bill C-43, the Lobbyists Registration Act, was first tried in Parliament. At first I eagerly accepted it. I said it would be a really good thing because then we as ordinary members, back-benchers, would have input into the bill at the very beginning. Hopefully we would be able to craft the bill so it would include from the beginning the necessary changes that would produce widespread approval among all the parties.

However, I was greatly disappointed. During the time of the committee everything went really well. We had a good chairperson and it was a time when we built good collegiality among ourselves. There were many times when we discussed these things. We came to a consensus but I was very disappointed when finally we came to the end of the process. Even though we thought we had agreement on a number of issues we raised on behalf of Canadians we represent, the members of the committee on the day of the voting of the clause by clause came in with their little check sheets and voted according to a pre-plan, which greatly disappointed me.

I was really distressed. A number of the things they voted against were things that I thought we had reached consensus on. In the end, it simply did not materialize that the individual members were able to express their convictions.

I would like to be on record as being opposed to this process. I know it was supposed to be new and innovative but my experience is that not only does it not work at that level, but it cuts off the next level of amendment possibilities and further debate which is very important in the House; to go through the regular procedure of having first reading, second reading, committee and then third reading.

I am against that part and urge all fellow members to preserve the functioning of Parliament by rejecting this motion to send it to committee at this time. It ought to go through second reading in a normal sense first.

I will now speak about the whole question of unemployment. Unemployment is a very severe problem. In the downturn of an economy many businesses respond of necessity by laying off some employees. Those employees now have lost their jobs and because generally the downturn in the economy produces fewer opportunities in other businesses, as more and more people get

laid off the probability and the availability of getting other jobs is reduced.

Obviously something has to be done. The present plan and the plan by the Minister of Human Resources Development are not long term solutions to this problem.

The types of policies the government is embarking on further erode the employability of Canadians. The real task before us is to provide a climate in which there are jobs available, in which there are employment opportunities and in which it is possible for people of all skills levels to find their niche and to contribute to society economically and in other ways. Tinkering with the bill will not do anything to achieve that fuller goal.

● (1540)

With respect to meeting the needs of those temporarily unemployed, Canadians should begin to recognize they are getting a very short shrift from government, from the unemployment insurance commission and from the whole system which is designed to tide them over through a difficult period. Many people would much rather have a job than rely on the limited benefits of unemployment insurance.

I will go even further. I reiterate what I have said many times at public meetings and in private. A number of employers have spoken to me since the time I became involved in the political process. They find it very difficult to obtain and keep workers because they are competing with unemployment insurance. They are competing with a situation in which an individual says: "I get this much if I do not work. Why should I work for you?"

I was at one time the recipient of this policy. I owned a small business with a partner. We hired someone who worked for us for a short time and then abruptly quit. When I asked him about it he listed the salary and benefits he received from us and said: "It costs me only about \$200 less per month to not do anything, so I am out of here". Unfortunately the business we were in required us to have accessibility to our employees at very odd hours. It was not a very pleasant working situation. We did not have the financial flexibility to pay huge bucks to persuade people to stay. We went through a continuing line of people who worked for us basically long enough to qualify for unemployment insurance and then they were gone.

One thing which really annoyed me was that those employees, all of whom were male, as it was heavy industrial work, when they filed their income tax returns, in every case they were able to receive a refund on their overpayment to UI. They were unemployed and under the limit, so they overpaid. However, we as employers struggling to keep the business going ended up paying the maximum to the UIC and to the Canada pension plan and we were ineligible for rebates comparable to the overpayments the employees were making. That was a great unfairness.

Unemployment insurance is exactly what its name implies. It ensures we will have unemployment. The name is now being changed. It is a cosmetic change. All the principles remain essentially the same. There are a few cosmetic changes being proposed, none of which will produce any profound changes in how the system operates and the disincentives built in to take part time work.

A number of years ago I worked at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and once again our UI premiums increased. It was at the time when they crossed the \$100 per month threshold. I talked to my fellow instructors. We did some calculating. There were approximately 750 instructors at the institute. We were paying \$100 per month each, which means a monthly contribution of \$75,000. Our employer, paying 40 per cent more, contributed an additional \$105,000 per month, making a total of \$180,000 per month, sent to Ottawa for the UIC from our little group of instructors. That makes a total of \$2.16 million per year.

• (1545)

Instead of being involved in that coercive system, we would have been able to keep the money and invest it or use it. We would have been able to provide the equivalent of 54 jobs based on a salary of \$40,000 per year. Meanwhile, our fellow instructors were being laid off because of pressure of taxation and other things. We were forced to pay people to leave work when we would much rather have shared the workload with them. Fifty-four of those people were being subsidized.

[Translation]

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to join all my colleagues who asked that Bill C-111 be referred as quickly as possible to the standing committee of the House, so that all Canadians can soon participate in the development of the bill, and eventually in its implementation.

At the same time, I want to refute many myths concerning this bill, particularly as regards part time workers.

A moment ago, I was listening to our Bloc colleague, the member for Quebec, talking about what else but the big bad federal government which is responsible for all ills on earth and in heaven, and all over the planet. She mentioned constitutional interference and injustices against Quebec. When I listen to the Bloc members day in and day out, it seems to me that they would like to continue and perpetuate the referendum debate forever.

If I may, since I live in the Montreal area and see it daily, I would like to point out the political, social and economic instability which is now pervasive in our area as a result of this sterile and divisive debate we are compelled to by the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois, and their obsession for a separate Quebec. The Montreal economy is sick due in part to

### *Government Orders*

this instability which scares away investments and jobs. This is a reality we need to talk about.

I would like to mention the workers who, either by choice or through no fault of their own, are working part time. Bill C-111 was drafted, in many ways, to help part time workers. We heard claims that Bill C-111 was a new tax on workers, or that it was tightening eligibility to such a degree that workers most in need would never qualify.

It is important to compare the provisions in Bill C-111 with those of the old system.

[English]

During the last two decades almost half of the new jobs created have been what economists call non-standard jobs. Most are part time jobs. By 1994, 17.3 per cent of all jobs in our country were part time jobs. Sadly, women filled 70 per cent of those part time jobs. Studies show that more than one-third of all part time workers actually seek and want full time work. Once again, more than two-thirds of the part timers who seek full time jobs happen to be women.

We should ask ourselves whether the old approach to unemployment insurance benefited part time workers. The answer is no. Under the old system a worker needed to work at least 15 hours or earn a certain amount to have his or her earnings insured. In 1995 that amount was \$163. The old system has frozen out 500,000 Canadian workers. Many employers have deliberately held workers to less than 15 hours. This has kept their wages lower. After all there can be no employer share of unemployment insurance premiums for uninsured employees. The result has been that these workers have not been eligible for any benefits if they lose their job.

[Translation]

But there is another aspect to that unfairness. A recent study by Statistics Canada revealed that 653,000 Canadians have more than one job. That is definitely not a normal situation. More and more people now have two or even three part time jobs, but many of them are still not covered by the present plan. That is absurd and unfair.

[English]

Then we have people who work more than the minimum some weeks but not other weeks. They have only partial coverage. That shows why we need this change. One central objective of Bill C-111 is to get rid of the artificial notion of a work week. By using hours as a measuring device and by making every hour count, part time workers earn coverage at the same rate as every other insured worker.

A person who loses a part time job will be treated the same as any other worker if he or she has enough hours of work. This is fair. We have set a reasonable standard regarding the number of hours a person has to work to be eligible for benefits. That underlines our goal to make work pay. It is a necessary step that helps us to meet our fiscal targets through Bill C-111.

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Many part time workers amass very few hours. They may be students. Some may be in seasonal work. They may have only a little part time employment or maybe only a few weeks of full time work. This bill understands that reality. It exempts people who earn less than \$2,000 a year from employment insurance premiums. These people will have premiums deducted from their paycheques just like everyone else but that money will be returned to them through the income tax system.

There will be no tax grab from our lowest income workers. This will have a significant effect. The Department of Human Resources Development has determined that more than three out of every four of the newly insured workers will have their premiums refunded. Another 920,000 low income workers who now pay premiums will see those refunded. Altogether that is equivalent to 1.3 million workers who will not have to pay premiums because their earnings are too low. The government has built a system based strictly on fairness.

*[Translation]*

What will the impact be on part time workers? They will pay \$14 million less in premiums, and a much greater number will qualify for benefits if they are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs.

*[English]*

It reflects the balanced approach this bill takes to the needs of people in seasonal work. The government clearly listened to the recommendations of the working group on seasonal work and unemployment insurance. These recommendations called for an hours based system. They called for an increased clawback. They called for steps to keep young people from leaving school for a cycle of unemployment insurance dependence.

Despite the claims of the opposition, these are the facts. Part time workers will see less off their income in premiums. They will have more access to benefits.

● (1555)

In contrast, the Reform Party has been pounding away at its claims that extending employment insurance to part time workers will lead to untold numbers being fired by employers. I use the word untold for a reason because I have never heard Reform members offer any credible statistics to support this claim.

Under the new system, part time workers who have been eligible for insurance benefits at any time in the previous three years will have the same opportunity for employment benefits as other eligible workers.

*[Translation]*

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my firm support for the motion of the government that Bill C-111 be referred as quickly as possible to a committee so that the serious consultations Canadians expect can get under way, and that Bill C-111 can be enacted as soon as possible.

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, is it my turn for debate? Ten minutes? I thought I could put questions to my colleague opposite.

**Mr. de Savoye:** No, we have been gagged.

**Mr. Bernier (Gaspé):** We have been gagged. That is the new way of doing things. It means that the government does not go only after the victims, but also after the members who represent the victims, as my colleague for Portneuf put it.

I am not pleased, but rather deeply saddened to rise today to speak on a bill which is so tough on the unemployed, on the jobless. Instead of tackling the problems and trying to find work for the people who live in the regions, the government is going after what little they have left.

What is this bill all about? As we say in French, and especially in my region of Gaspé, it is first and foremost a deficit insurance plan for the government, since it would save about \$5 billion. It is not the jobless who will benefit from this, but the government. So, first and foremost, the reform proposed by the minister is a kind of insurance program for him, for his deficit, and not an employment insurance system, as he would have us believe.

I was regional critic for the Bloc Québécois this last year, and I still am, unless changes are made, and the people in areas like the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands are being dealt a double blow by this bill, since the vast majority of the unemployed in these areas are seasonally unemployed. One of the first measures that will be applied by the government is the 1 per cent penalty for recurring unemployment. This means that each time an unemployed person in our regions receives UI benefits for a period of 20 weeks—20 weeks, not a year—that person is given a 1 per cent penalty applicable to his or her future benefits. That hurts.

Then, when you look at how the system works, we know the present rate of benefits is 55 per cent of the gross salary. This means that, once they have accumulated five periods of 20 weeks of UI benefits, these persons will no longer get 55 per cent of their gross salary, but 50 per cent. That hurts, and it is discriminatory. It is not their fault if they work in an area that is affected by seasonal fluctuations. Yet, they will be imposed a 5 per cent penalty. That is one thing.

Also, benefits are calculated not only based on the number of hours, but also based on the number of qualifying weeks. First,



the benefits will be divided by 14 and subsequently, in 1997 or 1998 I think, they will be divided by 16.

• (1600)

This means that if I manage to accumulate the required 420 hours in a period of 10 weeks, the total amount of benefits I am entitled to will be calculated and divided by 14, as if I had accumulated the required number of hours over a period of 14 weeks.

That results in another reduction of the UI benefits to which these unemployed people would normally be entitled. What should we think of that?

But the funniest thing or should I say the saddest thing about this—and I am sure all the people from the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands who are listening to this will demand an explanation from their member opposite—from what I understand—and I hope someone will be able to give me an answer at some point—the 420 hour minimum requirement must be met within a period of 14 weeks. Let us take for example a worker in a lobster plant in our area of the Gaspé Peninsula, who works mainly in May and June.

Suppose this worker manages to accumulate only 400 hours over this work period. According to the rules, he or she must accumulate 20 hours more in order to become eligible.

If that worker is unlucky and cannot find work for his last 20 hours until the fall, say in September or October, what will happen between the end of his first job, in June, and the beginning of his new job, at the end of September? He will be out of work and will receive no benefits of any kind.

I have read the regulations and, from what I understand, the UI commission will calculate like this: let us suppose he worked 20 hours at—I will be generous—\$10 an hour, that makes \$200 during that period. When the number of hours of work reaches 420, the amount earned is averaged over the last 14 weeks. Since the worker in my example did not work in July and August, because he lives in area where work is seasonal, his earnings during his qualifying period would be \$200 and it is that amount that would be divided by 14. What, then, would be the amount of his benefits? It would be \$1.25 or something like that. This is unspeakable.

I hope I am wrong and my office will receive a fax telling me I made a mistake. I just hope we can at least make the minister and the deputy ministers who came up with this scheme understand that in regions like Gaspé and the Islands, where people need unemployment benefits to make ends meet, they are very edgy about these changes to the program. People try very hard, but nature imposes its work schedules on humans.

Mr. Speaker, did you ever try to go strawberry picking or lobster fishing when there is three feet of ice? It is not easy.

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What can we do? Should we ask our viewers across Canada to give up strawberries and lobster forever, because people are no longer able to stay in their region for lack of unemployment insurance benefits, and have to move and find other jobs? Is that the message?

I am afraid we will see some trades and occupations disappear because they are limited to certain periods of the year. This is unthinkable unless, once again, the member for Gaspé is wrong.

Is the Minister of Human Resources Development keeping a bargaining chip up his sleeve? I have not yet seen what regulatory amendments the Governor in Council can make in the area of unemployment for fishermen and seasonal workers and I do not know if he can make some other changes. However, the core, the basis of this bill is a slap on the wrist right from the start.

• (1605)

I cannot believe how fast time is going by this afternoon. But in the main, I have made my point. Canadians and Quebecers must be wary. The minister is proposing a very fundamental change, and he is the first one to dip into the pot of this insurance which I call the deficit insurance. I ask the minister to protect the lives of those who live in the regions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before recognizing the member for Calgary North, I would like to say to the member for Gaspé, if I understood him correctly, that he used the word “gag” at the beginning of his speech. I will allow him to reply, but I must advise all members of the House that we are now under Standing Order 73(1)(c) which states:

(c) no Member may speak more than once nor longer than ten minutes.

I can assure the member that I have no intention of gagging him, or any other member. However, we are now proceeding under that rule. If the member wishes to reply, he can.

**Mr. Bernier (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, I had no intention whatsoever of implying that the Chair wants us to do certain things. But if I had the right to make a ten minutes speech, I thought I would also have the right to comment after the ten minutes granted to the other member.

This was to make our work interactive in the House: questions, answers. That allows us to understand certain things.

In my opinion, what Standing Order 73 does, if you will allow me to say so, is gag us.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Reform Party’s Atlantic issues critic, I have met with and spoken to Atlantic Canadians from all walks of life, including those with, to them, an unwelcome dependence on the social program known as unemployment insurance.

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It is the future of this social program that we are debating today. Reforms to the program are long overdue. It is a prize understatement to say that there is an unemployment problem in the Atlantic provinces.

The latest unemployment rate in Newfoundland is 15.9 per cent. In P.E.I. it is 12.2 per cent; in Nova Scotia it is 11.2 per cent and in New Brunswick, the lowest of the four Atlantic provinces, it sits at 11 per cent. By contrast the national unemployment rate for Canada is 9.4 per cent.

It is ironic the Liberals will now call the system in which these disastrous rates of unemployment are flourishing employment insurance. They have certainly done anything but foster employment for Atlantic Canadians in the past. What they have done is foster an unwelcome dependence on politicians, their programs and their promises.

In 1994, the Atlantic region, with 8 per cent of Canada's population, collected 16.6 per cent of UI benefits. Also last year, \$15.8 billion was paid out across the country in UI benefits, \$2.6 billion of which ended up in Atlantic Canada.

This is a huge chunk of our national wealth. The tragedy is that so many of these hard earned dollars do not end up in the hands of those who really need assistance. The distribution of these moneys is too often governed by political considerations rather than sound planning.

The great seaworthy vessel known at Atlantic Canada is in need of a major refitting. The weight of dependence on political intervention has punched a very large hole in the bottom of the boat.

Now the ship is taking on water at an alarming rate and who is at risk of drowning? First, our young people. In some fishing communities it is not uncommon for teenagers to drop out of school to take a position on a fishing boat because it gets them enough weeks of work to qualify for UI. The result is one less person in the school system. In the end, one person has been robbed of an opportunity to receive an education.

