



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 134 • NUMBER 077 • 2nd SESSION • 35th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, September 30, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 30, 1996

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Peter Thalheimer (Timmins—Chapleau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am responding to private member's motion M-205 which seeks to provide further protection for property rights pursuant to the Canadian Bill of Rights.

The Canadian Bill of Rights is part of this country's long and strong commitment to protecting human rights. With the coming of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, which duplicated many of the provisions of the Canadian Bill of Rights, it is important to understand how the bill of rights enacted in 1960 fits into the larger scheme of human rights' protections in Canada.

The Canadian Bill of Rights remains in force, but it is substantially different from the charter as it does not apply to provincial legislation or actions. It operates as a federal statute which is applicable to federal laws and actions. The charter expressly overrides any act that is inconsistent with it, while the Canadian Bill of Rights does not have an express provision which permits it to override other federal statutes.

A noticeable difference between the bill and the charter is that the bill does not have a limitation clause as provided by section 1 of the Canada Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What does the lack of a limitation clause mean for the protection of property rights?

It is important to understand that no rights are absolute. It is often necessary to limit rights to protect the widely shared values of the larger community.

The hon. member for Comox—Alberni, in seeking to provide greater measures for the protection of property rights, has recog-

nized that we cannot provide absolute protection for individual property rights.

Many laws also recognize that others may have a legitimate interest in the property rights of another individual, including family law and environmental protection. Even provincial builders' lien acts recognize and impose limits on the individual's right to dispose of property.

The bill of rights already contains a due process provision to protect property rights. The bill states:

It is hereby recognized and declared that in Canada there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely,

(a) the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of the law—

While there have not been many cases interpreting what this provision means, Walter Tarnopolsky, the noted scholar, in his commentary on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms finds that the bill undoubtedly imposed a requirement of fair procedure and may also have imposed a requirement of fair compensation.

The due process clause in the 14th amendment of the United States constitution, which protects life, liberty or property, has been held to impose a requirement of fair compensation for the loss of property. It can therefore be argued that the Canadian Bill of Rights continues to operate and provides sufficient protection for property.

It should also be mentioned that some provincial bills of rights include protection for property rights. The Alberta bill of rights, now the Alberta individual rights protection act, protects the enjoyment of property by a due process clause. The Quebec charter of rights and freedoms gives some protection to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of his or her property to the deprivation of rights.

• (1105)

Why is it necessary to protect property rights? In a liberal democracy such as Canada, the protection of property is fundamental to encourage growth and development. For this reason our society recognizes and protects property in a number of ways.

It is important to protect property. It is sufficiently protected through a host of common law statutes, including the bill of rights.

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Our history is one of recognizing and protecting real and personal property. As Canadians, we also value other rights as important.

That is why I like the 14th amendment of the United States constitution which protects life, liberty or property. Section 7 of the charter of rights and freedoms protects the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

Our primary concern is with protecting an individual's physical integrity. The issue of whether section 7 will be interpreted to include economic rights has not been determined. There can be no doubt that the drafters of the charter intended to protect the rights to life, liberty and security of the person as a primary right which is not to be deprived of, except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

We need to celebrate and be proud of our strong history of protecting human rights, including the right to own and dispose of property. Property rights in Canada are adequately protected. From a practical perspective, it is hard to think of a situation where the state would confiscate someone's property without providing for fair compensation. This amendment, to put it quite simply, is not necessary. It will not add anything to the numerous statutes and common laws that already protect the property rights of Canada.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of M-205. I want to commend the work of my colleague from Comox—Alberni for bringing this motion forward and also to note the work done by the member for Yorkton—Melville who has brought in Bill C-284 which has a similar purpose to this motion.

This motion is designed to strengthen and protect the property rights of Canadians. I wholeheartedly support M-205 for many reasons, which I will elaborate on momentarily.

Let me review very quickly what this motion says. M-205 reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should provide a greater measure of protection for individual property rights by amending the Canadian Bill of Rights to read:

"1. Subject to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society, every person has the right to the enjoyment of that person's personal and real property and the right not to be deprived thereof unless the person

(a) is accorded a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice, and

(b) is paid fair compensation in respect of the property, and the amount of that compensation is fixed impartially, and is paid within a reasonable amount of time after the person is deprived of their property.

2. Any person whose rights, as set out in section 1, have been infringed or denied may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain such remedy as the court considers appropriate and just in the circumstances".

It is my pleasure to speak today about this very important motion because I believe in the rights of Canadians, and specifically, the need to strengthen the protection of property rights.

The motion would amend the Canadian Bill of Rights by adding two sections. The first section would protect Canadians' rights with respect to property. In any case where this right were to be restricted, this motion would guarantee the right to a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. The second section gives individual property owners the right to fair compensation for their property and ensures compensation within a reasonable time period.

What I find most surprising in this debate is that it has taken so long for the House to make a clear expression of its support for the protection of property rights. The importance of protecting property rights has long been recognized in Canada and around the world. Property rights are included in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Canada is a signatory. Other democratic countries have already taken the lead in property rights' legislation, including the United States, Germany, Italy and Finland. Several Canadian provinces, including British Columbia, New Brunswick and Ontario have also initiated resolutions supporting stronger protection for property rights.

• (1110)

The debate about the protection of property rights is not new to the House either. In 1988 a motion to protect property rights received overwhelming support and was adopted as a resolution of the House. This was an example of cross-party support for the protection of property rights in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker of the House at another time and in another capacity expressed the view of the importance of property rights and his concern with the adequate safeguarding of these rights in Canada. In his words: "We must entrench the right to property in our Constitution. The right to hold and enjoy property provides one of the checks and balances against undue concentration of power in government at any level".

In fact, many members from the government side have in the past deemed there to be a need for stronger protection of property rights. In the early 1980s Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau who had originally written against property rights and the current Prime Minister both expressed the strong desire to strengthen the protection of property rights, so much so that the current government party wanted to go beyond this motion and entrench property rights into the charter of rights and freedoms.

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Back in 1980 the current Prime Minister said: "In deciding which rights should be included in the charter, we have selected only those which we feel reflect the central values of our society. Each of the rights we have listed is an essential ingredient for the charter and all are rights which all Canadians should have regardless of where they live in our country". This statement was made as part of his presentation to the provinces on the importance of strengthening the protection of property rights by entrenching them in the charter and they were included in his list.

At the time several Canadian provinces as well as the opposition parties at the time frustrated the inclusion of property rights in the charter.

While I am pleased to see that members of the government side, including their leader, have in the past recognized the need to better safeguard this important category of rights, entrenching them into the charter would require a constitutional amendment. This would be problematic, as we are all aware of the difficulty of amending the Constitution at the current time.

The beauty of this motion is that it does not require an amendment to the Constitution. Because this motion targets the bill of rights as opposed to the charter of rights and freedoms, it is easier to amend and well within the jurisdiction of the House.

Another advantage of M-205 is that the motion avoids concerns about encroaching on areas of provincial jurisdiction. In past debates on the issue concerns were raised about protecting property rights by including them in the charter. The objection was not about the importance of property rights, but rather about the encroachment of the federal government in areas of provincial jurisdiction through the charter.

My colleague, in designing this motion deliberately targeted the bill of rights as opposed to the charter of rights and freedoms. The reason for this is that the charter applies to the provinces as well as to the federal government while the bill of rights applies only to areas of federal jurisdiction. By targeting the bill of rights this motion avoids intruding into areas of provincial jurisdiction.

I would like to add my personal voice as a citizen. I do not believe any level of government should infringe on property rights in an unjust manner.

In the debate following the introduction of this particular motion on property rights, the government members who responded expressed their support for property rights. However, and there is always a but, they said they could not support the motion because they believed property rights already have adequate protection. I am pleased that the members opposite support property rights, but I would challenge them on their assertion that property rights are adequately safeguarded.

The bill of rights makes mention of the right of Canadians to enjoy property. However, this is simply not enough. Section 1(a) of the bill of rights states: "The right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, and the right not to be deprived thereof, except by due process of law".

Section 2(e) provides that no federal law "deprive a person of the right to a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice for the determination of his rights and obligations".

While I think all members of the House would support the principles outlined in the bill of rights as they apply to property rights, there is a problem. Unfortunately, while the bill of rights mentions property rights, the guarantee of protection and compensation in cases where private property has been surrendered is not explicit. This weakens the level of protection for property rights. Because the bill of rights is a regular statute, it can be overridden by a new federal statute. Without the explicit mention of compensation, a new federal statute could rather easily restrict the right of Canadians to fair and prompt compensation. M-205 would correct this by making explicit the government's requirement to provide fair and prompt compensation in circumstances where it is necessary for an individual to surrender property.

I am quite surprised by the current government's opposition to this motion. While members of the government party previously advocated entrenching property rights in the Constitution, they now seem to believe the status quo is good enough. I fail to see what could have changed their minds.

• (1115)

We have had in Parliament the Pearson airport bill which provides a precise example of why we need this kind of protection. While this bill ultimately died, had it been passed it would have cancelled agreements to privatize and redevelop terminals 1 and 2 of Toronto's international airport. Parts of the bill would have absolved the federal government of any liability associated with the cancellation of the agreements. As we know it would have gone further and even basically cancelled recourse to the courts. This is precisely the kind of example of why we need stronger protection of property rights in this country.

No one is suggesting there are never occasions where it may be necessary for individuals to surrender property. The motion recognizes this possibility. The difference between the status quo and the amendments this motion would bring about is that Motion M-205 would ensure that the property rights of Canadians could not be infringed upon without due process and fair compensation.

The existence of fundamental rights and the importance of fairness and justice are principles that Canadians have come to expect. If the government truly does support the property rights of

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Canadians and the principles of fairness and justice, I am confident it should have no reservations about supporting Motion M-205.

Let me add in concluding that we cannot understate the importance of property rights in the maintenance of a free society. We all know that free society and freedom in human history have been a fleeting thing. Only under certain legal, cultural and economic conditions are we able to enjoy the benefits of a free and democratic society.

We had an example of another kind of society in this century in the Soviet Union. We all know that the Soviet Union had one of the most democratic constitutions in the world in terms of its symbolic recognition of rights. What the people of the Soviet Union ultimately lacked was the right to own property. Without the right to own property and without iron clad guarantees that cannot be taken from you except by legal and just processes, all other rights are meaningless. That is precisely what happened in that society. All the other human rights, all the democratic freedoms enunciated in that constitution were absolutely meaningless because there was no fundamental right to property without which there is not a free society.

There are numerous examples in this country of the unjust expropriation of property by governments, governments forcing people to sell land and other material without compensation, without alternatives or without recourse to the courts. I know in Calgary it happened in the establishment of a transportation corridor. There have been other examples. It is not true to say we have adequate protection of property. Until we ensure these rights to property in the bill of rights, the charter and many other pieces of legislation, our freedoms will always be in jeopardy.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Motion M-205 of my colleague from Comox—Alberni.

The defence of property rights is arguably one of the most worthy matters of debate in a democratic society. The weakness of property rights protection in Canada compels us to revisit this issue today.

The 1982 charter of rights and freedoms which protects Canadians' right to life, liberty and the security of the person makes no mention of property rights. For Canadians that protection lies only in the common law tradition and in the bill of rights which guarantees "the right to enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process".

Close inspection reveals the guarantees in the bill of rights are only marginal at best. Also, both of these protections which do exist can be overruled by any other statute law. Even the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the

right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her property".

Canadians need stronger guarantees on their right to own private property. Motion M-205 opens up the debate on this issue by highlighting the weaknesses of the present system. It guarantees a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. It guarantees fair compensation within a reasonable amount of time. It allows for the protection of the rights of others by prescribing reasonable limits to property rights demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

• (1120)

Historically, property rights have been fundamental in the interpretation of individual freedoms. Individuals and democratic nations have defended these rights through history and history has recorded not only the struggles but the consequences for those nations which choose to ignore these basic rights. Take for example, as my colleague has just mentioned, the record of the USSR where lack of property rights, due process and fair compensation left those citizens powerless in the face of an intrusive state.

In short, there are many compelling reasons to discuss property rights. The government has argued against this notion. One of its objections is that property rights should not be unlimited. However this proposed legislation does recognize the importance of establishing parameters as well as offering recourse within the definition of reasonable limits as outlined in the motion.

Thus the proposed legislation continues to protect society for instance against crime even if it is committed on one's own property. More fundamentally, it provides protection for individuals and families when competing interests arise, and it provides redress to ensure protection and consideration for all parties. This is important in a variety of situations including, as has been brought forth by other members, divorce property settlements and recourse in the case of neighbourhood disputes.

Within these parameters however it does offer hope for families with protection against devaluation and confiscation of their property. For example, let us say the government needs access across personal property for a new road or power line. While the motion allows for such action, if it directly affects the family's investment or its very security and future, it also ensures just remuneration in the law. There is no such guarantee in Canadian law today.

The fact that the Liberals have indicated they do not support such a fundamental principle of freedom is troublesome indeed, especially when considering their existing record of abuse of property rights. I can think immediately of Bill C-28 and Bill C-68. Bill C-28 of course revoked the former government's Pearson airport contract without providing due compensation to the contractual

partners. Bill C-68, the gun control bill, has dramatically devalued possibly millions of pieces of private property again without guaranteeing due compensation.

Let us examine in more detail another of the concerns submitted by the justice department. The parliamentary secretary said that environmental legislation must not be restricted by private property protection and alluded to problems in the U.S. over such concerns as protecting endangered species. But in the United States, despite the nation's strong record of private property protection, two pieces of environmental legislation, that is the 1972 Clean Water Act and the 1973 Endangered Species Act, bypassed the constitutional protection of property rights and did so with some scandalous results.

In one case a rancher made a lake on his own property; as a result it classifies as a wetland. Instead of encouraging this private initiative, the U.S. government warned him that he would be charged if he violated wetlands regulations. This included accessing his own property with his own truck.

In another case a land owner was sentenced to three years in prison and a \$202,000 fine for violating the Clean Water Act by dumping landfill on his own property without a federal permit. A stream bed that was dry all year except when it backed up briefly during the rainy season justified the reclassification of his property as wetlands. The existence of skunk cabbage and sweet gum trees helped build the government's case which was originated by an unrelated complaint of a disgruntled neighbour who did not like the noise of the trucks driving past his house.

A vast amount of research in recent years has demonstrated the superiority of private property ownership over government regulations in resolving many environmental problems, not least the protection of animal species from extinction. A growing number of environmentalists are among those who are beginning to recognize this fact. Nevertheless, placing ideology before valid research, the environment minister refused to acknowledge competing evidence in a recent op-ed in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

• (1125)

The plight of the buffalo has been blamed on the tragedy of the commons: the fact that no one owned the buffalo or the land on which they roamed. If they had been privately owned, the owners would have had a vested interest in ensuring that this resource was not destroyed. The illustration of the buffalo is often contrasted with the survival of horses or cattle which have been bred as valuable resources for centuries.

Another illustration of this principle is the ivory trade. Most nations have argued for banning international trade in ivory while elephant numbers continue to decline due to poaching. However in

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Zimbabwe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government transferred elephant ownership rights to regional tribal councils. This privatization made game ranching possible with substantial profits accruing to the property owners. This financial incentive has guided the behaviour of property owners such that the elephant population in Zimbabwe increased while it declined in the rest of the continent.

Another example of the importance of property rights comes from western Canada. Here there is much debate over the large tree-cutting projects which largely exist on public lands. It is of interest to note that in Sweden not long after forest land was largely sold into private hands, the government had a forestation crisis, not a deforestation crisis, on its hands.

The simple fact is that private ownership is wedded to the reality of sustainability. Forests owned either by individuals or by the companies which harvest them have been shown to fare much better than land purchased from governments at below market value as is done in Canada.

The concept of property rights is evolving with new technologies. The Liberals argue that the protection of these rights should not be stricter so as to accommodate these new issues. One such area that has already been recognized as important and will continue to grow in its importance is intellectual property.

Here again though the government's position appears questionable when compared to the way it uses the existing flexibility in property rights against Canadians. Just this month the front page of Ottawa's leading business paper, the *Ottawa Business Journal*, featured a story which revealed Industry Canada's violation of business owners' property rights over intellectual property.

The study, which has been buried for a year, revealed that despite a Treasury Board policy that says intellectual property rights belong to the firms contracted by the government, bureaucrats have been claiming these rights for the government. According to testimony from some business owners, especially small business owners, these rights were often surrendered for fear that obstinacy would make it more difficult to win future contracts.

It is this very insecurity, the fear of law-abiding citizens that they cannot appeal to a justice system to protect their basic freedoms and the results of their often many years of hard labour, that is anathema to a free society. Canadians must be assured that their property is protected from the arbitrary hand of government by the guarantees such as those proposed in Motion M-205.

In conclusion, the principle of property rights is basic to the freedoms inherent in a democratic country. As the Liberals refuse to endorse the explicit protection of property rights in law, they perpetuate a troublesome trend of real and potential government

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intervention in matters that I say belong not to the state but to the citizens of Canada.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here today to support the member for Comox—Alberni on the motion he has brought before the House.

This issue was probably one of the most important ones in terms of drawing Reformers from western Canada into the Reform Party in the first place. People recognized from one example after another of what had happened in their area that this was necessary and that property rights in fact should be enshrined in the Constitution. That is of course a Reform policy although it is not fully what we are dealing with here today.

• (1130)

I will start by repeating what this motion is about for those watching or listening or for those who may read this in the future:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government provide a greater measure of protection for individual property rights by amending the Canadian Bill of Rights to read:

"1. Subject to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society, every person has the right to the enjoyment of that person's personal and real property and the right not to be deprived thereof unless that person

(a) is accorded a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice, and

(b) is paid fair compensation in respect of the property, and the amount of that compensation is fixed impartially, and is paid within a reasonable amount of time after the person is deprived of their property.

2. Any person whose rights, as set out in section 1, have been infringed or denied may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain such remedy as the court considers appropriate and just in the circumstances".

That is what we are debating today. I will talk a bit about the importance of having property rights clearly defined.

Property rights are really the cornerstone of human freedom, as some of my colleagues have expressed. These rights mean freedom from arbitrary interference in one's life by government. Property rights depend on the notion that you own yourself and your labour.

In 1690 John Locke wrote:

The great and chief end of men—putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property.

In 1790 Edmund Burke wrote:

The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue; it grafts benevolence even upon avarice.

Burke recognized clearly the importance of property rights.

A property rights guarantee ensures that government can only take your property under three very limiting conditions. First, the taking of your property must be for public use. Second, the taking of your property must be through due process of the law. Third, the taking of your property must be with just and timely compensation.

Various polls and surveys have demonstrated clearly that Canadians support a property rights guarantee. A poll commissioned by the Canadian real estate board in 1987 found that 81 per cent of Canadians considered property rights very or fairly important and that the Constitution should be amended to include property rights.

In 1992 a Gallup poll demonstrated that 87 per cent of respondents characterized the fundamental right to own property as either very important or important, and 87 per cent said that it should be in the charter of rights and freedoms.

To make this point stronger, a higher percentage of Quebecers supported a constitutional guarantee of property rights than supported a constitutional guarantee of distinct society. This issue is certainly important to Quebecers.

The Prime Minister also supports a property rights guarantee. One of my colleagues brought this up and it is worth mentioning again. During a presentation to the provinces on including property rights in the charter of rights and freedoms he stated: "In deciding which rights should be included in this charter, we have selected only those which we feel reflect the central values of our society. Each of these rights we have listed"—and that includes property rights—"is an essential ingredient for the charter and all are rights which all Canadians should have regardless of wherever they live in our country".

That was spoken by the Prime Minister a few years ago. It is interesting that now his government seems to be holding back on its support and is speaking against a first step toward providing for property rights in a meaningful way.

• (1135)

There are other countries which have enshrined property rights in their constitutions. Canada is in the good company of the United States, Germany, Italy and Finland. The fifth amendment of the United States constitution limits federal powers and expressly provides for a right to compensation. The fifth amendment states that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use without due compensation.

The 14th amendment of the American constitution stipulates that no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of the law.

Property rights were not included in our charter mainly because of the objections of the provinces of Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The reason is important to note. These provinces felt that it was an attempt by the federal government to intrude into provincial jurisdiction over property and civil rights granted to them by section 92(13) of the British North America Act.

The Canadian Bill of Rights does include property rights, but the guarantee of protection is minimal at best. There is no requirement in Canadian constitutional law that removal of private property be covered by a fair procedure to deal with compensation to the owner and there is no guarantee of fair treatment by the courts, tribunals or officials who have the power over individuals or corporations. Without the rights of due process and fair compensation individual property rights are meaningless.

The power of government in this area is unlimited. Any valid statute can expressly state that no compensation is payable when property is expropriated. That is the very thing which Canadians do not want.

How would Motion No. 205, presented by my colleague from Comox—Alberni, improve the current situation? Motion No. 205 proposes to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights by adding two new sections. The first section would allow citizens the right to their property unless the person receives a fair hearing in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. The second section gives the individual property owner the right to fair compensation for the property within a reasonable amount of time.

Since the Canadian Bill of Rights applies only to federal law and operations, this motion would avoid the provincial concerns raised during the debate on including property rights in the charter. However, since this legislation applies only to federal jurisdiction, clearly similar protection is needed at the provincial level. I would strongly support the provinces making similar changes in their legislation to protect property rights.

I would like to give a couple of examples of things that have gone wrong because there is not proper protection of property rights. The first example would not be protected if the bill is passed, but I would like to mention it anyway. This is something which happened in Calgary. I have had this story related to me on a couple of different occasions, so I believe it is worth mentioning. It affected the people who mentioned it to me in a very negative way.

Calgary had a green zone around the city which was protected by law. When this happened there was no compensation as a result of the damage to land prices. There was no expropriation on the part

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of government. It just declares that this zone would be a green zone and that caused property values to drop dramatically. People who had property within that zone in many cases, people who had talked to me, lost much of their life savings. It was clearly unfair and I think it is important that we have legislation that would protect against this.

• (1140)

The second very important example has been demonstrated already and explained by some of our members, although I think it would be worth repeating, and it has to do with the rights under Bill C-68 to take guns from people without any compensation.

From the gun collectors I have talked to, in a couple of cases gun collectors had tied their life savings up in their collection. This law has destroyed the value of that collection with no compensation. These examples point out the need for this to pass the House. I ask all members in the House to support my colleague and to vote in favour of this private member's motion.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise today and support this motion brought forward by my hon. colleague for Comox—Alberni.