Young people like this are suffering twofold. On one hand, they will be penalized for being labelled a frequent user. For years, they were led to believe that the UI benefits would always be there. Now, in a cruel twist of irony, they are also feeling the brunt of the years of mismanagement of the oceans' fish stocks which have disappeared.

Also facing the risk of drowning from the foundering ship of UI are the communities dependent on this social program, communities where the dollars from UI have literally kept the town alive. In the past the government has tried to bring in training programs to help workers move out of failing industries. The Liberal government is trying this again. Unfortunately, the job training programs, by the minister's own admission, have failed to deliver in the past.

• (1610)

As the hole in the bottom of Atlantic Canada's economic ship grew and as more water poured in, the people who could save the foundering ship were also penalized by the government. For years small business, the driving force behind job creation, has asked for relief from UI payroll taxes. Now, as the UI surplus fund grows, the government is offering a small stipend to the business community. The amount a business will pay in UI taxes will drop by one-twentieth of 1 per cent. This means that for every \$100 of earnings it will drop by 5 cents. This is a very frail tool to hand to our economic builders.

The ship that foundered over the years sank steadily through debt, mismanagement and abuse. As the hole in the bottom of the ship grew wider, successive governments tried to lighten the weight of the sinking ship by throwing overboard a couple of deck chairs, rather than by repairing the damage.

The Liberal government still has not moved to repair the damage caused by the heavy borrowing of its own and previous governments. The ship needs to be repaired, to be pulled into drydock for a short time and to be made seaworthy again.

Think of the possibilities of putting back to sea in a fully seaworthy ship. We can repair the ship and our social programs by making tough decisions now, saving them from being made for us down the road.

The international community, whether we like it or not, is watching what we do very closely. By bringing financial spending under control, the economic ship can be rebuilt and put back to sea. It will be a refitted ship, able to withstand the storms of the open ocean of global competition and avoid the rocks along the coast of variable interest rates and currency fluctuations.

The ship that is repaired and put back to sea has a host of ports to head for. The ports of possibility for Atlantic Canada are bountiful. By moving on the Reform Party's policy initiative Atlantica, the Atlantic provinces could open up new markets and a new north-south trading arrangement with the New England states, a market of 15 million people. Let us not forget the opportunity of tapping into the European market. By capitalizing on their unique proximity to other trading partners, the people of Atlantic Canada will be the real winners. The people who helped to carve out a country and a harsh new world 200 years ago can compete in the 21st century.

Sending a pile of cash in to try to solve the problems of a region does not work. According to the auditor general it never did. Programs designed to create employment, growth and prosperity, such as those set up by the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency, have shown questionable results at best. The importance of good, solid infrastructure to enable movement of products for businesses with initiative cannot be stressed enough.

ACOA has often been used as a means to create competition to successful enterprises by funding grants to new but unviable enterprises. This has had the effect of setting up the new for failure and at the same time damaging the success of the old.

The people of Atlantic Canada need ways and means to become self-sufficient. A region with natural resources such as lumber, fish, mining, Hibernia and Voisey Bay has opportunities to rival those of any other part of Canada if the shackles of government restriction, red tape and taxes could be thrown off. The federal government must free up the governments of Atlantic Canada and its citizens by giving them the opportunity and their own resources to manage and make decisions on the areas they see as being needed most. A move toward creating real jobs, not the make work projects of the past, is what Atlantic Canadians need and want most.

What the government needed to do and failed to do with this bill was to send a message to Atlantic Canadians that there is hope. There are ways to lessen dependence and restore self-sufficiency. We should not have to depend always on the ill conceived training programs which in the past have not worked. Politicians can trust the initiative of working people.

• (1615)

Atlantic Canadians want to work. They have a right to go to work but have been prevented from doing so by the very governments they say are trying to protect them. They have been taxed out of jobs. While the federal government increased taxes over the years, the provincial governments followed suit. Borrowing money and taking out a mortgage on our children's future is not the way to build a strong country.

Atlantic Canada is a region of the country which feels that the debate on this topic over the next few weeks is one that will have a very strong impact on them. I urge the government to take measures which will give this part of the country the long term plan and hope it needs to build a strong economic future and not tinker with programs which have no long term plan or benefit.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Dear colleagues, pursuant to Standing Order 73, as I mentioned earlier, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings to put the question now before the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

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

*And the division bells having rung:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) I have been requested by the government whip and the opposition whip to defer the division until 6.30 today.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-110, an act respecting constitutional amendments as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are two motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-110, an act respecting constitutional amendments.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 1 and 2 will be grouped for debate, but will be voted on separately.

[English]

I now propose Motions Nos. 1 and 2 to the House.

#### MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-110, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing line 13, on page 1, with the following:

“to by at least two-thirds of the provinces that include”.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.)** moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-110, in Clause 1, be amended:

(a) by replacing line 16, on page 1, with the following:

“(c) British Columbia;

(d) two or more of the Atlantic provinces”;

(b) by replacing line 21, on page 1, with the following:

“(e) two or more of the Prairie provinces”;

(c) by replacing line 25, on page 1, with the following:

“the Prairie provinces.”; and

(d) by replacing lines 5 to 7, on page 2, with the following:

““Prairie provinces” means the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.”

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**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, at report stage of Bill C-110, I will discuss briefly some of the amendments which have been put forth, including the one in my name. As well I have some general comments about the committee and report stage.

The amendment I have moved today seeks to replace the words "by a majority of the provinces" on line 13 with the words "by two-thirds of the provinces". I suggest this to the government really as a matter of drafting. On looking at the bill one will see that the bill as it is drafted, particularly with the amendment the government is proposing, is a bit odd.

• (1620)

The bill says the government will consult and get the consent of a majority of the provinces. Then it lists a formula with the amendment to include British Columbia that would include no fewer than two-thirds of the provinces in any case. The government's own formula would require at least seven provinces to get consent. In any case, the sections of the Constitution Act which the bill refers to require at least two-thirds of the provinces. They require either two-thirds or in some cases unanimity.

It seems to me the term "by a majority of the provinces" is absolutely meaningless and actually is a bit misleading. It illustrates one of the problems with the bill. If I have the time I will get to that later. There are several instances where it is clear that the drafting of the bill leaves a number of considerations fairly undefined or wide open.

The second amendment is the one moved by the government. This is the amendment to constitute British Columbia as a fifth region. I have said in committee and before that five regions are better than four but as I said at second reading, that does not render this bill acceptable. The bill remains fundamentally flawed. It does not give the power of consent to the Canadian people in a national referendum. That is what we have been seeking.

As I said at second reading and in committee, no matter what the regional formula is, as long as it is the provinces in the sense of provincial governments or premiers or legislatures that are being consulted, the fundamental flaw remains that there already exists a formula to do precisely that. The formula in most cases is seven provincial legislatures representing 50 per cent of the population. In that sense we have made the case, which I believe the Alberta government will pursue in court, that there are some fairly serious legal problems with delegating this power to the provinces for a second time.

One that I raised in committee to give an example of what I mean is that the provinces now required under the government's own formula would be provinces representing at least 90 per cent of the Canadian population. Clearly in the Constitution Act 1982 that is not the formula the provinces agreed to. They

agreed to a formula that would require provinces representing 50 per cent of the Canadian population.

The government obviously has tried to argue this differently but it is fairly transparent that this does change the intention of the Constitution Act where provincial governments are involved. That is why we oppose it. Although the Motion No. 2 by the government is in and of itself an improvement to the bill, it is an improvement that is not adequate.

I also note that in committee the Reform Party did table its fundamental amendment which is that this consultation would have to occur in all the provinces through a national referendum. I would point out that amendment was rejected by the Liberal government and also by the Bloc Québécois. I am perplexed by why the Bloc Québécois would oppose it. It is the position of the Bloc Québécois that the people of Quebec should be consulted on their constitutional future. I do not know why they would object to the Parliament of Canada consulting Canadians on a constitutional amendment.

We submitted a second amendment in committee regarding protection for the amending formula where it concerns aboriginal peoples. We had taken some advice from a number of the aboriginal leaders who came before the committee. That amendment was also rejected by the committee. My colleague from Crowfoot may discuss some of the implications of that a little later today.

• (1625)

It is fairly apparent this bill is being rushed through the House. We have the bizarre coincidence of a government which is trying to rush passage of a piece of legislation at almost lightning speed, while at the same time it is proposing major amendments to it. This is the first time I can recall this kind of situation occurring.

I want to comment on the rush which occurred in committee. The committee insisted on hearing all witnesses within a 48-hour period with no more than 24 hours notice to those witnesses. The names of witnesses who had been submitted included constitutional experts, whom we heard two or three of, aboriginal leaders, members of provincial governments, representatives of intergovernmental affairs departments and in some cases premiers.

We received replies. I am not aware of how, but I know the committee contacted all governments. I am not aware of how specifically they replied, but I will mention that the Government of British Columbia did wish to appear. Mr. Petter wished to address the committee on behalf of the Government of British Columbia. When it became technically not possible for him to do that on the given day because of problems we had with the satellite communication, he was promptly dropped from the list. If we had heard Mr. Petter's testimony, the government could well have known that its concession of a fifth region would not have been enough to satisfy the Government of British Columbia, but we missed that opportunity.

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Mr. Shillington of the Government of Saskatchewan wrote to me to indicate that he had wanted to appear before the committee but simply was unable to in the time constraints that were placed on him. That is also true for Mr. Mel Smith who contacted me earlier this week. He is a constitutional expert and former provincial secretary of British Columbia. He had indicated he would like to testify but there was no opportunity.

This is not an extended witness list I am talking about. These are people who either are experts in the field or in the case of governments are affected parties of the legislation itself. They wanted to testify and were refused simply because of the artificial deadline created by the government and by the committee for hearing witnesses. It was a very short deadline with very little time to hear witnesses and very little time to actually notify potential witnesses of the possibility of appearing before the committee.

I want to point out some of the lack of clarity that was in the bill and which was revealed to us in committee. These are things I notice the government has not submitted clarifying amendments on.

The bill says that no minister of the crown shall propose a motion for a resolution to authorize an amendment to the Constitution of Canada, et cetera, other than through the process of first submitting it to the provinces where there is a five region veto formula.

The term "no minister" is significantly important. This does not exclude the government from sponsoring, backing or putting its weight behind legislation tabled by a government backbencher or even by a parliamentary secretary. In that sense, it is unclear exactly whether the government does intend to follow this legislation.

The government assures us it is extremely unlikely that something like that would happen, but my experience has been that when a scenario is allowed and then we are told it is unlikely, it probably means it is likely. That seems to be the way things operate around here.

This second point is the subject of some debate in committee. The bill makes reference to an amendment first having been consented to by the provinces. It was unclear and the government itself was unclear in its intention of whether provinces meant strictly speaking provincial governments, which is what we would have anticipated and what the answers of the Prime Minister in question period seem to have implied, or whether it could actually mean in a sense the people of a province, which is a very different notion.

• (1630)

Neither the minister nor his deputy appeared to rule out legally the meaning of consulting the people, although they did say that it was not a likely occurrence in their view. The Minister of Justice said that it was highly unlikely they would use that interpretation. Furthermore, his deputy minister said that particular interpretation could also be challenged in court. She was not clear how the courts would rule if that meaning of provinces, provinces meaning provincial population, was used by the government. She was not sure whether the courts would allow that interpretation or not. This is very contentious.

It is very unclear in a number of ways what the government is trying to achieve and why we all know it is trying in effect to give a veto to the Government of Quebec over constitutional change and in particular to the future premier. It believes it has a way to trap him in some future scheme.

Unfortunately, even with the amendments the bill is ill considered. Ultimately the government will end up trapping itself and the people of Canada in what is, if not unconstitutional, a very unwise piece of legislation.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, I gave notice of an amendment to Bill C-110, an act respecting constitutional amendments, the effect of which would be to add British Columbia as a fifth region to which the federal veto over constitutional amendments would apply. It is to that amendment I rise to speak today.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to support this motion which will allow the federal veto to be used to protect the interests of all parts of this country, that is to say Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, the Atlantic provinces, and the Prairie provinces, since their consent will be required before we proceed with any constitutional change.

[*English*]

The amendment to Bill C-110 is the result of the government having listened to the members of its own caucus, having listened to members of Parliament and senators from British Columbia and having listened to the population of British Columbia, all of whom clearly and convincingly expressed their views and those of their constituents to the effect that the time has come for British Columbia to be recognized as a region for the purposes of the legislation.

The change also reflects the position adopted by the leader of the third party who spoke in the House on November 29. On that day he asked that the government recognize "the concerns and aspirations of British Columbia, the third most populous province in the country, as a region in its own right". We listened to that as well.

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Bill C-110, as amended, responds to the need for realistic reflection of British Columbia's status as a specific region of Canada. British Columbia is one of the most rapidly growing provinces with 12 per cent of the country's population and almost 42 per cent of the population of the western provinces.

Beyond this the province's economy and its position on the Pacific make it different from the provinces in the prairies. This recognition coincides with the position that B.C. governments have taken for over 20 years. Indeed it was a position of Premier W. A. C. Bennett in 1971 that British Columbia should be recognized for constitutional purposes as a separate region.

• (1635)

[Translation]

The recognition of British Columbia as the fifth region is consistent with the position taken by New Democratic Party members from British Columbia before the Beaudoin-Edwards Committee.

[English]

It is also consistent with the case British Columbia has made in recent years with some success that one of the three western positions on the supreme court bench be reserved for that province on a permanent basis.

As to Alberta and the other prairie provinces, it should also be noted that the bill as amended will give a veto to a combination of three prairie provinces, that is to say two or more of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta representing at least 50 per cent of the regional population.

Given the population figures, the amendment would provide as a matter of practical fact a veto for Alberta because it has over 50 per cent of the prairie region's population. At the same time, however, Alberta alone cannot consent to an amendment due to the minimum requirement of the approval of two provinces. The other prairie provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, could defeat an Alberta consent.

The federal government has listened carefully to the case made for British Columbia as a separate region. We have been convinced and we have acted quickly to make the change. In particular our own members of caucus from British Columbia who vigorously made the case for the recognition of their province as a region have made a real difference in the debate.

The government has concluded that the arguments favouring recognition of British Columbia, its size, its population, its contribution to the Canadian economy and its Pacific positioning, were compelling.

[Translation]

We believe that contrary to what is being said by those who always try to belittle what we want to do and who always say no, this bill and this resolution will contribute to Canadian unity and will reinforce the fabric of this country and the bonds between regions.

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, "the Prime Minister has missed the boat with his reform proposals" wrote Mario Fontaine in Friday's edition of the daily *La Presse*. The journalist was commenting the SOM poll published that day.

The Prime Minister is probably the victim of political amnesia, but Quebecers have a long memory. They remember all the promises that the Prime Minister made to get their votes. The helmsman of the constitutional *Titanic* has not delivered, and the way things are going he, himself, will be responsible for Quebec sovereignty. Quebecers are fed up and they will let the Prime Minister and his henchmen know soon enough.

The poll I was referring to shows without a doubt that Quebecers are dissatisfied. The master of bungling, amateurism, and improvisation should not be surprised to see that his proposals on distinct society, veto power and the federal government's withdrawal from manpower training are rejected by Quebec.

According to the SOM poll, not even one Quebecer out of four, or 24 per cent, is satisfied. Fifty-three per cent of Quebecers are not satisfied. Moreover, 30 per cent of Quebecers see the proposals from the federal clowns as clearly inadequate, while only 4 per cent think they are completely adequate.

The last straw is the motion before us. With his proposals, the Prime Minister has managed to do one thing: incur the wrath of all Canadians.

Under the big top of the federal circus, the Prime Minister is continuing to perform his act of bungling, amateurism, and improvisation. Imagine, in less than 15 days, the Prime Minister has forced distinct society on Quebec, against the will of the National Assembly, and given a symbolic veto to two provinces that never requested it, but would prefer something else from the federal government.

• (1640)

Let me recall what has happened to Bill C-110 since it was introduced at first reading stage on November 29, not quite two weeks ago. Yet, they say it is a major bill. At least, this is what the Liberal government says, through its double talk. Why hurry, then?

Bill C-110 was introduced on November 29. The day after, on Thursday, we started debate at second reading. On Friday, the government invoked closure to gag the opposition and the debate ended. On Monday, December 4, right after the vote at

second reading, the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice, where at 7.15 p.m., the Minister of Justice gave his sales pitch. On Wednesday the 6th, the clause by clause review was already going on.