I believe he should be commended for his tenacious attitude with regard to this motion. The issue of property rights has been debated in this House of Commons numerous times over the last 30 years and unfortunately for Canadians they still do not enjoy adequate protection of their individual property rights.

The fact that my colleague has been diligent enough on behalf of Canadians to correct this alarming oversight by hammering away at this issue once again shows his dedication and the dedication of the Reform Party to fight for equity and justice.

This issue reminds me of another battle that has been carried out on the floor of the House of Commons throughout the past 20 years. Like property rights, capital punishment has maintained overwhelming support by Canadians. The reinstatement of capital punishment has been favoured by 70 per cent of Canadians since it was abolished 20 years ago. Throughout that time MPs such as me have introduced legislation to fulfil the wishes of the majority.

Unfortunately too many MPs forget that it is their constituents they represent first and foremost. They forget that they are not in Ottawa to conform to the wishes of their political masters or to satisfy their own conscience. They are here to debate and vote on behalf of the people in their constituencies. Instead, as in the case of capital punishment, many have ignored this fact and so it is left to a few select members of this House to hammer away and reintroduce legislation until hopefully someday we will succeed and therefore ultimately Canadians will succeed.

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In the matter of property rights we are faced with a similar situation. A poll commissioned by the Canadian Real Estate Association in 1992 showed that 87 per cent of respondents considered the right to own and enjoy property of all kinds a fundamental right.

Another poll by the Canadian Real Estate Board in 1987 found that 81 per cent of Canadians considered it either very or fairly important that the Constitution be amended to include property rights. A 1987 Gallup poll demonstrated that 87 per cent of Canadians supported increased property rights protection.

Needless to say, this all indicates significant and overwhelming support and reflects Canadians' concern that their property rights can too easily be infringed upon. But still there is no guarantee in this country that private property will not be removed for public use and there is no provision that government must provide for fair compensation when it expropriates property for public use.

This is despite numerous attempts by Canadian legislators to protect property rights. As has been mentioned, these legislators include John Diefenbaker and Pierre Trudeau. Mr. Trudeau enjoyed excellent support from his justice minister at that time, the current Prime Minister.

• (1145)

Unfortunately, these efforts have been impeded by, among other issues, constitutional concerns and protests from provincial governments worried that their jurisdictions were being invaded. For example, during constitutional debates in 1992, the province of Prince Edward Island strongly protested the inclusion of property rights in any constitutional proposals. The premier of P.E.I. at the time went so far as to inappropriately state: "If we cannot control the destiny of land in Prince Edward Island, we will soon no longer be a province".

As we in the House are aware, the general sentiment among the majority of Canadians is that they are reluctant to see the constitutional can of worms opened at this time and it is easy to understand why. Fortunately, the motion recognizes this sentiment as well as the misguided fears of certain provinces. It strengthens property rights without constitutional change or the need for provincial consent. It applies only to federal law and the operations of the federal government.

It dictates that the federal government uphold a reasonable standard of fair and just compensation in exchange for personal property. While it does not involve the provinces, it sets a standard to follow and a precedent for individual property rights in the eyes of the law. Regardless of jurisdiction, it will strengthen and respect the rights of Canadians who believe their private property cannot and should not be arbitrarily taken from them by the federal government without compensation.

This is a simple and logical solution that does not infringe on the provinces and shows that the federal government is concentrating on cleaning up its own backyard.

It also rises above partisan politics. As I mentioned earlier, former prime ministers from both the Liberal and Conservative parties have seen fit to support property rights and the current Prime Minister once spoke very strongly of securing them for Canadians.

The Prime Minister's attempts at protecting property rights were unsuccessful. I hope he seizes this opportunity to support the motion which, as I have mentioned, accomplishes the task at a federal level in a relatively simple manner through the Canadian Bill of Rights.

While reviewing the motion and the debate on it, I became concerned that some members were confused about its intended results. First and foremost, I would like to reiterate to all members that this motion does not involve constitutional amendments. I repeat the statement that my colleagues and I have already made today because in past debate the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead in Quebec expressed worry that the motion would limit the ability of a provincial government to legislate in the environmental sector if property rights were enshrined in the Constitution. This motion will affect neither the provinces nor the Constitution.

Another point I would like to clarify with respect to that hon. member's statement from June 10, 1996 involves the importance of property rights to a person's identity. He does not seem to realize the fundamental importance that property rights hold for individuals. In the case of a home or a farm it often identifies who they are and who their ancestors were. It provides them with a heritage, a past, a sense of pride and a constant source of solace in times of difficulty. Certainly I can speak from experience about what has become known as the love of the land, being a farmer, and the pride that comes from the ownership of property.

In the early 1970s hundreds of families in rural communities near Pickering, Ontario were surprised when they began receiving form letters telling them their homes and farms were going to be expropriated to make way for a new international airport. No consultations were carried out with the residents or even with the local municipalities. People were forced to sell homes and land which some families had occupied for nearly 170 years. The federal government expropriated 7,527 hectares for an airport it never built.

Since they were expropriated the lands and homes of these Canadians have been mismanaged by Public Works Canada on behalf of the transport minister. The loving care that many owners put into their homesteads suffered vandalism and bulldozing. One of these homeowners, who is now in his seventies, said: "I could not believe the government's arrogance. It made me absolutely livid".

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• (1150)

After suffering through the tragedy of having their homes and farmland taken from them and witnessing its destruction, these people were enraged at the federal government's declaration two years ago that 2,000 of these hectares were now deemed surplus. How could anyone bear the indignity, frustration and heartache of having their homes taken from them, then hear that part of their heritage was being declared surplus?

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Shame.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): That is right. Shame on government. With this motion, fiascos such as this would not be allowed to happen. The federal government would not be permitted to arrogantly, without consultation and fair process, expropriate a family's homestead for a project that would probably never happen.

In the matter of other property, to have it taken away, also leaves an individual feeling violated and helpless. I agree to a point that these are only material goods and pale in significance to the well-being of loved ones or to freedom or to the other fundamental rights.

Members have to keep in mind that we are talking about an individual's property being expropriated by the federal government. If that process is not done fairly and with due compensation, it can be traumatic and as consequential as losing a loved one, particularly in the case of a property that has been in a family for generations.

In the case of freedom, can it truly be said that Canadians enjoy freedom when an individual is free to possess property only until the government has need for it or decides to take it away for some supposedly higher public purpose.

As previously noted in the House by some of my colleagues, there is no doubt that the legitimate owner of a firearm does not feel he or she is a free citizen of Canada when the federal government can dictate whether he or she will be allowed to keep property.

This is a frightening concept in what is supposed to be one of the leading industrialized and free nations in the world. It makes me feel as though we really have not come very far since the internment and expropriation of property from 22,000 Japanese Canadians during the second world war. At that time, the federal government said a higher purpose should supersede an individual's property rights. The federal government has a responsibility to its citizens and a responsibility to govern by example.

This motion would not limit the federal government to never being able to expropriate land for public works projects. However it would ensure that owners are guaranteed that any expropriations

would be carried out in a fair and reasonable way, consistent with the standard expected in a free and democratic society. It would also mean that there would have to be fair compensation for expropriation.

There have been many embarrassing incidents in Canadian history that involve the unjust seizure of property by the federal government. As members of the House will acknowledge, we continue to grapple with the fallout of these injustices to this day.

Motion No. 205 will ensure that future generations and MPs are not left to remedy any further violations the federal government might commit in the absence of property rights' protection. It is the least we can expect from a responsible government in a free and democratic society. Therefore, I urge all my colleagues on both side of the House to please support this motion.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, members of the House will know that I have used, from time to time, New Zealand examples to press home how important it was for us to get on top of our debt and deficit problems in order to create an investment climate that would create jobs. I have used these New Zealand examples not because New Zealand has done everything right but because we can learn from the experiences of other countries and choose the best things to implement here in Canada.

There are lessons to be learned from history and the experiences of others in connection with property rights as well. We can easily see that by taking a look at the enormous amount of historical material available to us.

We know the history of ancient Rome and Greece, China, Egypt and Mesopotamia. We know what happened in classical times, medieval times and in the industrial revolution right through to modern times. We know plenty about Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Russia, Cambodia, sub-Saharan Africa, you name it. By studying the historical records of those times and places we can quickly see that when governments do not respect property rights, the people eventually end up living in poverty and misery.

• (1155)

Perhaps it starts innocently enough. A government promises to regulate the economy for the common good, redistribute the wealth more fairly, make the rich pay their fair share, close the loopholes. I have a feeling I have heard this stuff somewhere before. It is a naive assumption that the government knows best and that the average citizen needs to be protected from himself.

History is full of examples. Whether they are headed by madmen like Stalin or Hitler or by well-meaning dreamers like Nehru or Nyerere, they always fail. Along the way they produce conflict instead of peace, famine instead of plenty. Instead of more and better rights than those we hold in the line that we receive from the

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Magna Carta, they deliver fewer and lesser rights. They promise a gilded cage and they deliver only the cage.

I challenge members to name one society that respected property rights where the people were not happier and better off for it. I challenge them to name one society that did not have property rights where the people are not more miserable as a result of that. The more protected the right to property, the better the living conditions and the better the societal order.

History also teaches us that where property rights are not respected, neither are personal rights. Along with the loss of property rights comes loss of liberty, loss of freedom of speech, loss of decency in society.

In her speech earlier today, my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam mentioned the benefits of transferring ownership of forests into private hands, for example. She gave an example of how sustainability was ensured by transferring the property rights to private hands. This same benefit can be seen in New Zealand which has transferred part of its forests to the private sector. It raised \$2.5 billion to pay off the final portion of its foreign debt by doing so. What results from that is we have private investors who have to protect that property in order to recover the \$2.5 billion investment and to receive an ongoing income. It is the guarantee of sustainability, it is the guarantee of replanting of those forests and it means that the government now is only in a regulatory role, instead of interfering in the marketplace.

Similar experiments with ownership of lakes have shown that when a camp ground owns the lake it makes sure there is no pollution in that lake. It makes sure that fish are stocked in that lake. With private ownership comes the desire to protect the property.

Property rights are the foundation of a decent and responsible society. They are the most important human right. It amazes me that we have a Constitution and charter of rights that guarantees the lengthy avoidance of deportation by known criminals and bogus refugees, but it does not guarantee property rights to law-abiding citizens. It amazes me that we have a Constitution and charter of rights that permits crimes to be committed without penalty by people who are under the influence of drink or drugs, but it does not guarantee property rights to law-abiding citizens. Canadians are supposed to feel good about their Constitution and charter but for the most part they are frustrated by it and with it.

Motion 205 put forward by the Reform Party member for Comox—Alberni is an excellent one. I urge all members to support it for our own well-being.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation for the support I have received from my colleagues with regard to this motion. It is

fundamental to freedom in our society and I think the point has been made adequately.

In summary, it must be pointed out to the government that property rights are not adequately protected in Canada. Things are happening today that are not acceptable in a free and democratic society and the examples given clearly demonstrated that. We have to ask the question: Why would a government not want to protect them more adequately so that all citizens could go about their business with the freedom to which they are entitled?

• (1200)

In summary, there are three reasons property rights are good: they make a society richer; they protect the freedom of individuals; and they protect the environment. Those are the arguments we as Reformers have been trying to make.