On that last day of committee review that the government did not see fit to make amendments to the bill.

But the next day, the Prime Minister made an about-face and the Minister of Justice, surrounded by the British Columbia caucus, announced hastily that the Pacific province would also get its veto and that, consequently, Bill C-110 would be amended at report stage.

The federal bulldozer continues to decimate and destroy the constitutional landscape of this country. This government uses the steam-roller on any reform of the Canadian yoke. The Prime Minister, through his justice associate, is pursuing his almost constitutional endeavour without taking anyone or anything into account. His narrow-minded attitude may cost him the next election.

We owe Bill C-110 giving a regional veto to four Canadian regions to this same person who did not even want to hear about the Constitution during the 1993 election campaign. Today, we are wasting our time debating whether the federal government should add a fifth region. In addition to all that, he tells us that he is fulfilling his referendum promises. That is nonsense, that is window dressing!

Last Thursday, the Minister of Justice hastily announced an amendment to Bill C-110 in order to divide the western provinces into two "regions". The day before, he was still maintaining that the bill would remain unchanged. That goes to show how they improvise on that side of the House. By giving everybody the right of veto, the Minister is blocking any possibility of constitutional amendments for future generations.

Be that as it may, this so-called veto is so meaningless that, as far as I am concerned, it could be given to P.E.I., Saskatchewan or even Newfoundland, I would not lose a wink of sleep over it.

What is the real effect of giving a veto to the Prairie provinces? Alberta will have what amounts to a constitutional veto of its own, because its population accounts for nearly 55 per cent of the Prairie provinces' population. Similarly, the other two together will have the same type of veto.

Last week, the Minister of Justice described these veto rights as negative, in that a real right of veto consists in refusing to support a constitutional amendment. In fact, Alberta will be able to block the Prairie provinces' right to a veto because one of the two conditions for exercising the veto will not be fulfilled. Two provinces with at least half the region's population are required, and the provinces will never be able to meet that demographic condition without the agreement of Alberta. So there is a negative veto.

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On the other hand, while Alberta can block the Prairie provinces' veto, it cannot, on its own, exercise a right to veto, because it does not satisfy one of the conditions required. It is obvious that Alberta is not two provinces.

If Bill C-110 is passed, four provinces will have a constitutional veto, i.e. two more than in a four-region formula. A constitutional amendment will require the support of a least six or seven provinces representing at least 90 per cent of the Canadian population.

• (1645)

According to the 1982 general amending formula, we only need seven provinces representing 50 per cent of the population. That amounts to constitutional deadlock. I even wonder if Bill C-110 is constitutional, since it changes the amending formula without following the procedure provided under the Constitution Act, 1982.

The Minister of Justice ought to know he cannot do indirectly what the law does not allow him to do directly.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester begins his intervention, I am obliged to tell the House that under our standing orders the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, social programs; the hon. member for Bourassa, immigration; the hon. member for London—Middlesex, the Middle East.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak to this bill. Hon. members will soon be asked to vote on measures introduced by the Prime Minister of Canada which recognize Quebec's distinct society and offer Canada's regions, in other words, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, the Prairies and the Atlantic region, a veto on constitutional amendments.

This is a bill of Parliament. It is not a discussion on the Constitution, as members of both opposition parties are claiming. I may remind them that the date set for discussions on the Constitution is 1997, according to the Constitution Act.

Bloc members are of course against our bill, which means the government must be right and must be on the right track. Separatist members kept telling us and all Quebecers and all Canadians during the referendum campaign that they wanted to be recognized as a distinct society, that they wanted veto powers. We took them at their word, and we came to the House and told them: "We listened to what all Quebecers had to say, and we will now recognize distinct society as a principle in the Parliament of Canada and we also recognize that Quebec has a veto like the four other regions of this country".

**An hon. member:** Put it in the Constitution.

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**Mr. Bellemare:** The hon. member for the Bloc said: "Put it in the Constitution". As usual, they will not listen and they did not understand when I said that according to the Constitution Act, we are to discuss these issues in 1997. This was the action taken by the federal government in response to the commitment made by the Prime Minister during the referendum campaign to meet the needs and demands of all Canadians.

[*English*]

Every day I receive correspondence from my French and English constituents, étant donné que mon comté est bilingue, who although they may have different ideas on how to deal with Quebec the majority recognize the different culture of their Quebec neighbours and recognize the need for change.

The turnout for the unity rally which I attended was a clear indication of the overwhelming support from all Canadians, les Québécois inclus, for a united Canada that includes Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Why recognize the francophones in Quebec as forming a distinct society, but not the anglophones? We could recognize the anglophones, but why? What would be the point? The anglophone culture is not in danger of disappearing, I know something about that. The anglophones are not being targeted by the factors threatening the francophone culture in Canada with its demise.

Although Canada's anglophone culture is distinct from American culture, it will always be supported by it. The media and the telecommunications industry will provide an environment that will sustain the anglophone culture. On the other hand, there is no such support for the francophone culture.

[*English*]

When we travel across the country we see the obvious differences from region to region. Nowhere is the difference more obvious than when one travels to Quebec. The difference in that province is accentuated by culture and by language.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Even members of the Reform Party will agree privately, but in the House, for obvious reasons, they oppose it.

[*English*]

There is no denying the distinction of Quebec. Quebecers are different from the rest of Canadians. They have always been different.

The country was founded by two very distinct peoples, the French and the English. The idea of a distinct society began with General Murray. Very few Canadians appear to know their Canadian history. Wolfe beat Montcalm on the Plains of Abra-

ham. The British won that war. The territory we now know as Canada was British.

Very few people seem to know that when Montcalm died on the battlefield he was replaced by General Murray who knew the practice of military procedures, that when invading a country we should recognize immediately the laws and the distinction of the people of the country we invade. It was practical. The practice was to recognize their laws, their culture, their religion and their language.

Like the Reform Party there were in the British mercantile society those who thought that Murray was going too far. They brought General Murray back to England for a court martial. Very few people would know that General Murray won his court martial, and the British government in 1774 recognized the duality of Canada and distinct society by proclaiming the Quebec Act.

[*Translation*]

I highly recommend to Reformers and Bloc members that they study their Canadian history. Canada is what it is because of its different and distinct cultures. If we allow these cultures to be eliminated, we will no longer be Canada, if fact, we will be quite close to being American.

No doubt it is the francophone community especially that sets us apart from our American neighbours. I do not want to become American; I want to remain Canadian. Being a fourth generation Franco-Ontarian, I have the advantage of being able to converse in both official languages every day. Although I am not a Quebecer, I know I am different from my unilingual neighbours, both English and French.

Reform frightens everybody, including western anglophones, by arguing that recognizing Quebec as a distinct society gives that province additional powers that anglophones and the other provinces do not have. I challenge them to tell us what these powers are.

Finally, the reason why the Prime Minister offered to give a veto to all five regions of Canada is to ensure that every province has a say in amending the Constitution.

[*English*]

Quebec, Ontario, the maritimes, the prairies and British Columbia will share the right to veto any proposed constitutional amendment that they feel would not be to the benefit of the residents of a particular part of the country and to all Canadians.

The Liberal government believes that all Canadians should have a say in the future of the country and the regional veto will afford them that luxury. The introduction of a regional veto will assure equal representation across Canada. Each region will have equal power in these matters; no more, no less.



[Translation]

Recognition as a distinct society does not give Quebecers additional powers or take any power away from anglophones and the other provinces. It gives Quebecers what they deserve: an essential tool not only to ensure their survival but also to develop their culture.

A distinct society does not mean a better or more advanced society. The French-language dictionary *Le Petit Larousse* defines the word “distinct” as “clearly perceived; clear, well-defined, different; unmistakable”.

I hear a lot of noise coming from Reform members on the other side of the House. These people who claim that they want to learn French, who have suddenly discovered the province of Quebec and act as tourists, have finally realized that it is different. They tell us as much in the halls, but here, for political reasons and for their own reasons, which I find deplorable, they are opposed to recognizing Quebec as a distinct society.

• (1655 )

[English]

*The Concise Oxford Dictionary* describes the word distinct as not identical, separate, individual, different or unlike. Those members of the Reform Party who have visited Quebec will know they are different in kind, not quality.

[Translation]

Recognizing Quebec as a distinct society is not a reward for francophones or a form of punishment against anglophones. On the contrary, it is essential to the survival of Canada—repeat, to the survival of Canada—as we know it today. We must recognize Quebec as a distinct society for the benefit of all Canadians and not only for Quebecers.

We, as the federal government, have a duty to ensure that Canadians enjoy the best quality of life possible.

Every morning, we can see the negative impact our infighting about constitutional issues has on our economy.

The hon. members of the Reform Party should take note that we should act now to give Canadians, not only Quebecers, a better chance to develop as a nation. Only by recognizing our differences will we be able to make any headway and only by recognizing them here, in this House, can we lead the way.

It is high time that we give Canadians the tools they need to see the difference and make their country a better place. Recognizing Quebec as a distinct society and the regional veto are exactly the sort of tools we need.

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[English]

I refer to an article in the *Toronto Star* of December 10.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. Unless there is unanimous consent he is out of time.

[Translation]

Does the House agree to give the hon. member a minute to finish his speech?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Bellemare:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. members from the Reform Party. Without speaking disparagingly of them, some of my remarks may be directed at their party.

[English]

“Reform’s hard line hinders unity of effort” was the headline in the *Toronto Star* of December 10, 1995. The article stated:

But Confederation from the start treated provinces unequally, to accommodate their special needs.

Protestants in Quebec, for example, have the constitutional right to their own school boards, as do Catholics in Ontario. That doesn’t apply elsewhere—For 25 years, Canada has been trying to find ways to give constitutional expression to Quebec’s special identity—But Manning’s visceral opposition to Parliament making any special gesture to Quebec is dangerous and divisive. It lends credence to the separatist argument that the rest of the country really doesn’t care. And that gives the separatists more ammunition, at the very time when Chrétien is trying to take it away from them.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, if ever there was an occasion when one should not have been generous in allowing an extra minute, that was one. It is water under the bridge and we cannot veto it, which brings me to the whole point of the discussion today.

Any one of us in the House could have vetoed the opportunity for the member opposite to add that couple of minutes to his presentation. We could have prevented him from coming forward for a host of reasons, some of which could have been petty, some of which could have been meaningful. Any one of us would have been able to prevent that member from finishing his speech. That is the nature of a veto and that is why there is no place in a constitutional democracy for a veto for anybody.

We should compare the American constitution with what we are trying to cobble together in Canada. The very fact that a constitution has flexibility allows it to live. The ability to change and evolve over time is the lifeblood of a constitution. That is what allows it to speak to the people and the people to speak to it.

Thomas Paine, in the mid-1700s, was an adviser to Thomas Jefferson. He had a lot to do with the gist of the American constitution. In his essay, “The Rights of Man”, from which I have quoted in the House in the past, he makes the point that

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every generation has the right and the responsibility to govern for its times and should no more bind future generations to today than past generations should have been able to bind today to the past.

• (1700)

A veto to any specific province puts our Constitution into a strait-jacket. It puts the feet of the Constitution into a bucket of cement. It also states that from this day forward future generations will be stuck with what we give them today. For all Canadians watching this debate, wondering why we are debating the Constitution when our country's economy is in such a state, that is the reason we should not have a veto in the Constitution for any province.

If we are to have an amending formula in which a super majority is required to amend the Constitution, we should stick to something like the seven out of ten provinces representing 50 per cent of the population.

Given that we will not be able to change this, because it is not a perfect world, in the Canadian barnyard we are all equal but some of us are more equal than others. It has to do with the residents of our province. We could all have a veto if we all moved to a province with a veto. That would satisfy that little problem. However, that is not likely to happen.

What is the nature of the veto we are stuck with, the effective veto? The government has stated it does not have a whole lot of meaning or effect in some parts of the country. It has stated right here in the House that the next government can simply remove this legislation. However, it states that in Quebec it is extremely meaningful.

I believe it is extremely meaningful legislation because once we have gone down that road and given the commitment of a veto to the people of Quebec, there is no going back. There is no way we will be able to go back on that ground.

The Prime Minister has cobbled this together to try to save his political skin in Quebec or perhaps to save the political skin of Daniel Johnson in Quebec. He has effectively put our Constitution in a strait-jacket, which will make it impossible to change in the future.

Why on earth would any Prime Minister give a separatist government in Quebec a constitutional veto which would prevent change of our Constitution for evermore? Surely if we must give a veto to a province we should give that veto to the people in that province, not to the government or to the legislature.

Most legislatures are elected with a minority of the votes cast. A case in point is this Chamber. The Liberals have a massive majority with 175 seats but received only 43 per cent of the popular vote. The same thing can happen because of vote splits in every legislature. Therefore a legislature with a veto could use that veto even though it has not received a plurality of the votes cast in that province to put it into power in the first place.

A legislature could be elected three or almost four years prior to the constitutional issue about which it is being required to make a decision. Here we have a situation in which a province could have the right to veto constitutional legislation. The legislature could have been elected with a minority of votes cast and have been elected three years before the question at issue came to the floor. Its election, the fact that it is there and has the ability to veto the legislation would have absolutely nothing to do with its popular right to do so.

**An hon. member:** No mandate.

**Mr. McClelland:** No mandate. None whatsoever. That is why in the regions the veto power must rest with the people and not the legislators.

• (1705)

**An hon. member:** Read the bill.

**Mr. McClelland:** A member opposite says read the bill. It does not rest with the people. It rests with the federal government which may at its pleasure make the distinction of how that decision is arrived at. It is not required that it be by referendum of the people in the province, which is what I am saying it should be.

My friend opposite earlier in his comments made brief reference to the distinct society. Very few people would recognize Quebec as being anything other than a distinct society, one which the vast majority of Canadians cherish as a fundamental part of Canadian identity. Most every Canadian recognizes that.

Our amendments essentially reinforce that first, recognizing Quebec as a distinct society would in no way confer on it powers or rights not be conferred anywhere else; second, that there would be no chance to abuse minorities; third, one nation, the affirmation that we are one nation. These were the things we felt must be affirmed in the distinct society status.

I thank the House for the opportunity to share a few thoughts. I ask the government to consider one other change to the legislation: make sure it is a popular ratification by the people.

[*Translation*]

## TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and the third reading of Bill C-110, an act respecting constitutional amendments.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a Minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stages.

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[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## WITHDRAWAL OF BILL C-362

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I tabled a private members' bill the other day, Bill C-362. I take full responsibility. There is an error in the bill. There was a later draft which should have been presented.

I would like to bring the correct draft to the House but first I must have the unanimous consent from the House to withdraw the current Bill C-362. I have agreement from the government side and from the Bloc.

Therefore I ask that the House give unanimous consent for me to withdraw Bill C-362 from the Order Paper.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Order discharged and bill withdrawn.)

\* \* \*

**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-110, an act respecting constitutional amendments, as reported (without amendment) from the committee; and of Motions Nos. 1 and 2.

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be debating Bill C-110 and more specifically Motion No. 2 to Bill C-110. Wherein Bill C-110 the veto powers were given to four regions of Canada, Motion No. 2 gives this veto power to five regions of Canada.

Where did this veto proposal come from? Let me take the members back to the referendum. The Prime Minister made certain promises about recognizing Quebec as a distinct society. Having many relatives in Quebec, I find it very incomprehensible that the Bloc Quebecois would vote against the recognition of a distinct society. I hope that somehow, maybe on a one to one basis, it can clarify that for me because I find it shocking.

• (1710)

We have excellent support for the direction the Prime Minister is taking. Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow says the proposals deserve to be carefully considered by political leaders and the public as an honest effort by an honest individual, the Prime Minister, to keep this great country together.

An Edmonton *Journal* editorial states: "To hear some of our politicians", and we are hearing them today, "you would think that the Quebec referendum didn't happen. There seems to be little recognition that Prime Minister Chrétien made necessary promises during the referendum campaign and that he is honour bound to keep them". That is what we are doing.

The Prime Minister has tabled legislation to keep his promises, and he is known for that. In his 30 years of politics he has never broken a promise, which is why he is so well liked by Canadians from coast to coast.

However, we have to settle this dispute of Quebec separation once and for all. People are fed up hearing about it. People are disgusted. It is affecting families psychologically. Families cannot have a normal relationship anymore. Instead of coming home and talking about hockey scores or other things they get on the referendum and become depressed. I know this from my family. Whether in education, whether they work for the police force, whether in the Department of National Defence, entire families are being affected by this dispute. Let us settle it once and for all and let us settle it quickly.

Some are complaining about why we are pushing this through quickly. It is Canadians who want us to act quickly. When people in Quebec voted no to separation they also gave us an important message to bring about changes but not to bring them about as former Prime Minister Mulroney did, dragging out commissions and committees and joint committees, et cetera. At the end of a one-year or two-year process what did Canada get? Nothing but more frustration, more disputes, more dividing of this beautiful country which was named number one by the United Nations. We do not want that. Canadians do not want that. They want us to act quickly and keep the promise we made during the referendum.

This frustration is not only within Quebec but outside of Quebec. I hear it in my constituency. I held a recent town hall meeting just after the referendum specifically to discuss what happened and where we should go from there. It covered the entire spectrum with frustration across the entire spectrum.

Allow me to quote a constituent, Howard Dunnick: "Dear Mr. Flis, I object strongly to giving Quebec distinct society status. As for the veto, why should the tail wag the dog? We just cannot afford to let Quebec spend our money like drunken sailors any longer. They say they are one of the founders of our nation. If they are so concerned, why do they first lead us to bankruptcy and then break up the nation? In fact, they do not care if they bleed us to death".

That is how strong the feelings are at that end of the spectrum. It is not the majority feeling, nor a feeling I share. At the other end of the spectrum Janet Page says: "Quebec needs to be

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brought into the Constitution. I do not want to lose Quebec. Bouchard does not have the best interests of the people in mind. The government should force him to bargain in good faith. We need an end to this”.

That is the frustration at the other end of the spectrum. We need an end to this dispute, to this debate. At town hall meetings we have to allow the people to share this frustration. What I like about the process of a town hall meeting, at least as I observe in my riding, is that people get educated. They educate themselves. Initially at town hall meetings they are filled with anger, with a let them go attitude. By the end of the evening they ask: “How can we demonstrate to Quebec that to us Canada includes Quebec?” They are good debates and discussions: What is Canada? What does it mean to be a Canadian?

• (1715)

By the end of the evening the same group of people who had those extreme views are making suggestions. They asked me whether when I was the principal of Argentina School and it was twinned with Canada School in Buenos Aires the children learned anything. I said yes. They learned about each other’s culture and language. There were student exchanges and project exchanges. That is a suggestion they give for us here in Canada. Others suggest that cities and towns should be twinning. Families should be meeting so they can talk around the dinner table and get to know each other.

I was so pleased that out of the frustration grew these kinds of positive suggestions. If we go in that spirit and we accept the distinct society, if we accept that Quebec has a civil code for its justice system, if we accept that regions should be given a veto power—and I support the fact that this motion allows B.C. to have a veto power.

I was born and raised in Saskatchewan. A third of my life was spent there. When we talked about the prairie provinces we did not include B.C. We included Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and that is a natural region. B.C. has its rising population and its distinctiveness of trading with the Pacific Rim and everything else that the minister mentioned in his presentation. It is natural that B.C. is a region, the prairie provinces are a region, Ontario is a region, Quebec is a region and the Atlantic is a region.

With that kind of check on changing and bringing amendments to the Constitution, we will see this country grow and flower like we have never seen. We have to be willing to share and to support each other, not like the Reform Party where the leader was the one who suggested that we include B.C. as a separate region. What does Reform do now? It is going to vote against this motion.

It is that party which held up five fingers every question period. Why not B.C.? It got B.C. What is it doing? Reform

members are not interested in Canadian unity. They are interested in scoring political points. They are scoring political points down to the point where they are 8 per cent in the polls.

I appeal to the Reform Party. I appeal to the Bloc Québécois. This is Canada. It is the most beautiful country in the world. We are not building Canada for you and you and you and me. We are building Canada for future generations. That is why we were elected. If we believe in that, we will all pull together and pass this motion and the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have been saying for a long time that the federal Canada of 1867 was a compromise based on a misunderstanding: the vision of Sir John A. Macdonald, who wanted a legislative union, or a single parliament for all of Canada, and the vision of George-Étienne Cartier, who wanted strong provincial parliaments, as well as powers delegated to a federal legislature that would be a creature of the provinces.

However, the creature decided to become the creator and committed the sin of pride like our first parents, who paid the ultimate price, as will the federal system. Earlier, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park told us how nice it is to have a resolution that recognizes Quebec’s distinct nature, because of its civil law tradition. But we have known that since 1867. Indeed, subsection 92(13) provides that property and civil rights come under provincial jurisdiction. Consequently, we were allowed, at the time, to keep our civil code which, incidentally, was in effect as of 1866 in Lower Canada.

As for our language, one just has to use it in this House to realize that it is different, that it is distinct from that of our fellow Canadians. The same is true for our culture.

• (1720)

Following the speech made in Verdun by the Right Hon. Prime Minister, there was a shortage of Tylenol to bring the fever down, and something had to be done very quickly. Consequently, the government hurriedly drafted a resolution providing that Quebec is a distinct society because of its language, its culture and its civil code. We already knew that. But what comes with that recognition? Absolutely nothing. This is a meaningless statement. No powers are granted along with that recognition.

And to make sure of that, the government introduced Bill C-110 and told us: under the resolution, Quebec is a distinct society by virtue of its language, its culture and its civil code. That is it. We will not get anything else. And to be sure that nothing will change, Bill C-110 gives veto power to just about everybody. I call that the Colonel Sanders veto power: a big chicken with legs for everybody. That is what our federation with vetoes for everybody looks like.

According to what Mr. Jean Dion was saying last week in *Le Devoir*, from now on it will take the approval of the equivalent of 91.8 per cent of the population to change anything in the Canadian Constitution. This means that nothing can change any more. And the Prime Minister will be saying: "There is nothing I can do now for Quebec. I would like so much to be able to do more, but I cannot because of Bill C-110. Heavens, has that piece of legislation ever put us in a difficult situation. I would have liked so much to give French Canadians, to give Quebecers the same rights enjoyed by Canadians in the western provinces and elsewhere". So we are going to be stuck with that.

The leader of the Action démocratique du Québec, Mario Dumont, was telling us the other day that because of the close results in the referendum, the Quebec government would have to start opening the mail. The one thing we are sure of today is that, with the bill before us, postage will not be very expensive: half a page, 45 cents. And they think that they will buy peace in Quebec with half a page.

As my colleague from Joliette was saying, what Quebec wants is a white horse, not a pony, and I totally agree with that. Let us have something concrete. Before granting veto powers here and there to block any constitutional amendment, the government should come up with concrete proposals involving some devolution of powers to Quebec. It should repeal the preamble of section 91 which authorizes the federal Parliament to make laws for peace, order and good government in Canada.

This preamble has been used by the courts to grant the federal government unforeseen powers, for example, the general spending power, this national dimension theory allowing the federal government to get involved in almost every area, emergency powers and ancillary powers. All of these constitutional theories were approved by the courts, but were never foreseen by the Fathers of Confederation. If there had been Mothers of Confederation, the women would probably have realized at that time that something was wrong with the Constitution.

The government should also repeal section 91(29) dealing with residual powers. In 1867, it was said that all powers that were not specifically granted to the provinces would come under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Think about the development of all the technologies, like broadcasting, cable distribution, television, aeronautics—we are now talking about the information highway—which could not have been foreseen in 1867 and which automatically fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, pursuant to section 91(29). These residual powers should be granted to the provinces retroactively, with a transfer period of no more than 12 months, so that the provinces can recover all of the residual powers which have surfaced since 1867 and the federal government can keep the

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power to subsidize it will need to exercise the powers the provinces will let it have.

The government should also remove from section 91 the federal powers in the area of unemployment insurance and give those powers to the provinces, as it withdraws from the field of taxation.

If we add a distinct society clause, it should be enshrined in the Constitution and not be limited to the present clause concerning only language, culture and the Civil Code, or Napoleonic Code, as the Prime Minister said the other day, in a rather revealing slip of the tongue. The Napoleonic Code is used in France. We have had our own Civil Code in Quebec since 1866.

• (1725)

So, we should have a distinct society clause enshrined in the Constitution stating that Quebec is a distinct society. The Constitution of Canada must be interpreted in such a way that the Quebec legislature is vested with all powers inherent to the recognition of its distinctiveness.

We would then have an interpretive clause that would colour the Constitution. We now have a resolution of the House of Commons similar to the ones we use to mark an anniversary or the end of a conflict somewhere. That is not really what Quebecers want.

Section 95 of the Constitution provides that agriculture and immigration are shared jurisdictions. The problem is that in the very same section, we see that federal legislation prevails when federal and provincial laws clash. Section 95 should be abrogated and immigration and agriculture recognized as exclusively provincial jurisdictions. The federal government should withdraw completely from these fields.

We might as well abrogate the sections concerning the Senate. In 1995, we certainly do not need this chamber any more, a non-elected chamber which is now delaying Bill C-69 on electoral boundaries, for example. Non-elected people telling us how the House of Commons should be elected, that takes some nerve. We could abrogate this at the same time.

According to section 91 there is nothing in the present Constitution which specifically addresses the management of foreign policy. It was inspired by section 132, which set out the powers passed down from the imperial Parliament, the Parliament of Great Britain. We could add to section 91, under federal powers, that foreign policy is a federal jurisdiction, but solely in those areas falling under the legislative authority of the federal Parliament. Section 92 could have the addition that foreign relations are also under the jurisdiction of the provincial legislatures. Lieutenant-governors ought to be appointed by the legislative assemblies, as should senators if we keep the Senate.

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Since today's debate is a bit short, I will skip over a few important aspects I was going to mention. When a package, a binding offer, is arrived at by the federal chambers, Commons and Senate, and the legislatures of all the other provinces, for there are many items that require unanimous consent, when that is done, then mail it off to Quebec and the negotiations can start. That can be the basis for negotiation. I do not expect to live long enough to see the day when postage costs will come down to a level that would allow such a document to be mailed.

So the Mario Dumont yardstick of at least reading the mail is no more, and since October 30, since the referendum results, we have had the proof in all ways possible that what the government is proposing is a totally cosmetic change with no substance whatsoever.

At both the report stage and on third reading, I will be proud to rise in this House to vote against Bill C-110, which has the sole merit of making the Verdun speech even more meaningless.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, through these naive and inexperienced eyes, I view the debates on Bill C-110 and our resolution that calls on the House to recognize Quebec as a *société distincte* as some of the most important debates we have had in our 35th Parliament.

We have just completed another chapter in our collective history and in our search for ourselves. We know that chapters talk about the Vikings. It is absorbing to read about our First Nations, about Jacques Cartier and about New France. When I think about the chicken tracks that really are the depictions of Champlain's voyages across the map of North America in the 1600s, I find that the interest is nowhere near as exciting as the interest which is created when we study the human intrigue we see beginning with the conquest in 1759.

That word conquest is such a terrible misnomer. Our Canada was never conquered in the traditional British fashion. Canada was never a classic British colony. In fact it was quite the opposite. Look at the demographics at that time. There were some 65,000 French living along the St. Lawrence River, compared to only 5,000 or 8,000 British. The first British governor, Murray, had very little opportunity to quash the French culture, its language, its religion, its customary civil rights, its civil approach to property management and property exchange; nor did he want to.

• (1730)

The history books tell us that Governor Murray Murray at the time indicated: "I will govern by the dictates of my heart and my heart dictates clemency and understanding". Those were some of the very first notions of the British governors in Canada. That

commitment continued and it became much more formalized in 1774 with the Quebec Act.

The British needed the support of the French against the rise of republicanism in the United States. They needed to ensure that the French were on side. Therefore, with the Quebec Act in 1774 there were very strong and real commitments that allowed for the free exercise of religion, for customary property and civil rights.

Those words are not very different from the words which included in this resolution which calls on the House to recognize Quebec as a distinct society in its religion, language and its right to civil institutions. I do not see the resolution as being anything special, unique or new. Rather, it is a very important reaffirmation of the commitments made to Canadians so very long ago.

Distinct society was understood in a very real sense by my ancestors. They were United Empire Loyalists, loyal to the crown. They came up from the United States after losing the revolution. They United Empire Loyalists came up through the walnut trail into southwestern Ontario and found a society different from that with which they were familiar. Catholicism was being practised. The French language was being spoken. There was no responsible assembly. They did not understand the method of transfer of property. The fee simple method, which was so much a part of the British culture, was not a part of society in Canada.

I suppose my ancestors were the first separatists. The United Empire Loyalists, who just could not make sense of the new community, the new situation, were successful in achieving the split into upper and lower Canada, right along the Ottawa River.

As time went on the issue and the need for responsible government was felt very clearly in both upper and lower Canada. We know about the Papineau revolution of 1837. We know that Lord Durham was sent over from England to complete a royal commission. His decision was to unify the two Canadas. He felt it was the right thing to do. He thought it was appropriate because in his mind it would create a homogeneous society by bringing the two cultures together. However, that is not how it works in Canada. It does not now and it did not then.

When the two first prime ministers, Baldwin from upper Canada and LaFontaine from lower Canada, came together to form the first great ministry, English was not the only language of Parliament. LaFontaine spoke in French. He and his colleagues from lower Canada were encouraged to speak French. As the Parliament moved from community to community, because there was not a set location, its members spoke in both English and French, without translation. Somehow they worked together. They understood each other. They took steps backward. They took steps forward and kept Canada together with two cultures and two languages working together.

It is that very heritage which has made this country what it is today. The acceptance of two cultures coming together to forge a common foundation has created Canada as we know it today: compassionate, humane, understanding, fully cognizant of the fact that to get along, to make progress, one does not have to deny a person's culture or an individual's history.

• (1735)

While it is very difficult to do, we can encourage people to keep what is so important to them, that is, their own sense and understanding of their personal history. It is this that has made Canada different from Britain, different from France. It is what has made Canada the best country in the world in which to live.

We still have difficulties and concerns. We look back and understand that shortly after Canada's 100th birthday in 1968 was the first comprehensive constitutional review. It was just a year after we celebrated Confederation.

From then on, we know the history. It is a litany of referenda, patriation of the Constitution, constitutional commissions, committees. We have been through 20—some years of discomfort, confused about where we are as a country.

Perhaps it is just the 100-year itch. Perhaps it is just a country anticipating a great future in the 21st century. If we step back and contemplate that, pull ourselves out of the reality as we understand it today, we may be able to find some important solutions for ourselves.

As we have noted with the extension of the veto to five regions, Canada as a result of social, economic and technological changes is regionalizing quite effectively. I look to my colleagues in Dartmouth and Moncton and consider the work they are doing to encourage the people in Atlantic Canada to think about a different kind of political unity, the unification of the Atlantic provinces.

Now may be the time and place when Canadians can step back, look at ourselves and ask the question, are we being paralysed by a paradigm of administrative doctrine of provinces that is constraining to us, that is making our clothes fit too tightly? Are we ready to break out and think of our country in a different way?

Can we actually contemplate a Canada of five regions: a strong Atlantic region; a strong region of Quebec with its deep cultural heritage that is so important to making the country unique; Ontario, which leads the industrial engines of the country; the prairies that have such great natural resources and truly are the bread basket not only of our country but perhaps even of the world; and of course, British Columbia, a different and unique part of the country.

Can we step back and allow ourselves to think of streamlining our country, bringing it together so that we can focus on our capabilities, on our strengths to build for a future, to make Canada not the slow moving, happy leviathan that has been

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treading water both calm and rough, but create ourselves into a darting and flexible space ship with five regions. We would add, of course, our very important First Nations, all under the umbrella of a strong federal government that could direct a comprehensive, cohesive, united Canada into the 21st century.

These are my ideas. We have so much to offer as a country to the people of Quebec, to the people of Ontario, to the people of British Columbia. I have great optimism that we have a strong future together and I would encourage the House to consider that as well.

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated very much the words that my colleague has just left with us.

When the justice minister appeared before the standing committee when we examined this bill, we were confronted with the fact that the bill transfers power or influence to the provinces, yet there is no definition of province. We do not know for sure to whom we are transferring the power. Are we transferring the power of veto to the provincial legislatures, to the cabinet or to the people of that province? This is very important. We saw during the Quebec referendum that it was not the Government of Quebec that kept Quebec within Confederation. It wanted to take the province out of Confederation. It was not the cabinet or the legislative assembly that kept Quebec in Canada, it was the people of Quebec.