Property rights make society richer in that they spur the creative effort of individuals to improve their own circumstances. Property rights are a guarantee that we get to keep what we own, we can dispose of what we own, enjoy the fruits of our labour and our property cannot be arbitrarily taken from us even by government. These rights are important to an economy such as ours. For societies to flourish and for things to be as they should, countries need to guarantee those property rights.

People should be free to make their own decisions about how to best use their possessions, including the fruits of their labour. For those not already enjoying material wealth, their labour is the most valuable thing they own. It is particularly important that everyone be guaranteed the right to improve their situation and benefit from the improvements they make. In the long run the right to make decisions about one's own life and work is the foundation of human dignity.

My last point is that property rights protect the environment. The problem of pollution is not that people pollute their own surroundings, but that they pollute the surroundings of others around them, including air and water. Without property rights, a distant government rather than the afflicted individual makes a judgment about how much pollution should be allowed. Governments weigh the political benefits of such pollution against the political costs and most often favour the polluter.

In conclusion, this debate highlights the fundamental difference between a Reformer and a Liberal. In order to maintain a free and democratic society, individual rights must be protected. This is something that must be fundamentally supported by every member in this House.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the *Order Paper*.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.) moved:

That this House support British Columbia as Canada's gateway to the Asia Pacific and recognize British Columbia as a major economic power in the region, and as a consequence, this House condemn the federal government for impeding progress in Western Canada by its mismanagement of the affairs of the nation, exemplified by the government's mishandling of the west coast fishery, Coast Guard services, the closure of military bases at Aldergrove and Chilliwack, B.C., the elimination of federal Ports Canada policing in B.C., the movement of grain to Prince Rupert, B.C. and other issues detrimental to the state of the nation.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present this supply day motion on behalf of the Reform Party.

This motion may speak to British Columbia issues, but it also speaks about Confederation and British Columbia's place in our national mosaic. If there is one way I could characterize what I am going to talk about today, it is a lack of vision on the part of the federal government; there are broken promises on behalf of the federal government; and there is a one way street between British Columbia and Ottawa.

My colleagues will be discussing federal mismanagement of issues surrounding the Prince Rupert grain terminal, the fishery, the military bases, ports policing in B.C. and the coast guard. I will specifically talk about the recently announced downsizing proposals for the combined DFO/coast guard operations which are scheduled to take effect soon.

• (1205)

The federal government has displayed its inability to effectively manage or prioritize sensibly and it has shown disregard for the public in its actions. Immediate corrective action is required to bring some sense to the discussions and to ensure that the public interest is represented rather than the interests of the bureaucracy or the minister.

The B.C. chamber of commerce is on record as expressing serious concerns about federal government priorities in its recent cuts to coast guard services. Its letter of September 13 to the Prime Minister stated what many others have stated very well and what the people of British Columbia are saying. The letter reads:

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We recognize the necessity of budgetary restraint but the responsibility of government to maintain public safety in marine channels must not be abrogated by the need to save money. We realize—that cuts may have to be made. We do ask, however, that your government prioritize allocations for public safety.

Your government is responsible by law not only for safety in marine channels but for navigational aids (lighthouses), small harbours management, and search and rescue. Even the recent assignment of responsibility for environmental cleanup to the organization responsible does not relieve the coast guard of environmental first response in potential disaster situations. Given the isolated nature of the west coast, cuts made without due care and attention can worsen an already dangerous situation. For example, mariners and fishers in the Hecate Strait near Prince Rupert already rely on the American coast guard in rescue situations due to the fact that the local coast guard helicopter is not fully equipped or always available for marine surface rescues.

Cuts we believe to be unwise include excessive reduction in the number of vessels and the subsequent reassignment of remaining vessels, resulting in units not fully capable of responding in search and rescue operations (reassigning *The Point Race*, for example, a vessel specially fitted to deal with the high speed, tidal currents in Discovery Passage near Campbell River to Port Hardy and replacing it with a vessel lacking its capabilities); destaffing lighthouses, which serve as important navigational aids for aviators as well as mariners, without providing an alternative for the essential services they provide; and reducing certain services to only a twelve hour standby when emergencies can happen at any time.

We believe it is the government's responsibility to provide Canadians with a reasonable opportunity to work and do business safely. Consequently, we strongly recommend that your officials re-examine the substance of the cuts to services and make a greater effort to exercise restraint in administrative areas. Where safety is concerned there must always be other options.

On Saturday at McInnes Island, 40 miles west of Bella Bella, which is a very isolated area, a lightkeeper called in that a float plane was down. That was the immediate response which allowed the pilot to be saved by the search and rescue team.

Today on Chrome Island, Merry Island and Entrance Island people are pouring pads to put in automated equipment. This situation has gone into overdrive. People are trying to stop the destaffing.

There are other signs of revulsion coming from British Columbia. The Union of B.C. Municipalities had its annual meeting two weeks ago. On September 20 an emergency debate was held on this issue. A unanimous resolution was passed regarding the disastrous effect the proposed cuts would have on boating safety.

The Coastal Communities Network sent a letter on September 25 to the minister. The letter states that the minister has broken two promises to British Columbians regarding destaffing light stations before demonstration projects have proven the safety viability of automated equipment; and he has negated the December 1995 national marine policy to ensure search and rescue operations are an essential service.

• (1210)

This motion is a wake-up call to a lethargic federal government that has ignored and dismissed B.C.'s contribution to the wealth and dynamism of the country.

Supply

British Columbia has 12.9 per cent of the total Canadian population, over 3.8 million people. Federal statistics indicate that for a decade or more B.C. has averaged 6 per cent of total government procurement and capital spending, which is nowhere near its population base or contribution to the federal coffers.

British Columbia's representation in federal cabinets has been characterized by weak ministers who have lacked clout at the cabinet table and who have been unskilled in how to play the federal influence game.

B.C. is the only province which year by year continues to have increases in live births. Two-thirds of the new migrants coming to British Columbia every year are under the age of 35. Our demographics are such that we could very nicely carry CPP and medicare programs, unlike the rest of the country.

British Columbians welcome downsizing of the federal government. We cannot afford the current contraption because of the combined Liberal debt which next year will cost us over \$50 billion per year in interest charges alone. What we want is fairness, good priority setting and true savings. Savings, not political transfers.

The concerns of coastal communities are being virtually ignored as cutbacks in basic marine safety and navigation services for which the federal government is responsible continue.

Information has been very hard to come by. To illustrate the arrogance of the senior bureaucracy, I have a timeline from the downsizing proposals which trickled out to the marine advisory groups in the last week of August: August 20 to August 30, client consultations; September 3 to September 6, assess client impacts; September 30, final funding decision.

The communities and anyone else who has been involved in this initiative have not even had time to catch their breath. As Robert Mason Lee of the Vancouver *Sun* observed at the UBCM conference in Penticton, the government has essentially stopped seeking public advice and is desperately cost cutting with poor rationale.

The minister from B.C. has not even represented B.C. interests when they have fallen into his portfolio. British Columbians are paying more and getting less.

To show that the operations people from the federal bureaucracy do understand program delivery but cannot win the debate with the senior bureaucracy, I would like to quote from the content of a report which I received this weekend. It is a DFO operations branch impact analysis which was leaked to me.

I will quote selectively: "The ability of multitask vessels to deliver fisheries patrol duties remains unclear. All vessels tasked to fisheries patrol will have search and rescue as primary tasking. In the extreme there may be no vessels available for fisheries patrol

during peak periods. Peak periods for fisheries patrol and search and rescue occur at the same time".

Second, "the current proposal does not meet operations branch fleet mix requirements. There is the need for a much larger number of flexible inshore vessels".

Third, "our ability to meet international commitments outlined in the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the free trade agreement and the Canadian shellfish sanitation program will be significantly reduced. Canada is required to collect data and enforce provisions of specific fisheries agreements in the Pacific Salmon Treaty".

• (1215)

Fourth, the ability of vessels to remain away from home port on a regular and or sporadic basis is critical to both fisheries enforcement and management. This will not occur under this plan either.

Fifth, uncertainty about vessel support for multitasked vessels and or insufficient vessels will result in fewer fisheries. The new initiatives implemented to rationalize the salmon fleet—known as the Mifflin plan, very controversial—will be compromised.

Less precision in in-fishery catch information and escape estimates for salmon enhancement in the short term will result in over harvest or under harvest and in the long term stock collapse.

A gradual reduction in the number of ships will have less impact in the sharp reduction plan for 1997. Considerable time will be required to train personnel in multitask duties.

There is currently a demand for increased habitat investigation and monitoring of projects in remote areas as a result of the new oceans act, the Canada Environmental Assessment Act and agreements made with First Nations by aboriginals, fishery strategy and land claims initiatives.

Initiatives to implement a community based strategy for fisheries management and enforcement in remote coastal communities will be compromised.

This report goes on. This is a damning indictment of what is being foisted on British Columbia right now. These proposals for Pacific coast operations lack any vision or entrepreneurship. It is typical Ottawa policy making done in a void. It is a myopic, lacking long term strategy thinking of the kind that characterizes most of this government.

Have these policy gurus thought about what the impact of these life threatening cuts will say to insurance companies and marine underwriters who cover the cruise ships or floating hotels which carry hundreds or thousands of people a trip? Have these policy gurus and our two esteemed ministers involved in this mess thought about Canada's liability for not providing adequate aids to navigation, search and rescue, vessel traffic and control and

weather forecasting equipment to ensure safety for these visiting vessels, not to mention our own west coast fleet of private and commercial vessels?

The fixation of cutting at the service level with no plan or strategic policy is a classic Ottawa closed loop philosophy. Around it goes and the dollars keep going in but they do not escape to serve society. We do deserve better.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I felt the speech given by the hon. member dealt very well with a number of the problems faced by the coast guard and light keepers on the west coast.

I know the member is the critic for Indian Affairs and I wonder if he could give us the benefit of a few minutes explanation of some of the problems that have been created in British Columbia, which has the largest number of Indian bands of any province in the country; if he could expand a little on the problems that have been created by this government for the people of British Columbia by the actions and the policies that have been foisted on British Columbians.

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the time allotted for me to speak was 20 minutes and I used my 20 minutes. If I were to address all the concerns this motion addresses just from my single perspective, I would need at least two hours in this House. There is a reliance by me on some of my colleagues which will happen today.

• (1220)

In terms of the question that my colleague asked about aboriginal issues, I have several major concerns, one of which is that the federal treaty office in British Columbia in a growth industry and has shown a lack of discipline in terms of its posture, attitude, behaviour and fiscal responsibility at a time when all other departments and operations in the province which are federally funded have been very much squeezed and pressured. There have been several instances of lack of financial control and a lack of terms of reference which would be applied in any other federal department. I think those have been reasonably well covered in the major media.

We do have an arrangement, an aboriginal fisheries strategy which is an allocation by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans which started in 1993. It allows aboriginal fisheries for commercial sale. This basically means that we now have a much bigger mandate in terms of enforcement and management. It is a much more complicated situation.

It is no surprise to people that we have fought against the aboriginal fisheries from the beginning on the basis that we do not believe there should be two commercial fisheries, one based on race and the other an all-Canadian fishery.

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The document from the operations division of DFO I quoted from indicates that indeed those complications are ever more complicated by the downsizing and will very much put the stock at risk. Specific comments have been made about the lower Fraser River. There are 98 Indian bands in British Columbia on the Fraser system alone.