• (1740)

If a veto is granted to the provinces surely it ought to be to the people of the provinces. The recent history of attempts to amend the Constitution shows very clearly that politicians will not represent the will of the majority of their people, as was the case in Alberta and in a number of other provinces on the Meech Lake accord.

The people of my province had the Meech Lake accord forced on them simply because our premier had signed an agreement. He then came back, laid down the law to his cabinet and caucus and that is what we were going to be stuck with.

If we want to maintain the unity of this country, as the hon. member has just so eloquently spoken about, if we want to appeal to those people who have vital reasons for staying within Canada and remaining united, then we ought not to leave the power to tear our country apart in the hands of the politicians. We must place power in the hands of the people who have a common sense feeling for this country and do not want to engage in these enormous social engineering experiments.

I asked the justice minister when he was before the committee to whom this bill was transferring power because there is no definition of province in this bill. He said that it could be the legislature who could then transfer that power to the people by way of referendum. However, there is nothing in this bill that mandates that the provinces go to their people.

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It is a bit like the Charlottetown accord where there were provisions within the accord for the provinces to elect senators. However some of the provinces, including Quebec, were not going to allow the people to elect the senators. It was the legislative assembly that would elect them. In other words, the power of appointment was being transferred from the federal government to the provincial governments and they would do the appointing. We cannot unite a country that way. If we are to keep Quebec within Confederation we must transfer the power this bill will provide to the people and not to the politicians.

I have heard hon. members say that the people of Canada want us to move forward on this, that they support this. That is not what we heard from those who appeared before the standing committee. We had four distinct groups of aboriginal peoples who do not support this bill. These people are referenced in the Constitution. They should have been contacted and consulted just as the governments of the provinces should have been consulted. They are referenced in the Constitution as well.

However, the government of the day did not have time for that. It rushed this thing through and it is still rushing it through. We were given 48 hours, as my colleague mentioned earlier. We were going to sit until midnight to hear witnesses if enough witnesses came forward on such short notice. Some of them would have to prepare with only 24 hour's notice. Is it not amazing that we were going to rush this thing through and we are being told that the people of Canada want this bill, yet we are not giving the provinces sufficient time to prepare, attend and express their views about this bill?

We had the justice minister appear before the committee and tell us that this bill was constitutional. Some witnesses could not appear in person but appeared using a video hook-up in their own areas. Professor Morton, a professor of political science at the University of Calgary, stated the following concerning the constitutionality of this bill:

The Chrétien veto law is unconstitutional, in as much as it proposes to legally change the amending process, without following the rules of that process. Section 41(e) of the Constitution Act, 1982, states explicitly that there can be no amendment to the part V amending formulas except with the unanimous consent of all 10 provinces and the federal government. The government's position is that because the "veto law" is not a constitutional amendment, it need not follow the amending formula. But this misses the crucial point that the amending process will have been changed and that this change will have the force of law.

• (1745)

He said that is the key point.

The justice minister is telling us it is constitutional. This professor, and I am sure others if they had had time to prepare

and appear before the standing committee, are telling us that there are very serious concerns about the unconstitutionality of the bill. There is an inconsistency in legal opinions on the constitutionality of the bill.

I want to touch on some of the testimony made before the committee and some of the concerns raised by the aboriginal people. There were four groups. Grand Chief Matthew Coon-Come of the James Bay Cree appeared. Ovide Mercredi, the chief of the Assembly of First Nations appeared, as did Rosemarie Kuptana of the Inuit Tapirisat and Wendy Moss, her legal adviser. There was Zebedee Nungak from the Makivik Corporation. They all spoke against this bill. Why? They said it is going to affect their constitutional rights that are guaranteed under section 35 of the act. Rosemarie Kuptana said:

Last week the *Globe and Mail* reported on a leaked federal memo that explicitly recommended our exclusion from national unity and constitutional discussions as well as recommending the means to achieve that exclusion. It was based on acynical and wildly inaccurate view that our silence or acquiescence on national and constitutional issues could be bought by making financial commitments at the local level on unrelated files. In its worst light, this strategy can also be viewed as a form of blackmail, progress on matters outside the Constitution or national unity will only come in return for silence on our constitutional rights.

That formed part of the presentation from the leader of that aboriginal group. I do not have time to go into all of these comments, but the Grand Council of the Cree indicated this:

Bill C-110 is inadequate and unacceptable from an aboriginal perspective and we think will be found to be inadequate and unacceptable from the perspective of all Canadians.

We did not hear that many witnesses, but we heard many things said about this bill. The individual who spoke the most and made the most fundamental comment was Ovide Mercredi, chief of the Assembly of First Nations, who said: "No autocrat is going to unite Canada". He pointed out very clearly that Bill C-110 has not united Canada; it has divided the provinces. It has not brought the aboriginal peoples in; it has divided them.

I simply cannot support the bill for the reasons given.

**Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the motion presented by the hon. Minister of Justice proposing amendments to Bill C-110 to add a regional veto for the province of British Columbia.

The amendments to Bill C-110 reflected in this motion are not only a step forward for the province of British Columbia, but recognize the importance of the province of Alberta within Canadian federalism. These amendments show that Canadian federalism is flexible and dynamic. It is an example of our commitment to make federalism work for all Canadians.



• (1750)

With Bill C-110, the motion on distinct society for Quebec and the recognition of the essential provincial role in labour market training, our government has taken the initial steps to respond to the aspirations of Canadians within our local communities for change. It is change to make our national institutions more responsive to the diverse regional interests and on the basis of our unique federal state and change to deliver on the commitments made by the Prime Minister to the people of Quebec and to the people of Canada to involve Canadians at the grassroots level in building bridges of accommodation and mutual respect for diversity that will serve to bind our nation together in a common purpose as we approach the 21st century.

The unity package is a recognition that the province of Quebec is a vital part of our Canadian identity, an identity which has as its basis the principles of understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity.

The motion on distinct society reflects an important part of the Canadian reality, the unique character of Quebec within our federal state. The Government of Alberta has recognized the unique nature of Quebec's language, culture and civil law traditions. The March 1992 report by the special select committee of the legislative assembly of Alberta advocated recognition of Quebec as a distinct society with recognition to include matters of language, culture and civil law.

Leadership candidate Ralph Klein was a member of the provincial government in 1992 and campaigned in favour of the Charlottetown accord which contained the principle of distinct society within Canada. Premier Klein has acknowledged that the province of Quebec is distinct within Canada: "There is something distinct in terms of civil law, language, tradition and culture that makes Quebec distinct". That is from the October 24 *Calgary Herald*.

The regional veto formula contained in Bill C-110 is in accord with the Reform Party's vision as expressed on October 15, 1995 in its 20 measures to modernize Canada. The Reform Party supported the concept that all future constitutional amendments be approved by majorities in all regions of Canada through a referendum. I remind the Reform Party that Bill C-110 leaves the regions with an option as to how they would apply their regional veto as an expression of the will of the people. As an Albertan I would expect the province of Alberta would use the referendum act passed in 1992 to reflect the will of Albertans.

The residents of my constituency of Edmonton East may not have developed consensus on the nature of changes required to renew Canadian federalism but make no mistake: passion for this country and the resolve to ensure its unity is felt by all in Edmonton East. Residents in Edmonton East share with Quebecers the same values of seeking constructive and positive changes to build a more effective Canada for the 21st century.

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Let me stress for the record that this package is the first step and only a first step. The next step must involve Canadians in defining the change. Dictating the 20 terms of secession from Confederation from the political backrooms as Reform did without the active involvement or participation of Canadians in our local communities is not consultation. We must begin the process by sitting down with Canadians in our cities, in our towns, and in our communities to come to a better understanding of our similarities and our differences as Canadians and how we can work together to meet the aspirations for positive and constructive change that will make Canada work more effectively and efficiently for all Canadians.

We are a better nation when we pull together, building on our common aspirations for change and respecting our diversities. We are a better nation when we work for the common Canadian interest rather than the narrow regional or provincial self-interest. History proves it. Over the past 128 years Canadian federalism has shown an amazing resiliency. While federalism may have bent at times, it has never been broken. That is a tribute to the generosity of the Canadian spirit to adapt to changing circumstances through creativity and innovation.

• (1755)

We have successfully met all the challenges over the past 128 years. Our network of social programs are the envy of the world. Medicare, the Canada pension plan, support for the disadvantaged and the disabled; these were all implemented through the process of consensus and agreement among Canadians.

We can meet the challenges of renewing Canadian federalism as long as we work together as Canadians in a spirit of mutual respect, understanding and co-operation. That is the genius of our federal system.

I welcome constructive dialogue with the people of Alberta on the implications of change. I believe it is important that Albertans be able to speak out on change. That is the basis of our economic and parliamentary democracy.

The Prime Minister has acknowledged the need to involve Canadians in the process of defining change. That is why he has indicated that Bill C-110 will serve only as a bridge until the formal review of the amending formula which is required by April 1997. As we lead up to that formal review, our government is receptive to new proposals by Canadians that will better reflect the principles of regional equality and equity in the process of constitutional amendment.

I will be consulting with the people in the communities of Edmonton East as to what steps we can take as a government to better reflect the principle of provincial equality within the amending formula and what steps we can take to build bridges of accommodation between the people of Quebec and all regions of Canada.

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I would like to talk about a series of unity initiatives that were held in Edmonton East two weeks ago. The purpose of the forums and the round tables was to develop a better understanding of the issues of distinct society and regional veto and to provide Edmonton East constituents with an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings on Canadian unity, to define the desired changes to federalism and to develop actions that individuals, our government and groups can take within our communities to enhance Canadian unity.

These forums involved a wide range of participants within Edmonton East: school children, families, the business community, francophone Albertans and representatives from our multi-cultural communities. I invited the member for Vaudreuil to discuss with the constituents of Edmonton East what the people of Quebec want and need from Canadian federalism and to explore the changes that are required to respect and value our distinctiveness and to enhance our shared aspirations for change within a strong and united Canada.

We examined four questions: How are you feeling and what are you thinking about the Quebec referendum and Canadian unity? When we talk about language, culture and institutions, how are the people from Quebec and Alberta different and how are they similar? Given our differences, what changes to our Confederation do we need to make to accommodate the needs and aspirations of both the people of Alberta and Quebec? What can you and I as individuals who live, work and go to school in Edmonton East do to enhance Canadian unity? It would be useful and interesting for us to ponder some of the responses to these four questions. I would be happy to share the report with anybody who is interested.

On the Quebec referendum and Canadian unity: "There is a great anxiety as to what is going to happen next. Canadian unity is fragile. The referendum was a real wake-up call for all Canadians". A second quote: "We must explore comprehensive change to Canadian federalism. We cannot continue to apply band-aid solutions".

To the question of how people of Quebec and Alberta are different and how they are similar: "The differences between us are well known. We have diverse cultural aspirations. The real test is whether Canadians are prepared to accept these cultural differences and aspirations in a spirit of respect and understanding".

These are not the comments of people who are preoccupied with secession and separation as are the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois. These are the comments of people who want to be involved in a process of defining changes that are necessary to respect our distinctiveness, value our diversity and reflect our shared aspirations for a strong and united Canada.

Frankly, Canadians are tired of the politics of discord and division that seem to be the agenda of the Reform Party and the Bloc. I can give my assurance to the residents of Edmonton East that I will continue to take their suggestions for constructive and positive change to Ottawa, to the Prime Minister and to the unity committee.

Let us acknowledge what the unity package is, that it is the first step. Let us move on to the second step, to build bridges between our communities, between our provinces and between our regions. Let us build the case for Canada by involving all Canadians.

• (1800)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-110 introduced by the federal government. This bill is suppose to legislate the changes the Prime Minister promised during the referendum campaign. In addition to Bill C-110, we also have motion No. 26 on the distinct society and the changes in manpower training.

Quite a menu, all these changes, at least the federal Liberals seem to think so. Just think, the Prime Minister went on national television during the referendum to announce sweeping changes if the no side won. Quite a menu, according to the federalists. But Quebecers feel they are looking at an empty plate. There is nothing here to satisfy Quebec's legitimate demands. Nothing to meet the expectations of Quebecers who believed the Prime Minister's promises made in haste towards the end of the referendum campaign and served up with a catch in the throat and, almost, a tear in the eye.

The no side won in a photo finish: 50.6 per cent of the voters said no, and many of them believed in the last minute national farce produced by the little guy from Shawinigan. On the other hand, 49.4 per cent of Quebecers said yes, in fact 56 per cent said yes in the little guy's part of the country. Most revealing.

The message from Quebecers was clear, and it will be even more so next time. Meanwhile, we have to live with the Prime Minister's initiatives which clearly show he did not get the message. In fact, will he ever get the message? Will he ever understand what Quebecers really want? In light of the changes he proposes and of his previous actions toward Quebec, it is easy to conclude that the Prime Minister is out of touch with Quebec and that his roots are Canadian from coast to coast first and foremost.

Let us not forget that the hon. member for Shawinigan is following in the footsteps of the illustrious Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who has always advocated Canadian unity, equality among the provinces, and individual rights and freedoms above all, especially with a view to checking Quebec's momentum. These Liberal politicians have always believed in 10 little provinces that are equal and subordinate to a dominant central state, the Government of Canada.

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How can someone who has been soaking in this kind of atmosphere for 30 years not become contaminated? Can we hold this against the Prime Minister? Of course, it is not easy to break from the past and the illustrious Trudeau and to amend this outdated concept that lives on in federalist minds. Too bad for them. But is it their choice and their problem.

In this regard, I recently had a discussion with a remarkable constituent of mine, Bernard Gilles Grenier, whom I salute, who remembered a time when he rubbed shoulders with eminent Quebec federalists. He told me: "They have always wanted to clobber us separatists. From Trudeau to the current Prime Minister. But we should not worry, because Quebecers evolve much more quickly than those people. Problems cannot be resolved by using such gutter language or by stooping to that level. I can tell you from experience".

We must also acknowledge the giant step taken by Quebecers between the 1980 referendum and the one held in October. With popular support having grown from 40 to 50 per cent, Quebec's sovereignty is at hand, and Bill C-110 as well as the other meaningless measures improvised by the Prime Minister will certainly not quash Quebecers' will to build a country of their own.

In this regard, editorialist Alain Dubuc wrote the following in the November 29 edition of *La Presse*: "But this beginning of a reform remains too modest and too uncertain to represent a proposal acceptable to Quebecers and constitute a credible alternative to the sovereignist movement".

In his editorial comment entitled "Quebecers want more, much more", Alain Dubuc goes on to say: "Let there be no mistake. Had the Prime Minister declared during the referendum campaign that all Canada had to offer in terms of prospects for change were the three proposals put forward on Monday, the yes side would have won". It is interesting to note that Mr. Dubuc had sided with the no camp throughout the campaign.

• (1805)

Earlier, I commented on the Prime Minister being out of touch with Quebec and not understanding Quebec. Mr. Dubuc, a federalist editorialist at *La Presse*, a newspaper owned by Paul Desmarais, who pulls the strings of this Liberal government, supported my position on occasions in recent articles. First, on November 29, when he wrote: "This first and rather timid effort shows mainly that the Liberal government is having a real hard time understanding what is going on in Quebec".

And second, on December 8, Mr. Dubuc wrote: "The Prime Minister is showing that he does not understand all that well the country that he is seeking to save and that he is not living in the same world as the Quebecers he has to convince".

Mr. Dubuc is quite clear: the Liberal proposals just do not cut it. That opinion is clearly confirmed by a SOM-*La Presse-Droit de parole* poll released on December 8. The results of that poll are very telling, since 53 per cent of Quebecers find the proposals inadequate, and 30 per cent even find them totally inadequate. Is that clear enough?

Then there is Claude Ryan who, on Friday, during Radio-Québec's *Droit de parole*, said that he too felt these offers were inadequate. Coming from such a firm believer in the Canadian cause, this is quite the statement.

The veto proposed by the Minister of Justice is part of that last minute plan. That second element once again created a circus-like atmosphere, something at which the Liberals are expert. That second element, that proposal to "loan" the federal veto, was condemned by just about every major stakeholder in Canadian politics. From coast to coast, opponents rose to strongly condemn that proposal. The Mercredis, Filmons, Romanows, as well as the Reform Party leader and, yesterday, the Conservative leader, all condemned the plan.

We, members of the Bloc Québécois, will have nothing to do with this bill, which contributes nothing to the debate. As pointed out by our leader, it is, at best, a diversion used by the Liberal government to silence those who criticize it for not doing anything about the constitutional issue, for making promises and for misleading the public.