The comments in this document deal with the lower Strait of Georgia, which I will cite. There are extensive delays in responding to fishing violations on the international boundary. American seiners and gill-netters often venture into Canadian waters to intercept Fraser River salmon stocks during the absence of Canadian fisheries patrol vessels equipped with modern tracking technology. The international consequences of not having an enforcement platform on the boundary in 1994 were highlighted by the press in Canada and the U.S.

Commitments to the Pacific Salmon Treaty require specific information and enforcement activity in this zone. Reduced enforcement capability on the most extensive aboriginal sales fishery in the Pacific region and escalation in non-compliance in closed periods and mandatory landings will result.

I appreciate the question from the member.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of my colleague from North Island—Powell River on this very important topic today, the alienation that British Columbia has felt over the last few years. This has escalated over the last three years with the present Liberal government. There are many issues and examples of the neglect and ways the government has taken British Columbia for granted that it would take days to detail them.

• (1225)

It is no wonder that particularly in the northern part of British Columbia there is a real sense of northern alienation and we are not just physically a great distance from Ottawa but certainly a great distance when it comes to the thinking of this government. It is exemplified by the fact that last December the government did not even deem it appropriate to consider that British Columbia might be a separate region when it was doling out vetoes for future constitutional amendments. That is how it manifested itself.

I was reminded of this just this past weekend when I flew home to my riding of Prince George—Peace River to attend a very special event in the city of Dawson Creek. Due to the efforts of a lot of people we found that the Alaska highway was being dedicated as the sixteenth civil engineering wonder of the world, so to speak. It takes its rightful place with other engineering projects such as the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and

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the Panama Canal. Quite frankly, I was absolutely appalled that there was no federal representation there.

This is a transport issue. This government deemed it appropriate to have the Minister of Transport from British Columbia. He was not present at that ceremony. No designate was present. This exemplifies the attitude of the federal government toward British Columbia. This was such an important event and there was no one there representing the federal government.

I wanted to bring it to the attention of the House as simply the latest example I am aware of where this federal government gives British Columbians a slap in the face. I say shame on this government.

I ask the member if he can think of an example similar to that, perhaps in his riding, perhaps in southern British Columbia, to relate to the people of Canada who are watching today of how the thinking of this federal government ends at the Rocky Mountains despite the fact that we have at least one federal minister from British Columbia, whom we certainly dearly missed in Dawson Creek last weekend.

Mr. Duncan: I have only one minute, Mr. Speaker, and I can think of several issues but I cannot obviously talk about all of them.

If I get down to riding specifics, the minister from British Columbia promised a community in my riding that the dock which burned down in 1989, which was uninsured because the federal government self-insures, would be replaced. That promise was made in 1995. I have pursued it with the minister and I have not received satisfaction. That is a clear broken promise.

There are other issues locally. One that concerns me a lot which is a B.C. issue happens to involve an air crash in Campbell River which took eight lives. We have clear recommendations from the transportation safety board that the visual flight rules in effect in Canada which were changed in 1990 against its recommendations need to be changed back to pre-1990 or there will be more fatalities as a result.

The senior bureaucrat responsible on the same day that investigation was announced after 11 months of study was quoted in the Vancouver *Sun* as saying they had no intention of changing the visual flight rules. The marginal weather in which these things happen is very much indicative of British Columbian weather. We are probably the major influence and I have not received any response from the minister to my representations in that regard.

• (1230)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Reform Party for once again providing an opportunity for the government to look good. Its members have worded its resolution in a manner that is negative

but, I assure you, Mr. Speaker, it gives us the opportunity of pointing what the facts are.

The motion, although confused, deserves a straightforward response. This government over the last three years has put the right priorities in place for British Columbia. I would like to talk on that point in five specific areas.

First, the economy and how the government is successfully following policies on the deficit and on jobs that fit well with the aspirations of British Columbians and, indeed, Canadians from one end of this country to the other. This the hon. member and his friends over the last three years have completely forgotten.

Second, I would like to point out that the government's emphasis on Asia-Pacific is good news for all of Canada, but no part of Canada more than B.C. It is in British Columbia that this emphasis on Asia-Pacific context with the Pacific rim, trade with the Pacific rim, has benefited us enormously. I am sure my colleague, the hon. secretary of state for Asia-Pacific, will be speaking on that.

The third point I would like to stress is what someone might call the political or constitutional—not that we are keen on the word constitutional these days—which is the government's historic recognition of British Columbia as a distinct region of this country, instead of simply being lumped with the prairies as has been the case when we used the term, the west, and included all four provinces. British Columbia is different. It is important that that be recognized. I am very pleased it has been recognized.

Fourth, the Reform Party's motion refers to British Columbia's position as Canada's gateway to the Pacific. I would like to mention some of our policies in transportation and elsewhere that are making British Columbia, particularly the airport in Vancouver, not just the gateway of western Canada or even North America to the Pacific but the whole western hemisphere. I will be talking about that at some length.

Fifth, I would like to mention several specific issues that relate particularly to British Columbia where we have had, thanks to the government's actions, B.C. priorities brought to bear on national decision making.

The final point I would like to make is that in all these major areas of concern for all British Columbians, the Reform Party has been a non-factor. It has been invisible. It has been insensitive. It has been ineffectual. It has been incompetent and, generally, it has been in a tailspin. This is shown clearly by the polls that have them falling rapidly and steadily in British Columbia from the position it held at the time of the election.

First is the debt, deficit, economy and jobs issue. In the last election campaign in British Columbia, British Columbians and Canadians across the country made it clear that the government had to get its fiscal house in order. The government promised that and it is delivering.

Job creation and deficit reduction go hand in hand. With a balanced and prudent approach, the government set out not only to meet but to exceed the targets set in 1993 one after another. Remember that not too long ago, Canada was faced with a deficit annually of \$42 billion. By 1997-98, that will have been cut to \$17 billion, which represents a 60 per cent reduction over that period.

We have worked hard on the government side to create a climate in which Canadians in business can expand, can grow, can hire more other Canadians and can provide the opportunities which result from that.

In British Columbia, the results are encouraging. It has one of the strongest provincial economies in the country. In fact, in most of that period it has been the strongest. British Columbia has created 100,000 new jobs since 1993 and the provincial inflation rate has dropped on a year over year basis of 1.2 per cent in April 1996. The employment growth is the highest in the country.

• (1235)

We expect this to be exceeded in the future. Over the next decade, it is expected British Columbia will create approximately 400,000 new jobs. It is not a question of the federal government doing this alone. However, the policies put in place allow the private sector to achieve the successes necessary for expansion and improvement in the job position.

We also of course are extremely lucky because of our strategic position on the edge of the Pacific and in relation to the Asia-Pacific trade. British Columbia is also endowed with resources which contribute dramatically to its opportunities.

However, the government has done its appropriate part to make sure British Columbians and British Columbia take advantage of those opportunities that I mentioned. We have the fundamentals right. The fundamental fiscal problem is being dealt with and we are getting the situation in the country as a whole, and in particular in British Columbia, into a far happier situation than it was three years ago.

Interest rates have declined three percentage points in the past 12 months. British Columbians know well, as do others across the country, that lower interest rates are the key to job creation because it encourages businesses to make investments and expand. It also, I might add, allows families to save thousands of dollars on their mortgage payments.

The inflation rate is the lowest in 30 years. British Columbians know how important it is for attracting foreign investment. Cutting the deficit, lowering interest rates and controlling inflation mean a stable economic climate in which foreign investment can be attracted and the economy can grow.

Supply

My second topic is Asia-Pacific. Canada is a Pacific nation and the government has brought that fact to life more than any previous government in recent history. The Pacific advantage is an advantage for all Canadians wherever they live, but it is particularly important in British Columbia.

The province of British Columbia is showing the way by taking advantage of the opportunities in the most economically vibrant region of the world. We are trying to work together with our fellow Canadians to make sure we benefit by the opportunities provided on the Pacific rim.

APEC, the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference, will be held in Vancouver, which is in my view the premier international city now and a jewel on the Pacific rim. As a British Columbian, I am pleased to see this city develop into a major commercial, cultural and tourism centre for the Pacific rim but also for the world. Its role as the gateway for the Asia-Pacific market will be showcased when the Prime Minister hosts the heads of state for the APEC leaders' summit in November of next year.

Our active participation in APEC over the last three years ensures that the interests of British Columbia and Canadians are fully taken into account in any decisions which strengthen trans-Pacific trade. We are in constant contact with other nations of the region in all sectors, private and public, so that the trade, economic and cultural objectives in Asia-Pacific can be realized.

There will be a series of other meetings taking place next year with respect to APEC. We have indicated that 1997 will be Canada's year of the Pacific. I, for example, as Minister of Transport, have invited my counterparts to a transportation ministerial meeting to be held in British Columbia in June 1997, the theme being "transportation supporting trade and growth in APEC". I believe the involvement of the government in APEC is a pretty clear indication that when it comes to looking to the future and expanding opportunities we are doing what we can and doing it well.

Team Canada has been talked about frequently. The trade missions have been outstanding successes. Members will recollect that the emphasis of those trade missions has been the Pacific rim. In the red book we made a commitment to strengthen our trading relationship with the Pacific rim and those trade missions were a direct result of that red book commitment.

We have had Team Canada trade missions to China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaya and they have proved to be extremely successful in providing opportunity for British Columbia and other Canadian businesses to obtain entry into other markets.

• (1240)

The figures of billions of dollars of trade have been explained at other times in the House. I need not go into them again. All I can say about the specific British Columbia component is that the

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increase in trade with the Pacific throughout the country inevitably benefits the city and the province best suited to take advantage of its geographic position on the Pacific rim.

We are not, however, resting on our laurels with respect to trade. We intend to have a further mission. The Prime Minister in January will lead another trade mission to Asia. Once again I confidently expect that British Columbian entrepreneurs and business people will be among the most active of the people who accompany him.

The recognition of British Columbia as a fifth region of the country is important.

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Belatedly.

Mr. Anderson: The hon. member says “belatedly”. I wonder where they were when this issue was being debated.

Last December a bill was introduced which indicated how the federal government would approach the constitutional amending formula. It outlined a regionally sensitive formula, but it did not include British Columbia. As a result of representations from myself and my colleagues in the British Columbia caucus—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Anderson: The peanut gallery is making comments. They did absolutely nothing to achieve the recognition of British Columbia as a distinct region of the country. They did nothing at all. Months later their complaints start.

The Prime Minister listened to our caucus. The result, for the first time, was that British Columbia was recognized as a distinct region for constitutional purposes. We are no longer lumped with the other western provinces.

I would like to go back about 50 years and quote from Bruce Hutchison’s book *The Unknown Country*. He said: “Crossing the Rockies you are in a new country, as if you had crossed a national frontier. Everyone feels it. Even the stranger feels the change in tempo, in outlook and in attitude”. That was 50 years ago. Fifty years later it was recognized by the Prime Minister. That is what leadership is all about.

I would like to speak on transportation, tourism and Asia-Pacific. The Reform Party’s motion refers to British Columbia’s position as Canada’s gateway to Asia-Pacific. I would like to mention some of the policies, which are apparently unknown to Reformers, in transportation and in other areas which are helping to make British Columbia not only Canada’s gateway, but, as I indicated earlier, the hemisphere’s gateway to Asia-Pacific.