This bill, which, following the minister's amendment, gives a veto to five regions, is a political maneuver that does not change in any way the substantive issue that concerns Quebec and Canada. The Minister of Justice himself has said that it does not change the Constitution and that it is primarily a form of self-discipline on the part of the federal government. Actually, the federal government is resorting to self-discipline in order to avoid giving too much to Quebec.

Suppose that the federal government acted as if it wanted to give an advantage to Quebec by transferring new powers to this province, for example under Motion No. 26 which recognizes Quebec as distinct. What would happen? Wham. The power of veto of the other regions would be invoked immediately to put a stop to any such intentions on the part of the federal government. This is the new self-discipline the federal government is resorting to. Yet the federal government is getting itself of the hook with this measure. It will be able to open doors to Quebec without any fear, knowing that the veto of other regions will slam those doors shut.

*Government Orders*

Therefore Bill C-110 will have a perverse effect. While solving none of our present problems, it will make it even more difficult for the federal government to transfer powers to Quebec, though I strongly doubt it intends to do so.

In this morning's issue of *Le Devoir*, Jean Dion wrote the following on this issue: "The constitutional amending formula requiring the approval of seven provinces constituting at least 50 per cent of the Canadian population was already considered very restrictive. Yet, this formula will now require the prior approval of seven provinces representing 92 per cent of the Canadian population. One can already imagine a few crafty persons coming to the conclusion that the approval of 14 provinces representing 142 per cent of the population of Canada will now be required. After all, this would not be the first incongruity for this country".

• (1810)

In other words, Bill C-110 is a yoke, a straight jacket, which this country is putting on itself. The whole thing is becoming so complex that nobody believes in it, except of course the leader of this national farce, the Prime Minister himself.

Those of us in the Bloc and many Quebecers are left cold by the federal proposals. We are light years beyond them, and Quebec sovereignty alone is acceptable and inevitable. This real change will take place soon.

[English]

**Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the more I listen to the debate, the more I am reminded of Sir Winston Churchill's statement that democracy is the worst of all kinds of government except all the others.

Today we have heard many views of the solutions to the national unity problem we are facing in Canada. Regardless of how much we talk about it and to what depth we go into it, we must focus on the larger picture. The larger picture is that of a strong, united Canada. It means unity at the local level, loyalty to the community, loyalty to the province and loyalty to the nation as a whole, all blended together. That is what was intended by the Fathers of Confederation and great Canadian statesmen who put the country together.

We are now 128 years old. In terms of years and of the history of other countries that is not very long. However, we are still experiencing growing problems whether or not we recognize them as that.

The ongoing project for us today is that of being pioneers of our era and building a nation that was the dream of Canadians in the past and is the dream of Canadians in the future by bringing national unity into reality in a continent-wide country by bridging the challenges of geography, by bridging diverse peoples, by going against the pull of American influence, by

bridging regional and cultural differences and by relationships between French speaking and English speaking communities.

A book I depend on a great deal is *Canada: A Story of Challenge* by historian J. Mr. S. Careless. In one sentence he goes into the diversities of the country but ends up by saying the book is a surprised and measured satisfaction that so much has been accomplished in the face of such grave difficulties". He wrote that more than 40 years ago. He ended by saying: "Nevertheless, the author's awareness that Canada throughout her history has met and survived repeated and rigorous challenges still gives him a basis for believing that she will continue to do so".

As we debate the issue today we must look at the larger picture. Instead of getting ourselves all tied up into knots about regional matters and who has a veto and who does not, let us be fair to the various regions of the country. Let us develop more and more a stronger and a more meaningful, deep and abiding national pride in the country as a whole. The depth of that feeling is called a national spirit or it is a feel for one's country as a whole.

We saw a good example of that in Montreal during the massive rally when Canadians came together. Our loyalties are a three-tier system: the community, the province and the nation. It is a pride in the entire nation that will pull the regions and the peoples closer together. Canadians can and should have love for their community and admiration for their province and their nation at the same time. But we must tie it all together with the words and the term, "love of nation—Canada".

• (1815)

Premiers have a responsibility to their individual provinces but must not think of becoming a power unto themselves. A few weeks ago the premiers were going to meet without the Prime Minister because they wanted to discuss what the provinces wanted. This is why Canada should have a strong national government. It will pull the nation together. It is why the premiers and the Prime Minister must work closely together, not separately as the premiers were attempting to do. Everybody must see the national picture if we are going to succeed. We must have good communications and good transportation links.

I have been disappointed with the Reform Party's tunnel vision on this, particularly the statement made by the leader of the Reform Party on October 28, when he said: "The less the politicians themselves get involved, the better. We have a lot of work to do on how to handle the morning after". The people of Canada expect their politicians to show leadership on this issue and it is what the government is attempting to do.

The B.C. premier complained about other items in order to get his point across, but he sounded more like the captain of a sinking ship.

If we were not going through this process now in the House, then the government would be accused of not being interested, not living up to its commitments. Our response to Quebec is a

necessity. In my view, our response to B.C. is a necessity. I have always considered B.C. a very unique part of the country. I have visited there on many occasions and have a great sense of appreciation for it.

This legislation is a response of support for those people in Quebec who want to stay in Canada and also to persuade others to change their minds, to come back and stay with the nation.

The leader of the Bloc states that he does not want any changes at all, that he is not going to accept any changes at all. That too is tunnel vision. Is it not surprising that it comes from a man who changes political parties like he changes his clothes?

I believe today and I have believed in times past that B.C. is a different region of the country. I have visited it on many occasions and travelled through the Rockies on various occasions. I have visited the site where the last spike was driven for the CPR. Our country should put up a sign there 40 metres long and 20 metres high. If this had taken place in the United States it would be advertised. It is a big part of our history. Let us be proud of it.

After 1871 Canada were committed to building a railway across the country to tie it all together. The settlement of the prairies took place thereafter. I have visited the prairies on many occasions. People say that they get bored travelling the prairies. I do not at all. I think it is wonderful. As a person who grew up on a farm I have a great sense of appreciation for that great part of Canada.

Ontario and Quebec have an industrial base. They have beauty, tourism and culture. I have visited different areas of Quebec with my family on many occasions.

The region of Atlantic Canada is unique, friendly, hard working. They believe in tourism and practice it well. The people have a wonderful sense of humour.

• (1820)

Come on Canada, look at what we have. Be positive. Be grateful and satisfied. The good Lord has been kind to us. It is time we showed some appreciation for the gift He has given to us. For heaven's sake, let us appreciate it. Let us build bridges through understanding, not hate. Let us stand up for Canada and be proud. Shout out our national pride and look to our opportunities and our good fortune.

Anyone can hate and criticize, but it takes a good solid Canadian citizen from anywhere in Canada to stand up and say: "I love my community, I love my province and I want Canadian unity and a Canadian spirit that works together in a dedicated way so that we can move forward and do good things for Canadians today, tomorrow and the next day" and send the message to the whole world that we have a Confederation success story to tell everybody. We have that great purpose and vision in our hands right now as we discuss this issue in Parliament.

### *Government Orders*

Let us do it. Let us join with the Canadian people who showed their great unity at the major rally in Montreal and others who sent messages across Canada when they could not be there. Let us show a sense of appreciation by coming together and finding a solid solution to the national unity of our beloved Canada.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to make a few comments on Bill C-110, an act respecting constitutional amendments.

I believe and a lot of people in the House know this bill was concocted in haste. It was concocted to please the wrong people, to please the separatists. It has already been criticized by other provinces that are supposed to be pleased by it: B.C., Alberta and Quebec are not happy with this bill.

An amendment to Bill C-110 was introduced today recognizing B.C. as a separate region. We knew that right from day one. Where has the Prime Minister been? Why did he not include B.C. in the first place?

The hon. member for Renfrew—Pembroke—Nipissing spoke eloquently. He says B.C. is such a wonderful place that it should have signs 20 feet by 20 feet. Where was he a week ago when the bill was brought forward? Why were they all sitting there so quiet, kowtowing to the Prime Minister who consulted only a few people when he brought in this bill?

The issue is not five regions or four regions. We know that B.C. is a region. We have always known that. All the members of the Reform Party from B.C. have known that. The issue comes down to the Constitution and what this Prime Minister and a very few members of his cabinet are doing to it. This is what the Canadian public does not understand. This is what I feel is important for us in the House to point out, especially in opposition.

The Constitution Act of 1982 has rules on how to make changes to it. If we wish to amend the Constitution, wherever it starts from, here or in the provinces, it requires the approval of seven provinces out of ten representing 50 per cent of the population. That is in order to approve an amendment. It also requires the approval of the federal government, the House of Commons.

The government is now trying to share. It is arguing that it is sharing the federal government approval along with the seven out of ten provinces. It is going to share that with the provinces but it is not clear what "provinces" means, whether it means legislatures or whether it means the people of a province. It divides the provinces into regions and lumps them together.

I do not wish to address five regions versus four regions. I want to argue that the government is tinkering with the amending formula. By tinkering with the amending formula I am afraid the bill is going to be ruled unconstitutional and this is all a waste of time. We should be addressing what is on most people's minds—and the very reason this party got elected supposedly

*Government Orders*

was to create jobs—the economic agenda and the criminal agenda.

The bill may be struck down as unconstitutional. As my colleague from Calgary West pointed out earlier, this bill violates the principle of the seven provinces out of ten representing 50 per cent of the population. By sharing it with the regions, whether it is four or five is irrelevant. The bill is now requiring the approval, before the federal House gives it, of 80 per cent or 90 per cent of the population. Therefore it is tinkering, tinkering at its worst.

• (1825)

It is all a waste of time to please some people in the country who will never be happy. They are called separatists. The more we give them the more they want. Why do we not stop the game, please Quebecers and please all Canadians and get on with making laws which are important? The Prime Minister was elected to not talk about the Constitution and constitutional amendments, and here he is doing it.

If the federal government wishes to share its vote, why not give it to the people? Why not be clear about it? Why not give it to the people of the five regions? No, government members voted against that in committee. They want to give it to the legislatures again. The legislatures already have a vote through the seven and fifty formula for constitutional amendment. Now, whether the federal government approves or denies, the legislatures will be given another vote based on regions. That is ridiculous. It is a double veto. I do not understand that. If it really wants to have more input, if it wants to share its veto, if it wants to share its vote, then why not share it with the people of the regions as opposed to the legislatures for a second time?

The reason we are criticizing this is that the legislatures already have a say. They have one say. That is great. If they do not get their way, then they will go behind closed doors and the leaders of the provinces of the five regions will make a deal. We want to protect the Canadian people against that. If Canadians are going to have a say, they should have it through referenda. That is why we are barking, loud and clear, about what we mean. I hope the government is listening.

It is a double veto and a direct legal instrument. The government, instead of the House of Commons where it has the majority, is now going to share its veto with five regions. It gets worse. With the legislatures of the five regions it is a double veto. Now the government is going to give its veto to a separatist government from the province of Quebec. How in heaven's name are we ever going to make changes to the Constitution? How in heaven's name are we ever going to unify the country if the government gives the Parti Quebecois a veto? That party will

never vote on anything for Canada. It does not want to build a nation; it wants to tear it apart. I cannot believe how such a passionate plea can come from the government side with such stupidity. It has failed to recognize who it is giving the veto to. It is giving it to the Parti Quebecois, which wants to break up the country. That province should not have a veto.

The people of Quebec should have the veto. The people of Quebec should be able to stand on any issue which affects their Constitution and which drastically changes the rules of the Constitution Act. The people of Quebec should have a say. I trust the people of Quebec. They have voted already. Yes, it was close, but they voted to stay in Canada. That is who we should be pleasing.

Why does the government not give them the same right if it is going to share? It should share with the people who helped government members stay in their seats. It should share with the people who helped to save the Prime Minister. It should share with those people who want to keep the country together. Do not give it to the Parti Quebecois which wants to tear the country apart. That is absolutely ridiculous.

The people of the country are smarter than what we become after being in this closed box for a year or two. That is why we need input every once in a while. That is why we need a little jab in the back or a pinch in the behind to wake us up. A little cool water, running fresh over our faces, will make us pay attention to the voters who sent us here. It gets too easy when we talk to ourselves.

I cannot believe that the government will not listen. It plays politics with everything. The issue is the people versus the legislatures. We are making meaningful amendments, such as the amendment of the hon. member for Calgary West.

• (1830)

The bill says no changes can be made unless the amendment has first been consented to by a majority of the provinces. We understand that is the seven out of ten. It is kind of funny rhetoric—and the member for Calgary West has studied the Constitution extensively—that replacing two-thirds of the provinces would clear up the mess. It would clear it all up and we are down to the issue of whether we mean the people or the legislatures.

If we give it to the legislatures we are giving it twice. We are giving it to the party in power right now for the next two years. If saint so-&-so gets elected as a leader of that party, who knows how long he will be leader? The country will be held up for ransom for time immemorial. A no vote means never and a yes vote will mean forever. Just once we have to lose a referendum and we lose the country.

This is how serious it is, and the government laughs. It makes snide remarks at the Reform Party. I call the government to task. I am not here playing politics. I am serious about what I am saying. I am serious about giving a veto to a government that can never ever allow change. It should be difficult to make changes to a constitution. There is no question about it, but change should be possible with reasoned arguments and reasoned debate.

I will end my comments on that note. I hope the Prime Minister is listening somewhere in the world.

\* \* \*

### RECOGNITION OF QUEBEC AS A DISTINCT SOCIETY

The House resumed from December 7 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Pursuant to order made Wednesday, December 6, 1995, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion of the Prime Minister under government business No. 26.

Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** The question is on the amendment.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 392)

#### YEAS

##### Members

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Abbott                                    | Ablonczy                         |
| Benoit                                    | Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)          |
| Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)             | Bridgman                         |
| Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud—Est)         | Chatters                         |
| Cummins                                   | Epp                              |
| Forseth                                   | Gouk                             |
| Grey (Beaver River)                       | Grubel                           |
| Hanger                                    | Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)      |
| Harper (Simcoe Centre)                    | Hart                             |
| Hayes                                     | Hermanson                        |
| Hill (Prince George—Peace River)          | Hoepfner                         |
| Jennings                                  | Johnston                         |
| Manning                                   | Mayfield                         |
| McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud—Ouest) | Meredith                         |
| Mills (Red Deer)                          | Morrison                         |
| Penson                                    | Ramsay                           |
| Ringma                                    | Schmidt                          |
| Scott (Skeena)                            | Silye                            |
| Solberg                                   | Speaker                          |
| Stinson                                   | White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest) |
| Williams —41                              |                                  |

#### NAYS

##### Members

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Adams                                       | Alcock                                |
| Allmand                                     | Althouse                              |
| Anderson                                    | Assad                                 |
| Assadourian                                 | Asselin                               |
| Augustine                                   | Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) |
| Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud—Centre) | Bachand                               |