We are making it a priority to maximize the blessings of geography, for example, with respect to Vancouver’s airport. The Reform Party is proposing today that we recognize B.C. as the gateway to Asia. That has already been done. As the saying goes, better late than never. It is better that the Reform Party recognize

now what has gone on over the last three years rather than continue in the ignorance which its members have displayed to date.

Sweeping and bold changes were introduced by the government which are liberating business in B.C. from red tape and bureaucratic clutter. They are allowing businesses to compete successfully with the very best of European, Asian and American businesses. They are strategic, forward looking and they are helping to position British Columbia as the international gateway.

Let me cite a few examples. The Vancouver international airport is fast becoming the hub for passengers and cargo travelling between Asia, Canada, the United States and Latin America. The Vancouver international airport served more than 11 million passengers in 1995. Its growth in that year out performed the national averages in every single sector. Indications are that 1996 will be even better, with the airport reporting a 21 per cent increase in passenger handling as of the end of July. This is not happening by chance. Policies laid down by the government are making it possible. Open skies, signed in February of 1995, is an excellent example of how policy helps the private sector.

• (1245)

It is not the impediment to growth that the Reform Party is indicating today. Rather, it is a landmark new initiative which gives Canadian air carriers unlimited route rights from any point in Canada to any point in the United States. It provides reciprocal rights for American carriers across Canada except with certain limitations in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal where there is a phase-in period.

Vancouver, as much as anywhere in the country, has seized the opportunity this government created with the open skies accord. To date, approximately 25 new routes between Vancouver international airport and the U.S. have been introduced. That is a massive leap in traffic at a time when most airports are experiencing far slower growth.

Air Canada has added services from Glasgow, Osaka, Paris, Seoul and Zurich to Vancouver over the past three years, as well as the Canadian international flights which are long established and better known.

In addition, we have been negotiating with many of the countries of the Asia Pacific region to establish new services. These include Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines. The Philippines only two or three weeks ago established a daily service to Vancouver.

The distance from Hong Kong to Chicago is almost 1,000 kilometres shorter when you use Vancouver instead of San Francisco as the gateway. We are making sure those advantages are realized.

The advantages of the new airport policy have again been seized enthusiastically by Vancouver. We now have in Vancouver one of the most successful modern airports in the world. I toured it

recently with the American secretary of transportation and it was pleasant to hear his compliments on this score.

The port of Vancouver is another extremely important element in the transportation system. In terms of tonnage it is among the top three ports in North America and is the major generator of jobs, growth and economic benefit in Vancouver.

The port's activities generate more than 10,700 full time jobs, and that is directly. The government looked at ports, looked at Vancouver, looked at the other ports of the country and then asked how can we make this better. And in fact, we did.

We want to ensure more local control, more businesslike approaches and less red tape. All this is taking place under the new marine policy. We will have greater efficiency, cut costs and we will give communities more control over their ports. That will allow Vancouver to further take advantage of its geographical and ice free port position.

Last year the port of Vancouver handled approximately 71.5 million tonnes of cargo from over 10,000 foreign and domestic vessels. Cargo worth more than \$29 billion went through the port's 20 major terminals to and from more than 90 different countries. With the introduction of Bill C-44 by this government, the subsequent years are likely to be a great deal better and stronger.

The cruise passenger industry is another area of great success. Once again positive policies of the government have contributed to that success.

Among other examples I will mention is the customs accord which was signed at the same time as the air accord in February 1995. We are expanding and improving the facilities at the border, thus making travel easier, thus making cross border trade a great deal better.

I could give figures on tourism but I think they are well known. Tourism has dramatically expanded. The gain from this tourism increase to the Canadian and British Columbian economies has been dramatic.

• (1250)

I might add that the party opposite certainly did not support the Prime Minister when he tripled the amount of federal funds that went into tourism promotion; indeed it opposed it. Now it sees the results, a greatly expanded economy, and naturally it is trying to swim on board.

Specific B.C. issues have made British Columbia's economy more effective, more competitive and more stable for investment from overseas. As my time is limited, let mention three examples: softwood lumber, B.C. Tel and the Triumph decision.

Softwood lumber is an area where we heard next to nothing from the Reform Party and yet a critically important issue to British Columbia. We have had over the last 10 years constant U.S.-Canadian bickering over softwood lumber exports, and Canadian ex-

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porters posted approximately \$800 million worth of bonds and cash as countervailing duties just to get their products into the United States.

This government brought an end to all of that and we now have the U.S.-Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement, announced in April of this year. The U.S. has now made the unprecedented commitment not to launch any trade actions on softwood lumber exports from Canada for the next five years. Thus stability for the industry, thus an industry which is nowhere in the country more important than in British Columbia, a definite economic gain.

Softwood lumber exports are 65 per cent from British Columbia to the United States. The remaining provinces have the remaining 35 per cent.

On the quota, province by province, British Columbia lumber companies receive the initial allocation of 59 per cent, which was welcomed by the industry both publicly and in private communications. I think the Reform Party probably now understands that and once again would like belatedly to get on board.

With regard to the B.C. Tel issue, an exception was made for British Columbia telephone which allowed the national policy to work effectively and which satisfied the important considerations of British Columbia at that time.

Similarly for Triumph, the research facility at the University of British Columbia, once again steady funding over the period, an opportunity for that to do its very best and to expand the economy of our province.

In summary, we have a clear example here of government policies which have led to improved economic conditions, an improved position for British Columbia. Our only problem we face in this House is that we have 24 Reform MPs from British Columbia who do not seem to understand the importance of working constructively to make sure these advantages are made even greater by working collectively in the years ahead.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will try to keep my question very short because I know a lot of my colleagues would like to ask a question of the minister. It is not often that we get the opportunity.

My question deals with a specific case which I referred to a few minutes ago in the House. What we have seen this last weekend is the Alaska highway achieve its rightful place in world recognition as the 16th international historic civil engineering landmark. It is now in the company of the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, the Panama Canal, et cetera.

This minister did not deem it important enough to show up. This minister did not deem it important enough to even send a letter. This minister did not deem it important enough to send even a message that could be read at the ceremony on Saturday. I wonder, if this is an example of how he treats the importance of British Columbian issues?

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Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, it shows the difference between Reformers on that side and the Liberals on this side. They are concerned with pomp and ceremonies. We are concerned with actual concrete results to achieve an improved economy for British Columbia. It is a simple example of the difference between our two parties. They go for show, we go for substance on this side of the House.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister says everything is just wonderful in B.C. and everything that has gone right is because of his personal intervention.

The minister seems to avoid any public accountability in B.C. for the actions of his party. He was a guest on the David Mitchell radio show a couple of weeks ago, but he only took one phone call from the public on the open line. That one phone call was extremely critical of his government and its policies.

• (1255)

There is another major talk show host in Vancouver, Rafe Mair, who constantly requests the minister to come on the show to answer questions and take an open line to the people of B.C.

I would like the minister to answer why he will not go on the Rafe Mair show or whether he will give a commitment in the House today that he will go on the Rafe Mair show and take open line in order to be accountable for the actions of his party in government.

I would also like the minister to comment on an article that was written by Barbara Yaffe in the Saturday edition of the Vancouver *Sun*. That article mentions a special report prepared for the intergovernmental affairs minister by the member for Simcoe North who recently travelled throughout B.C. and discovered that “the people in B.C. are feeling a sense of alienation and are mistrustful of Ottawa”.

The minister was called for comment by Ms. Yaffe and he declined to return the calls. Sure there is a feeling of alienation and miscommunication. The minister is responsible for it.

Why did he not return the call and could he please comment on the report prepared by the member for Simcoe North which indicates clearly that there is major alienation in B.C.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, with respect to Mr. Mitchell's hotline program, the hon. member is apparently unaware in his innocence of these matters that it is the host who determines how many questions go on the air, not the guest. That deals with that issue.

With respect to Mr. Mair, for whom he appears to be the agent, I have been on that program at least twice. I do not object to going on

there again, but there is a certain predictability of that program. There is a certain predictability of the audience which makes me feel that I am not truly speaking to ordinary, average British Columbians when I am on his program.

The Reform Party, which is sinking so rapidly in the public opinion of British Columbia, should begin to understand the message I am giving it. Wake up. Find out where the real majority of British Columbians stand. They are not restricted to the audience of one or another hotline radio program.

With respect to Barbara Yaffe, I have not read her column. I do not recollect receiving a call from her on Friday. I will check my file. There may be dozens of calls a day from the press at particular times when there are issues such as WestJet and others which take the time of a minister. However, I will check. The normal course of events for Barbara Yaffe as a columnist in Vancouver is that the calls are all returned to her.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I noticed the minister likes to take credit for a lot of issues with regard to the deficit. We should perhaps talk about the record of the government.

Indeed the deficit has gone down by \$25 billion during this term. However, new government revenues received from the taxpayers have gone up \$25 billion. So what are all these government cutbacks about? They are about paying more interest on the debt. The Liberals do not want to talk about the debt, but it will exceed \$600 billion next month and will be by their own estimates \$619 billion next year.

If the Reform Party's platform had been adopted by this government we would have already balanced the books and we would be starting to see no more cuts in program delivery. The program delivery cuts we suggested, you are in many cases exceeding in what you are doing and we very much question the priority—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I remind members to direct all interventions through the Chair, not directly to one another across the floors. I will allow the hon. member for North Island—Powell River to conclude his comments and his question, please.

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I regret that. I lost myself there.

• (1300)

The minister talked about the veto situation in British Columbia. It is very clear that British Columbians did not want a veto for anyone when it came to constitutional change. If the minister wants to know why half of the British Columbian Reform members voted against a veto for British Columbia it was because we were

opposed to the whole concept of vetoes which in the long run is going to make constitutional change very difficult indeed.

I was personally involved in the softwood lumber dispute. I got into a debate in the media with the member for Kenora—Rainy River in Ontario. I assure the minister that we were talking to industry. We were taking an active interest. We were putting some Ontario members on notice that British Columbia had a strong agenda. All the government did was to do what was correct and fair, which is unusual. Some things have been done which have been fair. They were done that way simply because there are 24 Reform members from the province of British Columbia.

A further observation is that the minister certainly enjoys taking credit for some of the initiatives that were carried forward by the previous Minister of Transport, the best minister this government has had.

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I do not know quite where to start.

Let us start with half of the Reformers voting for the veto and half voting against it. The hon. member explains why half voted against it, but he does not explain why half of his colleagues voted the other way. That is as mixed up as the Reform Party usually is on most important issues affecting British Columbia.

With respect to the debt and deficit, let me explain again to the member that revenues are up. Why? Because the economic situation is better and revenues go up at times like that. This is a lesson in economics which apparently has missed the hon. member and indeed the whole Reform Party.

Had we adopted Reform's policies, we would not have had that increase in economic activity. We would not have had that increase in revenue and we would not have been able to cut the deficit as this government has done. It is perfectly clear that he had better understand a little better what the issue is with respect to deficits and how one can tackle it effectively without creating a recessionary situation which would put millions more Canadians out of work, which was their policy.

With respect to softwood lumber, I am glad to hear what he has said about his party being in favour of what happened because we did not hear it when it counted, which was before the decision was made. Now he has corrected the record. We say: "Fine. Thank you for joining with us in making sure that we got that particular matter dealt with".