#### Government Orders

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Bakopanos                                 | Bélair                                    |
| Bélangier                                 | Bellehumeur                               |
| Bellemare                                 | Bergeron                                  |
| Bernier (Gaspé)                           | Bertrand                                  |
| Bethel                                    | Bevilacqua                                |
| Bhaduria                                  | Blaikie                                   |
| Bodnar                                    | Bonin                                     |
| Bouchard                                  | Boudria                                   |
| Brien                                     | Brown (Oakville—Milton)                   |
| Brushett                                  | Bryden                                    |
| Caccia                                    | Calder                                    |
| Campbell                                  | Cannis                                    |
| Caron                                     | Catterall                                 |
| Cauchon                                   | Chamberlain                               |
| Chan                                      | Chrétien (Frontenac)                      |
| Chrétien (Saint—Maurice)                  | Clancy                                    |
| Collenette                                | Copps                                     |
| Cowling                                   | Crête                                     |
| Dalphond—Guiral                           | Daviault                                  |
| de Savoye                                 | Debien                                    |
| Deshaies                                  | DeVillers                                 |
| Dhaliwal                                  | Dingwall                                  |
| Discepolo                                 | Dromisky                                  |
| Dubé                                      | Duceppe                                   |
| Duhamel                                   | Dumas                                     |
| Dupuy                                     | Easter                                    |
| English                                   | Fewchuk                                   |
| Fillion                                   | Finestone                                 |
| Fiis                                      | Fontana                                   |
| Fry                                       | Gagliano                                  |
| Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine) | Gagnon (Québec)                           |
| Galloway                                  | Gauthier                                  |
| Gerrard                                   | Godfrey                                   |
| Godin                                     | Goodale                                   |
| Graham                                    | Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)                 |
| Grose                                     | Guarnieri                                 |
| Guay                                      | Guimond                                   |
| Harb                                      | Harper (Churchill)                        |
| Harvard                                   | Hickey                                    |
| Hopkins                                   | Hubbard                                   |
| Ianno                                     | Iftody                                    |
| Irwin                                     | Jacob                                     |
| Jordan                                    | Karygiannis                               |
| Kerpan                                    | Keyes                                     |
| Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)                  | Kirkby                                    |
| Knutson                                   | Kraft Sloan                               |
| Lalonde                                   | Landry                                    |
| Langlois                                  | Lastewka                                  |
| Laurin                                    | Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)           |
| Lavigne (Verdun—Saint—Paul)               | LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso) |
| Lee                                       | Lefebvre                                  |
| Leroux (Shefford)                         | Lincoln                                   |
| Loney                                     | Loubier                                   |
| MacDonald                                 | Maclaren                                  |
| MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)   | Malhi                                     |
| Maloney                                   | Manley                                    |
| Marchi                                    | Marleau                                   |
| Martin (LaSalle—Émard)                    | Massé                                     |
| McCormick                                 | McGuire                                   |
| McKinnon                                  | McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord—Ouest)  |
| McTeague                                  | McWhinney                                 |
| Ménard                                    | Mercier                                   |
| Mifflin                                   | Milliken                                  |
| Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)               | Mitchell                                  |
| Murphy                                    | Murray                                    |
| Nault                                     | Nunez                                     |
| Nunziata                                  | O'Brien                                   |
| O'Reilly                                  | Ouellet                                   |
| Pagtakhan                                 | Paradis                                   |
| Parrish                                   | Patry                                     |
| Payne                                     | Peric                                     |
| Peters                                    | Peterson                                  |
| Phinney                                   | Picard (Drummond)                         |
| Pickard (Essex—Kent)                      | Pillitteri                                |
| Proud                                     | Reed                                      |
| Richardson                                | Rideout                                   |
| Riis                                      | Ringuelette—Maltais                       |
| Robillard                                 | Rocheleau                                 |

*Government Orders*

|                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rock                             | Sauvageau                |
| Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury) | Serré                    |
| Shepherd                         | Sheridan                 |
| Simmons                          | Solomon                  |
| Speller                          | Steckle                  |
| Stewart (Brant)                  | Stewart (Northumberland) |
| Taylor                           | Telegdi                  |
| Terrana                          | Thalheimer               |
| Tobin                            | Torsney                  |
| Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)  | Tremblay (Rosemont)      |
| Ur                               | Valeri                   |
| Vanclief                         | Venne                    |
| Walker                           | Wappel                   |
| Wood                             | Young                    |
| Zed—197                          |                          |

## PAIRED MEMBERS

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Bélisle   | Blondin—Andrew          |
| Canuel    | Culbert                 |
| Eggleton  | Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) |
| Marchand  | Minna                   |
| Paré      | Pomerleau               |
| Regan     | St-Laurent              |
| St. Denis | Szabo                   |

• (1900)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the amendment lost.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those against will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

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

(*Division No. 393*)

## YEAS

## Members

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Adams                    | Alcock                                      |
| Allmand                  | Anderson                                    |
| Assad                    | Assadourian                                 |
| Augustine                | Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre) |
| Bakopanos                | Bélair                                      |
| Bélanger                 | Bellemare                                   |
| Bertrand                 | Bethel                                      |
| Bevilacqua               | Bhaduria                                    |
| Bodnar                   | Bonin                                       |
| Boudria                  | Brown (Oakville—Milton)                     |
| Brushett                 | Bryden                                      |
| Caccia                   | Calder                                      |
| Campbell                 | Cannis                                      |
| Catterall                | Cauchon                                     |
| Chamberlain              | Chan  |
| Chrétien (Saint-Maurice) | Clancy                                      |
| Collenette               | Copps                                       |
| Cowling                  | DeVillers                                   |
| Dhaliwal                 | Dingwall                                    |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Discepola                                 | Dromisky                                  |
| Duhamel                                   | Dupuy                                     |
| Easter                                    | English                                   |
| Fewchuk                                   | Finestone                                 |
| Flis                                      | Fontana                                   |
| Fry                                       | Gagliano                                  |
| Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine) | Galloway                                  |
| Gerrard                                   | Godfrey                                   |
| Goodale                                   | Graham                                    |
| Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)                 | Grose                                     |
| Guarnieri                                 | Harb                                      |
| Harper (Churchill)                        | Harvard                                   |
| Hickey                                    | Hopkins                                   |
| Hubbard                                   | Ianno                                     |
| Iftody                                    | Irwin                                     |
| Jordan                                    | Karygiannis                               |
| Keyes                                     | Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)                  |
| Kirkby                                    | Knutsen                                   |
| Kraft Sloan                               | Lastewka                                  |
| Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)               | LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso) |
| Lee                                       | Lincoln                                   |
| Loney                                     | MacDonald                                 |
| Maclaren                                  | MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)   |
| Malhi                                     | Maloney                                   |
| Manley                                    | Marchi                                    |
| Marleau                                   | Martin (LaSalle—Émard)                    |
| Massé                                     | McCormick                                 |
| McGuire                                   | McKinnon                                  |
| McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)  | McTeague                                  |
| McWhinney                                 | Mifflin                                   |
| Milliken                                  | Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)               |
| Mitchell                                  | Murphy                                    |
| Murray                                    | Nault                                     |
| Nunziata                                  | O'Brien                                   |
| O'Reilly                                  | Ouellet                                   |
| Pagtakhan                                 | Paradis                                   |
| Parrish                                   | Patry                                     |
| Payne                                     | Peric                                     |
| Peters                                    | Peterson                                  |
| Phinney                                   | Pickard (Essex—Kent)                      |
| Pillitteri                                | Proud                                     |
| Reed                                      | Richardson                                |
| Rideout                                   | Ringuette—Maltais                         |
| Robillard                                 | Rock                                      |
| Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)          | Serré                                     |
| Shepherd                                  | Sheridan                                  |
| Simmons                                   | Speller                                   |
| Steckle                                   | Stewart (Brant)                           |
| Stewart (Northumberland)                  | Telegdi                                   |
| Terrana                                   | Thalheimer                                |
| Tobin                                     | Torsney                                   |
| Ur  | Valeri                                    |
| Vanclief                                  | Walker                                    |
| Wappel                                    | Wood                                      |
| Young                                     | Zed—148                                   |

## NAYS

## Members

|                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Abbott                                | Ablonczy                      |
| Althouse                              | Asselin                       |
| Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) | Bachand                       |
| Bellehumeur                           | Benoit                        |
| Bergeron                              | Bernier (Gaspé)               |
| Blaikie                               | Bouchard                      |
| Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)               | Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville) |
| Bridgman                              | Brien                         |
| Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)     | Caron                         |
| Chatters                              | Chrétien (Frontenac)          |
| Crête                                 | Cummins                       |



Dalphonde-Guiral  
de Savoye  
Deshaies  
Duceppe  
Epp  
Forseth  
Gauthier  
Gouk  
Grubel  
Guimond  
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)  
Hart  
Hermanson  
Hoepfner  
Jennings  
Kerpan  
Landry  
Laurin  
Lefebvre  
Loubier  
Mayfield  
Ménard  
Meredith  
Morrison  
Penson  
Ramsay  
Ringma  
Sauvageau  
Scott (Skeena)  
Solberg  
Speaker  
Taylor  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)  
Venne  
Williams—91

Daviault  
Debien  
Dubé  
Dumas  
Fillion  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Godin  
Grey (Beaver River)  
Guay  
Hanger  
Harper (Simcoe Centre)  
Hayes  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Jacob  
Johnston  
Lalonde  
Langlois  
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)  
Leroux (Shefford)  
Manning  
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)  
Mercier  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Nunez  
Picard (Drummond)  
Riis  
Rocheleau  
Schmidt  
Silye  
Solomon  
Stinson  
Thompson  
Tremblay (Rosemont)  
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)

#### PAIRED MEMBERS

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Bélisle   | Blondin—Andrew          |
| Canuel    | Culbert                 |
| Eggleton  | Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) |
| Marchand  | Minna                   |
| Paré      | Pomerleau               |
| Regan     | St-Laurent              |
| St. Denis | Szabo                   |

● (1910)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr. Reed:** Madam Speaker, if the Clerk would check, he would find that the hon. member for Halifax West is not here in his seat but the hon. member for Halton—Peel is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Duly noted.

**Mr. Solberg:** Madam Speaker, it is important to note on this important debate that the leader of the Conservative Party is not here.

#### Supply

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I am sure the hon. member is well aware that we do not mention the presence or absence of any member in the House. The hon. member for Halton—Peel will duly be recorded as present.

\* \* \*

#### SUPPLY

##### ALLOTTED DAY—BRITISH COLUMBIA LAND CLAIMS

The House resumed from December 7 consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Pursuant to order made Wednesday, December 6, 1995, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion of the hon. member for North Island—Powell River relating to the business of supply.

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent that the members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted—

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Boudria:** Obviously the information given by the whip of that party was not accurate.

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

(Division No. 394)

#### YEAS

##### Members

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Abbott                                    | Ablonczy                    |
| Benoit                                    | Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)     |
| Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)             | Bridgman                    |
| Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)         | Chatters                    |
| Cummins                                   | Epp                         |
| Forseth                                   | Gouk                        |
| Grey (Beaver River)                       | Grubel                      |
| Hanger                                    | Harper (Calgary West/Ouest) |
| Harper (Simcoe Centre)                    | Hart                        |
| Hayes                                     | Hermanson                   |
| Hill (Prince George—Peace River)          | Hoepfner                    |
| Jennings                                  | Johnston                    |
| Kerpan                                    | Mayfield                    |
| McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest) | Meredith                    |
| Mills (Red Deer)                          | Morrison                    |
| Penson                                    | Ramsay                      |
| Ringma                                    | Schmidt                     |
| Scott (Skeena)                            | Silye                       |
| Solberg                                   | Speaker                     |
| Stinson                                   | Thompson                    |
| White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)          | Williams—42                 |

#### NAYS

##### Members

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Adams                                       | Alcock                                |
| Allmand                                     | Althouse                              |
| Anderson                                    | Assad                                 |
| Assadourian                                 | Asselin                               |
| Augustine                                   | Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) |
| Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre) | Bachand                               |
| Bakopanos                                   | Bélair                                |
| Bélanger                                    | Bellehumeur                           |
| Bellemare                                   | Bergeron                              |
| Bernier (Gaspé)                             | Bertrand                              |
| Bethel                                      | Bevilacqua                            |
| Bhaduria                                    | Blaikie                               |
| Bodnar                                      | Bonin                                 |
| Boudria                                     | Brien                                 |
| Brown (Oakville—Milton)                     | Brushett                              |
| Bryden                                      | Caccia                                |
| Calder                                      | Campbell                              |

*Supply*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Cannis                                    | Caron                                     |
| Catterall                                 | Cauchon                                   |
| Chamberlain                               | Chan                                      |
| Chrétien (Frontenac)                      | Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)                  |
| Clancy                                    | Collenette                                |
| Copps                                     | Cowling                                   |
| Crête                                     | Dalphond-Guiral                           |
| Daviault                                  | de Savoye                                 |
| Debien                                    | Deshais                                   |
| DeVillers                                 | Dhaliwal                                  |
| Dingwall                                  | Discepola                                 |
| Dromisky                                  | Dubé                                      |
| Duceppe                                   | Duhamel                                   |
| Dumas                                     | Dupuy                                     |
| Easter                                    | English                                   |
| Fewchuk                                   | Fillion                                   |
| Finestone                                 | Flis                                      |
| Fontana                                   | Fry                                       |
| Gagliano                                  | Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine) |
| Gagnon (Québec)                           | Galloway                                  |
| Gauthier                                  | Gerrard                                   |
| Godfrey                                   | Godin                                     |
| Goodale                                   | Graham                                    |
| Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)                 | Grose                                     |
| Guarnieri                                 | Guay                                      |
| Guimond                                   | Harb                                      |
| Harper (Churchill)                        | Harvard                                   |
| Hickey                                    | Hopkins                                   |
| Hubbard                                   | Ianno                                     |
| Iftody                                    | Irwin                                     |
| Jacob                                     | Jordan                                    |
| Karygiannis                               | Keyes                                     |
| Kirkby                                    | Knutson                                   |
| Kraft Sloan                               | Lalonde                                   |
| Landry                                    | Langlois                                  |
| Lastewka                                  | Laurin                                    |
| Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)           | Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)               |
| LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso) | Lee                                       |
| Lefebvre                                  | Leroux (Shefford)                         |
| Lincoln                                   | Loney                                     |
| Loubier                                   | MacDonald                                 |
| Maclaren                                  | MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)   |
| Malhi                                     | Maloney                                   |
| Manley                                    | Marchi                                    |
| Marleau                                   | Martin (LaSalle—Émard)                    |
| Massé                                     | McCormick                                 |
| McGuire                                   | McKinnon                                  |
| McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)  | McTeague                                  |
| McWhinney                                 | Ménard                                    |
| Mercier                                   | Mifflin                                   |
| Milliken                                  | Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)               |
| Mitchell                                  | Murphy                                    |
| Murray                                    | Nault                                     |
| Nunez                                     | Nunziata                                  |
| O'Brien                                   | O'Reilly                                  |
| Ouellet                                   | Pagtakhan                                 |
| Paradis                                   | Parrish                                   |
| Patry                                     | Payne                                     |
| Peric                                     | Peters                                    |
| Peterson                                  | Phinney                                   |
| Picard (Drummond)                         | Pickard (Essex—Kent)                      |
| Pillitteri                                | Proud                                     |
| Reed                                      | Richardson                                |
| Rideout                                   | Riis                                      |
| Ringuette-Maltais                         | Robillard                                 |
| Rocheleau                                 | Rock                                      |
| Sauvageau                                 | Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)          |
| Serré                                     | Shepherd                                  |
| Sheridan                                  | Simmons                                   |
| Solomon                                   | Speller                                   |
| Steckle                                   | Stewart (Brant)                           |
| Stewart (Northumberland)                  | Taylor                                    |
| Telegdi                                   | Terrana                                   |
| Thalheimer                                | Tobin                                     |
| Torsney                                   | Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)           |
| Tremblay (Rosemont)                       | Ur  |
| Valeri                                    | Vanclief                                  |
| Venne                                     | Walker                                    |
| Wappel                                    | Wood                                      |
| Young                                     | Zed—194                                   |

## PAIRED MEMBERS

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Bélisle   | Blondin-Andrew          |
| Canuel    | Culbert                 |
| Eggleton  | Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) |
| Marchand  | Minna                   |
| Paré      | Pomerleau               |
| Regan     | St-Laurent              |
| St. Denis | Szabo                   |

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion lost.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A)

**Hon. Marcel Massé (for the President of the Treasury Board):** moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996, be concurred in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Motion agreed to.)

**Mr. Massé (for the President of the Treasury Board):** moved that Bill C-116, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1996, be now read for the first time and printed.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time.)

**Mr. Massé (for the President of the Treasury Board)** moved that Bill C-116, An act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1996, be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went in committee thereon, Mrs. Maheu in the chair.)

[*English*]

(Clauses 2 and 3 inclusive agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

On Clause 4

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Shall clause 4 carry?

[*English*]

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. We have debate on this.

• (1925)

**The Deputy Chairperson:** There is no debate. Standing votes can be taken.

*Supply*

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Chair, is that a ruling from the Chair, that there is no debate?

**The Deputy Chairperson:** There is no debate.

[*Translation*]

On Clause 5

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Shall clause 5 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Clause 5 agreed to.)

On Clause 6

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Shall clause 6 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Clause 6 agreed to.)

[*English*]

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Shall the schedule carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Schedule agreed to.)

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Shall clause 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Shall the preamble carry?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gauthier:** Madam Speaker, I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether the bill before the House is identical, in every respect, to those of previous years.

**Mr. Gagliano:** Madam Speaker, on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board, I would like to give my colleague the assurance that this bill is identical to those passed in previous years.

[*English*]

(Preamble agreed to.)

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill reported.)

**Hon. Marcel Massé (for the President of the Treasury Board' Lib.)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are passing through the House a bill which is going to spend \$2.5

billion and you are telling us there is no opportunity for debate on this bill?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Yes. There are just deferred divisions and no debate in the plenary session of this bill.