The basic problem, if I may point this out to the House at this time, is that in the Reform Party, British Columbia members simply do not get a fair shake. They have four times as many members in this House as the Liberal caucus which has six from

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British Columbia, but Reform's Alberta members are constantly dominating what goes on in that party.

An article in the Edmonton *Journal* talks about the B.C. members being left out in the cold in the assignment of duties. It talks about a specific member, the chairman of the B.C. caucus, who said that finance, criminal justice matters and the future of social programs are the most important items on the national agenda for the next few years. They are key issues where Reform hopes to score points and Alberta Reformers were awarded all of these prestige critic positions by the hon. member from Calgary, the leader of that party.

The chairman of the B.C. caucus went on to say that it is needed to make the hon. member from Calgary, the leader of his party, realize the need for more regional balance. "We do not want to be run by one province. Appearances in politics is everything".

• (1305)

This is one of the basic problems that we from British Columbia, all 32 of us, as a group face in the House of Commons. There are six on the government side and 26 on the opposition side, 24 of whom are in the Reform Party, the third party. Those Reform members do not get a look in when the Alberta people are dividing the critic's positions or the opportunities for questioning in this House. I have here all the information on issue after issue affecting British Columbians where they have sat silent because the Alberta members dominate their caucus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to commend my colleague from North Island—Powell River for putting forward today's opposition motion on behalf of the Reform Party.

We will use the time allocated to the official opposition to show how, at the eastern end, on the Quebec side, the federal government's malfeasance and attitudes have also impeded progress, especially in Quebec.

For the benefit of the people listening to us, I will read this motion:

That this House support British Columbia as Canada's gateway to the Asia Pacific and recognize British Columbia as a major economic power in the region, and as a consequence, this House condemn the federal government for impeding progress in Western Canada by its management of the affairs of the nation, exemplified by the government's mishandling of the west coast fishery, Coast Guard services, the closure of military bases at Aldergrove and Chilliwack, B.C., the elimination of federal Ports Canada policing in B.C., the movement of grain to Prince Rupert, B.C. and other issues detrimental to the state of the nation.

You will agree with me that, in several instances, if the word "Quebec" were substituted for the words "Western Canada" or "nation", one could come to practically the same conclusions as

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the hon. member for North Island—Powell River. I will address the part of his motion dealing with the Coast Guard, which could lead to other federal issues that have hurt Quebec and its economy for some 30 years.

I am very happy to participate in this debate on the Coast Guard, among other things, as an associate member of the fisheries and oceans committee, as the member for Trois-Rivières, which is a port city, a maritime city, and also as the official opposition's critic on regional development.

The Coast Guard has launched a full-scale attack against what could be called Quebec's overall economy. It is leading a frontal attack against St. Lawrence Seaway, its ports and those who use them and it is also carrying out an assault that is more deceitful, hypocritical and irresponsible in economic terms against ordinary citizens, ordinary Quebec consumers unlucky enough—as we will see in a moment—to own a pedal-boat, a kayak or a rowboat and to use it on one of Quebec's lakes or little rivers in their free time.

We will start our review of these two issues by looking at the Coast Guard's plan to charge users of the St. Lawrence River and the St. Lawrence Seaway. A decision was made a few months ago, at the beginning of the year, to charge users of the St. Lawrence in three ways: first, for the use of navigational aids such as beacons, buoys and telecommunications, most of which are managed by the Canadian Coast Guard; second, as early as this fall, for ice removal, for the use of icebreakers and; third, for the dredging of the ports on the St. Lawrence and the channels leading from each port to the St. Lawrence.

• (1310)

The project was the subject of what is termed consultation at the Coast Guard. The IBI report, according to all those who appeared before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, involved bogus consultation; it is not even worth the paper it is written on, for all its irresponsibility and biased questions responses.

That was the position at Fisheries and Oceans and at the Coast Guard, but following strong representations made by the official opposition, the minister finally had to admit that the fisheries and oceans committee should be consulted and users invited to at least express their views publicly, which was done.

About fifty users from across Canada came to testify, 75 per cent of whom requested a moratorium, in part because, the IBI study did not include an impact assessment to determine how a decision to impose a tariff would affect the users. In many cases, the shipowners using the St. Lawrence River are foreign shipowners, and they will now be charged for the use of the river, which will seriously jeopardize the competitiveness of ports along the St. Lawrence.

There has been no impact study, although the industry concerned, the stakeholders were prepared to participate in a joint

government-user study. Instead, the government took a unilateral, arbitrary approach, deciding to impose, as a first step, new tariffs for navigational aids.

Governments, and not the least significant ones, namely the governments of Ontario and Quebec, reacted very strongly against this. But as far as I know, while the Quebec Minister of Transport, Mr. Brassard, who is responsible for this issue, has repeatedly asked to meet the federal minister responsible. No meeting has taken place. This goes to show the arbitrary way this government goes about things and the true extent of its willingness to co-operate.

Another decision was made later on. Contrary to the decision made at the time when a uniform tariff was being considered, that is to say a single tariff applied throughout Canada, from coast to coast, the government gave in to lobby groups from across the country and decided to divide the country in three regions.

There is a specific objective: user fees. The Coast Guard has a mandate to come up with X millions of dollars as its contribution in the fight to bring down the Canadian government's deficit. Nobody has come right out and said so—it is the Coast Guard's share.

With all of Canada facing a real problem, they decided to carve up this vast, wonderful, united country into three large regions: the West; central Canada, meaning the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes; and the East, that is the Maritimes, with the Port of Halifax obviously being the focal point. They have carved Canada up into three large regions with three kinds of user fees.

There is one fee for the West, one for central Canada, and one for the East. As if by chance, the central region, including Quebec and Ontario, the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes, is being asked to contribute the most. Forty-eight per cent of the revenues from these fees will come from the central region, 30 per cent from the East and 22 per cent from the West.

The concept of user fees being proposed, furthermore, is truly astonishing. Not only were there no real consultations, but it has been decided that people travelling on the St. Lawrence use the services of the Coast Guard.

• (1315)

In not one case has it ever been shown that any services are actually provided, but the Coast Guard has decided to charge fees anyway.

The result is that, for North Shore ports, such as Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles and Port-Cartier, a single buoy, an aid to navigation, will cost users \$5 million. This is a small example of what happens when the powers that be fail to consult the client where the concept of user fees is involved.

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The overall result is that, without any impact study, it seems that, according to users, there is a serious danger, given the very fierce competition that exists, that the competitiveness of ports on the St. Lawrence, and even in the Great Lakes, but especially ports on the St. Lawrence, will be jeopardized by the additional costs resulting from these new rates, which will put St. Lawrence ports at a disadvantage compared to ports in eastern Canada, particularly Halifax, ports on the American eastern seaboard, and even ports on the Mississippi.

There is talk in certain sectors, and not the least important ones, and this view is supported up by SODES, the Société de développement économique du Saint-Laurent, that the existing fees could double with the introduction of this new scheme.

Do you know what SODES is? It is not some little backwater special interest group. It has 110 members. They come from practically everywhere in Canada, although mostly from Quebec, given the name. Its members include: the Association de l'industrie de l'aluminium du Québec—all the aluminum smelters in Quebec belong to SODES—the Association des armateurs du Saint-Laurent, the Association des industries forestières du Québec, all the pulp and paper industries, and the Business Development Bank of Canada. The federal government belongs to SODES, and SODES feels that there is a likelihood of the fees doubling. Canada Steamship Lines is a member—and I hardly need draw you a picture to show that its federal connections are not very distant ones. St. Lawrence Cement, the entire Quebec City Urban Community is a member, as is the Quebec-Cartier Mining Company, Trois-Rivières grain elevators, in my riding, le Groupe Desgagnés, le Groupe Océan. Industry Canada is also a member of SODES.

SODES is, therefore, very concerned about the effects which are, to use its members' own words, potentially devastating for the economy of Quebec, the cities and ports along the St. Lawrence. Industry Canada is a stakeholder in the SODES evaluation. The Quebec Maritime Institute, Lavery & de Billy—a major law firm—, Logistec Corporation, MIL Davie, Oceanex. Fisheries and Oceans Canada is also a member of SODES. The consistency of this government is quite evident.

Irving Oil too is a member. No less than Irving, of the fine province of New Brunswick, whose owner, let me remind you,—there must certainly be an element of family trust in this story—threatened to cut his children out of the will if they did not move out of Canada to avoid paying tax, to avoid his estate's ending up in Canada's tax coffers. Irving Oil is a member of SODES, in brackets, and is also threatened by the federal plans. The central St. Lawrence pilots, the port of Montreal, the port of Sept-Îles, the port of Trois-Rivières, the port of the Saguenay, to name just a few. The Shipping Federation of Canada, the Société du parc industriel et portuaire de Bécancour, Transport Canada—also a member—, Ultramar, the City of Montreal, Quebec City. I could go on and on; there are 110 in all.

• (1320)

So this is just the first step. We are talking about navigational aids only, because more information is available on this particular subject. It will be necessary to recover \$20 million in 1996, out of projected \$180 million to be recovered between now and the year 2000: \$20 million this year, \$40 million in each of the two following years, and then \$60 million annually, the other items being deicing, the use of icebreakers and dredging of harbours.

Another source of irritation to users is the fact that, contrary to what was called for, there was no cost cutting by the Coast Guard itself, which might have reduced fees to users.

According to our information, the Coast Guard has never embarked on an exercise to streamline its operations, which would have made its case more convincing. We must realize that putting the burden on the shoulders of users weakens the competitive position of St. Lawrence ports and makes it less attractive for shippers to do business with us. The cost-cutting exercise never took place. As I pointed out earlier, there was no explanation of the actual services the Coast Guard offers its users on a day to day basis.

One of the points that, in my opinion, illustrates the disastrous consequences of lack of co-operation between Fisheries and Oceans and users concerns the way fees are charged, which is a very important aspect. A decision is made to charge fees, but how will this be done? Apparently there were two methods known to those in the industry. The first one is based on the size of the ship. I will give you a fictional tonnage: a ship that has a tonnage of 30,000 always has a tonnage of 30,000, wherever it may be.

The other method is according to the tonnage of cargo unloaded, which makes all the difference and is a sore point between ports of destination and ports of call. In this case, we have a major port of destination, the port of Montreal, and a major port of call, the port of Halifax. If we take the method based on the size of the ship, all ports are equal, but if the fee is based on tonnage unloaded, this works out to the advantage of the port where the unloading takes place.

So of course the port of Halifax has an advantage if the fee was based on the tonnage of cargo unloaded. So what was the Coast Guard's decision? It decided that fees would be based on the unloaded cargo tonnage, thus obviously favouring the port of Halifax at the expense of Montreal. Another good decision designed to favour Quebec's economy, right?

An additional consequence is that, again according to calculations made by SODES, which I mentioned earlier, these costs could reach one dollar per ton. There was so little consultation—and

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SODES is a responsible organization, as we saw earlier—that, according to the Coast Guard, these additional costs could result in an increase of ten cents per ton.

There is therefore, as we can see, a huge gap between the estimates of two organizations that are supposed to be responsible, competent and capable of issuing an opinion. Someone may be wrong, but this discrepancy definitely shows that there was no co-operation.