**Mr. Milliken:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member forgets that under Standing Order 81 supply days are granted to the opposition. We have just had five supply days which finished on Friday. Those were five days of debate on subjects chosen by the opposition on this very bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Massé (for the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

• (1930)

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I wonder if there is consent to apply the vote taken on government Motion No. 26, the main motion, to the motion now before the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** There is not unanimous consent.

All those in favour the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

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

*Supply**(Division No. 395)*

## YEAS

## Members

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Adams                                       | Alcock                                   |
| Anderson                                    | Assad                                    |
| Assadourian                                 | Augustine                                |
| Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre) | Bakopanos                                |
| Bélaïr                                      | Bélangier                                |
| Bellemare                                   | Bertrand                                 |
| Bethel                                      | Bevilacqua                               |
| Bhaduria                                    | Bodnar                                   |
| Bonin                                       | Boudria                                  |
| Brown (Oakville—Milton)                     | Brushett                                 |
| Bryden                                      | Caccia                                   |
| Caldar                                      | Campbell                                 |
| Canniss                                     | Catterall                                |
| Cauchon                                     | Chamberlain                              |
| Chan  | Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)                 |
| Clancy                                      | Collenette                               |
| Copps                                       | Cowling                                  |
| DeVillers                                   | Dhaliwal                                 |
| Discepola                                   | Dromiskiy                                |
| Duhamel                                     | Dupuy                                    |
| Easter                                      | English                                  |
| Fewchuk                                     | Finestone                                |
| Flis  | Fontana                                  |
| Fry   | Gagliano                                 |
| Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)   | Galloway                                 |
| Gerrard                                     | Godfrey                                  |
| Goodale                                     | Graham                                   |
| Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)                   | Grose                                    |
| Guarnieri                                   | Harb                                     |
| Harper (Churchill)                          | Harvard                                  |
| Hickey                                      | Hopkins                                  |
| Hubbard                                     | Ianno                                    |
| Iftody                                      | Irwin                                    |
| Jordan                                      | Keys                                     |
| Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)                    | Kirkby                                   |
| Knutson                                     | Kraft Sloan                              |
| Lastewka                                    | Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)              |
| LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)   | Lee                                      |
| Lincoln                                     | Loney                                    |
| MacDonald                                   | Maclaren                                 |
| MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)     | Malhi                                    |
| Maloney                                     | Manley                                   |
| Marchi                                      | Marleau                                  |
| Martin (LaSalle—Émard)                      | Massé                                    |
| McCormick                                   | McGuire                                  |
| McKinnon                                    | McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest) |
| McTeague                                    | McWhinney                                |
| Mifflin                                     | Milliken                                 |
| Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)                 | Mitchell                                 |
| Murphy                                      | Murray                                   |
| Nault                                       | Nunziata                                 |
| O'Brien                                     | O'Reilly                                 |
| Ouellet                                     | Pagtakhan                                |
| Paradis                                     | Parrish                                  |
| Patry                                       | Payne                                    |
| Peric                                       | Peters                                   |
| Peterson                                    | Phinney                                  |
| Pickard (Essex—Kent)                        | Pillitteri                               |
| Proud                                       | Reed                                     |
| Richardson                                  | Rideout                                  |
| Ringuette-Maltais                           | Robillard                                |
| Rock  | Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)         |
| Serré                                       | Shepherd                                 |
| Sheridan                                    | Simmons                                  |
| Speller                                     | Steckle                                  |
| Stewart (Brant)                             | Stewart (Northumberland)                 |
| Telegdi                                     | Terrana                                  |
| Thalheimer                                  | Tobin                                    |
| Torsney                                     | Ur                                       |
| Valeri                                      | Vanclief                                 |
| Walker                                      | Wappel                                   |
| Wood  | Young                                    |
| Zed—145                                     |  |

## NAYS

## Members

|                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Abbott                                | Ablonczy                          |
| Althouse                              | Asselin                           |
| Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing) | Bachand                           |
| Bellehumeur                           | Benoit                            |
| Bergeron                              | Bernier (Gaspé)                   |
| Blaikie                               | Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)           |
| Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)         | Bridgman                          |
| Brien                                 | Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est) |
| Caron                                 | Chatters                          |
| Chrétien (Frontenac)                  | Crête                             |
| Cummins                               | Dalphond—Gural                    |
| Daviault                              | de Savoye                         |
| Debien                                | Deshaies                          |
| Dubé                                  | Duceppe                           |
| Dumas                                 | Epp                               |
| Fillion                               | Forsteth                          |
| Gagnon (Québec)                       | Gauthier                          |
| Godin                                 | Gouk                              |
| Grey (Beaver River)                   | Grubel                            |
| Guay                                  | Guimond                           |
| Hanger                                | Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)       |
| Harper (Simcoe Centre)                | Hart                              |
| Hayes                                 | Hermanson                         |
| Hill (Prince George—Peace River)      | Hoeppner                          |
| Jacob                                 | Jennings                          |
| Johnston                              | Kerpan                            |
| Lalonde                               | Langlois                          |
| Laurin                                | Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)   |
| Leroux (Shefford)                     | Loubier                           |
| Mayfield                              | Ménard                            |
| Mercier                               | Meredith                          |
| Mills (Red Deer)                      | Morrison                          |
| Nunez                                 | Penson                            |
| Picard (Drummond)                     | Ramsay                            |
| Riis                                  | Ringma                            |
| Rocheleau                             | Sauvageau                         |
| Schmidt                               | Scott (Skeena)                    |
| Silye                                 | Solberg                           |
| Solomon                               | Speaker                           |
| Stinson                               | Taylor                            |
| Thompson                              | Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)   |
| Tremblay (Rosemont)                   | Venne                             |
| White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)      | Williams—86                       |

## PAIRED MEMBERS

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Bélisle   | Blondin—Andrew          |
| Canuel    | Culbert                 |
| Eggleton  | Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) |
| Marchand  | Minna                   |
| Paré      | Pomerleau               |
| Regan     | St-Laurent              |
| St. Denis | Szabo                   |

● (1935)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-111, an act respecting employment insurance in Canada, be referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion for reference to a committee, before second reading, of Bill C-111, an act respecting employment insurance in Canada.

*Adjournment Debate**[English]*

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I believe if you were to seek it you would find unanimous consent for the result taken on the previous vote to be applied to the vote now before the House.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 395]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

• (1940)

*[English]*

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### SOCIAL PROGRAMS

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP):** Madam Speaker, some time ago I asked the Deputy Prime Minister some questions about health care and post-secondary education social program cuts.

I pointed out that Liberal members were in opposition to similar but not so deep Conservative government cuts, but once they moved to the government side there had been a change of heart. I asked whether or not tearing down the institutions of health care, post-secondary education and social programs was a way of building a unified country. The answer was no, yet the cuts continue.

The reports and analyses we have show that the government's cuts to health care, post-secondary education and social programs are the deepest we have seen in the last 50 years.

The race is on to decentralize the federal government and to slash social spending, so say the slashers, to save Canada. Unfortunately the decentralizers and social program blood-letters may well destroy the country before they save it.

In the wake of the rather narrow no vote in the referendum the government feels compelled to carve up pieces of Ottawa's powers as a show of good faith to Quebec and provincial politicians are champing at the bit for more power.

How can the country achieve unity when the government continues to destroy our safety net? We do not have to be experts to realize that we cannot save Canada if its very foundations are being undermined.

What about the interests of Canadians, particularly the interests of vulnerable Canadians? Lest we forget, social programs helped create a compassionate society and support the robust economy that now seems almost a nostalgic memory. Lest we forget, social programs greatly reduced the glaring inequities between rich and poor Canadians and between have and have not provinces. As we have seen those greater cuts, we have seen the inequities between rich and poor grow larger. Above all, lest we forget, Canada's health care and social system would never have come to be without federal leadership and federal dollars.

Alas, Conservative and Liberal governments have forgotten that between 1984 and 1993 the Mulroney government killed universal old age pensions and family allowances. It also made two deep cuts to unemployment insurance and reduced the social housing budget. The government of the hon. member for Saint-Maurice has continued down the path of cuts and devolution. It has made unprecedented cuts to unemployment insurance and has announced dismantlement of the Canada assistance plan. The government has clearly forgotten the path which took us to unity.

Throughout these changes Canadians have had no say in reshaping their social policy. As a result, allow me to voice the views of millions of Canadians who are trying to remind the government which path to take. Canadians are saying whenever they are asked that social programs played a major role in building Canada's society, economic system and political system over the last 50 years. Canadians are saying that social programs make Canada a distinct society and play an essential part in rebuilding Canada.

Canadians are screaming that we need strong and efficient social programs for a strong economy and a strong Canada. The most effective social policy is an effective economic policy that invests in job creation, community economic development and skills development.

Canada will not achieve unity under the government because it refuses to listen to what Canadians are saying. In the difficult months and years to come, the government must remember how social programs have helped to define the country. Social programs such as unemployment insurance embody the values of a civil society, one in which people care for and care about each other.

Most important, in these unstable political times and insecure economic times it is crucial to remember how much social programs have contributed to Canadian unity. If Canada is to survive, Ottawa must provide courageous and effective leader-

*Adjournment Debate*

ship along the path to rebuilding Confederation. It must stop slashing social programs.

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was taking notes while the hon. member was speaking. He can rest assured that the government is definitely committed to the principles of medicare.

The member should also understand that the reason we introduced the Canada social and health transfer was that we wanted to provide provinces and Canadians with the type of flexibility for which hundreds of thousands of Canadians called during our consultations on social security review. The hon. member is misguided in saying Canadians were not consulted. We undertook perhaps the most extensive consultation in Canadian history.

• (1945)

The carrying nature of that consultation was shown clearly with the tabling of the new employment insurance bill, which will allow Canadians to get jobs and keep their jobs. It will help the most vulnerable in society in a sustainable fashion; not to mention the great work we are doing on the youth portfolio under the leadership of the Secretary of State for Training and Youth. During hard fiscal times we have increased the expenditures and investment in young people by \$43 million to \$236 million. We have provided thousands upon thousands of young Canadians with their rightful opportunity to gain the type of skills required for the new economy.

I am glad the hon. member brings to the floor of the House of Commons some deep concerns, but he and his party can rest assured that we are on the side of Canadians, not against them.

[Translation]

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ):** Madam Speaker, last November 30, I put a question to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration concerning the fate of Anatoli Delets and his family, who came to Canada from the former Soviet Union in 1992.

Immigration officials in Montreal are only waiting for the release of Mrs. Delets from the hospital to deport that family to Moldavia. Mrs. Delets is Jewish, and Mr. Delets, who has been held in custody in Montreal for several weeks, is not considered a Moldavian under the citizenship law of that new country.

Where will the minister send them? As is often the case, the minister has shown no compassion towards the Delets family in spite of the difficulties and the significant distress they are suffering. They have no country to go to with two young children.

Where is Canada's humanitarian policy the minister is always boasting about? This family is a typical case, and a very good one, where the minister should use his discretionary powers to grant permanent residency in Canada.

Again I urgently appeal to the minister, in the days before Christmas, to show compassion toward the Delets family. Moreover, the minister should remember that he too left his country to come and settle here.

Another family, the Savas from Romania, is going through difficult times. Since November 17, they have taken refuge in a church in Saint John, New Brunswick.

The Sava family came to Canada four years ago and has integrated very well into Canadian society. Since the youngest of the two children was born in Canada, he is a Canadian citizen.

Mr. Sava is a mechanical engineer. He has just repaired the church steeple; the bells now peal every day for freedom.

I pay tribute to the United Church for its support for the Sava family. The minister should be able to find a way to deal with this case. I hope he will not wait for six months as was the case with Mauricio Romero, a young Salvadorian who took refuge in a Calgary church to avoid deportation to Salvador. I had the opportunity to visit him twice, speak to his family and meet the pastors who were helping him.

Why will the minister not use his discretionary powers right now to grant permanent residency to the Delets and Sava families? Both have been living and working in this country for several years. To deport them now is inhumane.

As immigration critic, I have been made aware of several similar cases. I have noticed that the Canadian refugee policy is more and more aligned on the policy of the United States and certain European countries that, increasingly, are less generous and welcoming to people in distress.

As the international year of tolerance is drawing to a close, I am asking the minister and his officials to show some compassion, especially to the Delets and Sava families.

• (1950)

[English]

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am surprised the hon. member would try to call into question the generous and compassionate immigration system we have.

Perhaps he is doing it for some ulterior political reason, but our immigration system is something we have always taken pride in. We have been recognized internationally for our generosity, for our compassion, for our deep understanding of what the immigrant experience is all about.

*Adjournment Debate*

The government understands also the family's disappointment. There is no question about that. However, in order to maintain a system that is credible and fair we need to absolutely make sure we respect the law.

The family has had the full benefit of Canada's generous refugee determination system. It has been found not to be refugees and must now leave Canada.

There are other options the family can exercise. We understand it has requested removal to another country. The department has no objection to removing it to another country as long as that country is willing to take it and legally admit it.

The other option is for the family to return to Moldova and apply through the normal process.

[*Translation*]

## MIDDLE EAST

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the member for London—Middlesex, I represent many Canadians of Arab origin who are very proud to be Canadian citizens.

[*English*]

Many of these constituents of mine are very successful small business people in their own right. They were so in the Middle East and they have continued that success here in Canada.

They have met with me a number of times to indicate they feel to an extent they are perhaps being under used as new Canadians in the sense that they have great knowledge and expertise of their former countries in the Middle East; an expertise and a knowledge they are very anxious and prepared to share with the Canadian government and with Canadian business people looking for opportunities for business overseas.

These constituents of mine have made it clear they are extremely pleased and happy that at long last it looks as though the Middle East has entered a new era of peace. There will be a tremendous amount of rebuilding and reconstruction needed, particularly in the area of infrastructure of all types.

It pleases me as a Canadian and as their member of Parliament to hear them speak so highly of the Canadian leadership role in peacekeeping in the Middle East. They are well aware this dates back to Lester B. Pearson and the Suez crisis and his tremendous actions then for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

It seems to these friends of mine that somehow Canada is missing an opportunity to capitalize on the tremendous goodwill that exists in the Middle East toward our nation.

What they mean by this is simply that they feel Canada is not being as proactive or aggressive as we might be in pursuing business opportunity which really are enormous in scope. Most Middle Eastern countries would welcome Canadian business

with open arms. While we are pursuing such opportunities, many of these friends and constituents of mine feel we need to be more proactive and aggressive.

To that end, there is one interesting idea that has been proposed to me a number of times. It is the establishment of permanent Canadian trade centres in the Middle East.

These people would see such centres as being run and financed by the private sector, by private business with help from the Canadian government in terms of protocol and business contacts, that sort of thing, government to government contacts which the Canadian government could provide.

They certainly see the costs of such trade centres as being shared by Canadian businesses. They point out that such a cost sharing arrangement would be much cheaper than various Canadian businesses year after year sending their own representatives to the Middle East at a greater cost and probably with a less efficient result.

I asked my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, two or three specific questions. Is such an idea feasible? Where has Canada tried such an idea? Does the parliamentary secretary agree that Canada can be more aggressive and proactive in pursuing trade opportunities in the Middle East when these countries are so anxious to welcome Canadian business people?

**Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from London—Middlesex. He is a hard working and outstanding member of Parliament who has in the past and who continues to truly represent his constituents.

I will first share with my colleague some of the initiatives and some of the things the government has done so far in the Middle East. In January of this year the government opened the embassy in Beirut. Also we have ongoing negotiations for a free trade agreement with Israel and we have approached other countries in the Middle East to have free trade agreements with them. Our support for the private sector is very strong. We are trying to help it explore markets in different parts of the Middle East.

I had the great pleasure of participating in the World Economic Summit in Jordan where in excess of 20 Canadian companies participated. I have also taken a trade mission to the Middle East on a number of occasions. I agree with my colleague that the Middle East is an emerging market that will be the Giant Tiger of Asia in the year 2000 and beyond.

His suggestion for a trade centre is an interesting one. I will be sure to take it to our officials. We have some of the finest people representing us in the Middle East with embassies from one end of the Middle East to the other. We have trade commissioners working extremely hard. At the Department of Foreign Affairs we have a division working day in and day out.

*Adjournment Debate*

The people in the division responsible for the Middle East and North Africa work 24 hours a day trying to promote trade and help to improve relations between Canada and these parts of the world.

We are delighted to see my colleague take an interest in the area of trade in the region and I would be more than happy to work with him on an ongoing basis.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.55 p.m.)

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