A direct consequence of this is that, should things remain the same, the north shore region, including Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles, Port-Cartier and other ports, not using icebreakers since there is not enough ice build up in that area, will be charged a fee for the use of icebreakers, even though there is no need. This will be the case because it was decided that, in such and such regions, under such and such conditions, it will cost so much money for the use of icebreakers. People are very concerned because, again, this situation will adversely affect these ports, in terms of their ability to compete with other ports.

• (1325)

What the Coast Guard did last spring shows that it did not know where it was going. For example, over two weeks, from the end of February to the middle of March, its overall fee schedule rose from \$3.40 to \$4.48, an increase of \$1.08 or 33 per cent per gross ton. This is very important as it, in my opinion, contributes to this whole exercise's lack of credibility with users, because every time the Coast Guard is pressured by a lobby group into changing its fee schedules or procedures, it just so happens that the changes are made at the expense of Quebec's management and infrastructure. A \$1.08 increase over two weeks is quite impressive when we are talking about three or four dollars.

Another practical consequence is that, according to what we have learned, a 25,000-ton ship will have to pay \$112,000 a year just for navigational aids. Users will eventually also have to pay for ice breaking and dredging operations. Do you not think that this represents a serious threat to us all, at least in Quebec? Since all this is being managed from Ottawa, since Quebec has no say in these decisions, Quebec's overall economy may be seriously compromised by such actions if we fail to mobilize more against them.

Since I have only two minutes left, much to my surprise, I will quickly move on to the other decision made by the Coast Guard, which is a beauty. I am talking about recreational boaters.

The government has in the works an elaborate mandatory registration process for small craft: canoes, kayaks, rowboats and pedal boats. The fee will vary from \$5 to \$35 per craft and covers

training courses and a penalty system. Again, the consultation was bogus—that is what we were told—strangely similar to the consultation process involving the users of the St. Lawrence River.

The great excuse given for meddling in this area is public safety. But how will paying a \$25 fee before they set foot in their boats make recreational boaters more safety conscious? I think this is a relevant question. How will this make pleasure boaters more safety conscious, especially since this is based on the principle of user fees?

Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for lakes. It is pretty outrageous, in fact, for Fisheries and Oceans to look after the lakes and small rivers in Quebec, while the Coast Guard has jurisdiction over the St. Lawrence River, the Richelieu River, the Ottawa River and the Saguenay River. Those who vacation in Quebec, who spend money in Quebec and Canada, who take a rowboat or a pedal boat along any small river or lake in Canada are being obliged to pay up. They are being charged a fee while the owners of sumptuous boats are not being bothered. They have to register their boats, but can do so for free. Yet, they are the ones really who make the most use of the buoys, communications facilities and locks.

Do you know how much it apparently costs to move a 30-footer through a lock? The rate is 50 cents per foot. This means a mere \$15 to get a lock opened. But they want to tax the individual who enjoys a ride on a pedal boat along the shore of a small lake. That is what it is, a tax, a disguised tax, which—and I say this as the critic for regional development—penalizes Quebecers and Canadians who vacation in Quebec and Canada. Perhaps some thought should be given to that, to how this affects those who spend at home instead of abroad. They are being penalized by this anti-regional development measure, among other things.

I could go on about this, but my time has expired.

• (1330)

[English]

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc for his speech. There is some commonality in some of the things my colleague is speaking about.

One of the concerns is the whole question of user fees. It has been identified that Canadians are paying more now in user fees for government services than they are paying for GST. We are dealing with a level of government, the federal government, that basically collects one dollar in two of all taxes in Canada. To me these user fees appear to be a new form of taxation that is not called taxation in some cases. It is easy to buy into the user fee principle as long as the fee is used for appropriate purposes.

One of the concerns that has been identified in British Columbia is that we now have a commercial marine industry that as of June is paying commercial marine fees in a major way. There is the recreational fee the member was also referring to which will be coming into play probably next year. It has been deferred. We know from insiders that this is another tax or revenue grab. It will be packaged in such a way that this is a necessary user fee in order to ensure that recreational boats and recreational boaters are appropriately licensed and controlled in some measure. Is that how the member sees it?

Another thing that concerns us is the sense of prioritization that is coming forward. The safety aspects in the Pacific region that deal with public safety, the cuts that are being made that have serious ramifications are the rough equivalent of \$7 million annually. I am not talking about fisheries management here. I am only talking public safety, the coast guard, search and rescue. At the same time we see the minister of heritage spending an unbudgeted amount but what is reported to be \$23 million to give away Canadian flags. I would ask the member to comment on that.

[Translation]

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I think that, in the case of recreational boaters, this is indeed a disguised tax. It is ill-advised to implement such a measure. In the case of Quebec, it might make sense if, at least, it only applied to those waters, including the St. Lawrence River, where the Coast Guard is present.

However, supposedly for reasons of public safety, this applies to areas where the Coast Guard never set foot and does not provide any service. There is something which I did not mention earlier, but which I find very annoying. I am referring to the purported benefits mentioned by the Coast Guard to justify the registration of boats and the implementation of user fees. As regards these benefits, the Coast Guard issued the following press release on April 30, 1996:

Benefits: The establishment of a computerized system to store up-to-date information on boats allowing the organizations responsible for search and rescue operations and for implementing the act, to have quick access to reliable data, 24 hours a day. This system would greatly increase their effectiveness during investigations relating to theft and other offences, and to search and rescue operations. All those who use Quebec waters would benefit from this improvement.

● (1335)

I am certainly in favour of law and order, but I see imminent dangers in letting everyone, including Fisheries and Oceans and the Coast Guard, monitor the public. Every Tom, Dick and Harry is giving himself a mandate to oversee the public and, if we let it happen, there is a risk that we will find ourselves in a quasi-police state, where any stakeholder with any kind of power can, given the

Supply

current sophisticated technology, find out a great deal about his neighbour's private life.

It will be possible, thanks to the rowboats and pedal boats, to follow the comings and goings of citizens around the clock. The intention may be good but, as we know, there are a lot of people who can manipulate this sort of information. Some people know how to make lists. Therefore, a debate should be held regarding this issue. As a parliamentarian, I am increasingly annoyed by this type of behaviour.

This is a tax, hypocritically disguised. We are witnessing, as with gun control, a tighter control over the public. There should at least be a real public debate to find out what kind of society we want to live in, given the existing dangers. As we know, studies show that some dangers exist because of sophisticated means involved in this issue.

[English]

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my debate today with a question: How does the Liberal government feel about B.C.? I would also like to answer that question from the perspective of a B.C. member of Parliament.

The government likes our taxes and it likes to be able to use them, with B.C. as a have province, to provide equalization payments to the have not provinces. It seems to like to hold its conventions in Vancouver, I think for very obvious reasons, and it likes to visit us in the winter. In fact, the Prime Minister is attending an international conference in Vancouver in November of this year.

How does the government repay us? Well, among other things, it mismanages our fishery. I will refer to the 1996 spring hearings which were really a charade. I would like to read into the record a letter from the sports fishing industry in Victoria, British Columbia to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Referring to those hearings, the fishermen said:

There is no satisfaction in this outcome, only regret that the concerns brought forward by the sport fishing community were not taken more seriously by senior DFO officials. While we appreciate the audience you gave to our concerns last spring, the outcome was a rejection of the alternatives which were presented to you. In addition, no other options were considered by your ministry which could have mitigated the economic impact for the sport fishery and ultimately the consequences that British Columbia and its coastal communities are suffering.

The Liberal government has a habit of situating its hearings. It seeks to have people appear before its committees who are on line with Liberal policies and therefore will follow the strategy that the Liberal government has already determined. There are a number of instances of this but I will leave it at that for now.

The Liberal government has also moved to remove the last regular army presence in British Columbia. I will speak more to that in a few moments.

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Despite the fact that Vancouver is recognized and acknowledged as one of the major ports through which drugs and contraband are imported into Canada and thence to the United States, the federal government has decided to do away with the port police at the port of Vancouver. We question the wisdom of that.

The government has replaced manned light stations, or are in the process of doing so, with automated stations. I would like to refer to the views of a tugboat captain, Robert D. McCoy, who said: "Having spent the best part of 52 years sailing on this coast, 30 of them as a tugboat master, I feel I am well qualified to speak on this subject. I am as protective toward my tax dollars as any Canadian. Automated lights cannot give visual reports on sea conditions or the visibility in the vicinity of the stations. These alone are of paramount importance to mariners and bush pilots. They cannot see flares nor can they render assistance of any kind. My personal experience with reports from automated buoys is that their data are sporadic and at times unreliable. To put the Canadian marine community at the mercy of a satellite system operated by the U.S. department of commerce is to me questionable at best".

• (1340)

Of late the word is that we are going to reduce the coast guard presence on the west coast. Again, this is another reduction which will dramatically impact the safety of the citizens of the west coast. I will have more to say on that in a moment.

My time is restricted and therefore I will limit my comments to light stations, the coast guard and the military.

With regard to light stations, Reform is in support of economizing but certainly not at the price of people's safety and welfare. The B.C. coastline is unlike any other in the world, save possibly the coastline of Norway.

We cannot compare the B.C. coastline to that of Washington, Oregon or California. We cannot compare it to the coastline of Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Newfoundland. Its deep fiords, steep descents into the water and rocky coastline is unique. Other than perhaps Alaska and Norway, there is no comparable coastline in the world. Therefore studies which show that other areas have divested themselves of manned light stations are interesting but not relevant to B.C.

The coast of B.C. has extremely heavy traffic. I will deal more with that in a few moments as it bears on the subject as well. A human presence is required. I can think of two recent incidents. One was last spring at the north end of Vancouver Island where a ship was foundering with two people aboard. The only way the message got out and assistance was rendered was the observation of the light station keeper at the north end of Vancouver Island.

My colleague has referred to a second incident which happened this past weekend. I would like to read from the *Globe and Mail* report on it: "Bella Bella, B.C. U.S. pilot John Hilliard has a lighthouse keeper to thank for being plucked from the wing of his sinking aircraft after he crashed near this community on the central B.C. coast. With some direction from the Canadian Coast Guard and a lighthouse keeper on McInnes Island, he was rescued unharmed".

It has been plainly obvious that there are alternatives available. The B.C. government has offered to become involved and it is my contention that the federal government has not taken this intervention seriously and considered it enough. The policy to unman the light stations needs to be re-examined promptly.

I would like to move now to the Canadian Coast Guard. The coast guard budget was previously reduced, as were all government departments. We are not fighting against that. Now the government is proposing even further cuts to the coast guard in the Pacific region. It is talking about a 35 per cent reduction, or about \$31 million and 360 staff, over the coming four years.

For the 1997 year commencing on April 1 the fleet budget will be reduced by \$7 million, reducing the coast guard vessels from 39 to 22. That is a reduction of 17 vessels out of the coast guard fleet on the west coast. There are also plans to multitask and cross train the crews to provide support to both coast guard and DFO programs and the reassignment of coast guard vessels to fisheries duties. We will not argue with any of that. Cross training people and double tasking them if it does not affect their prime capability is a good program.

We are concerned about the safety of air and marine traffic using west coast corridors. In my own case, and I will be referring to it in a bit more detail later, we are concerned about the safety of students, residents and tourists which is in question as a result of this policy.

The coast guard is responsible for many programs. Every one of them is affected by these cuts. My chief concerns today are in the area of search and rescue, environmental response, that is pollution from shipping, and direct spill response management or supervision of private sector clean-up. Last, the area I am concerned about is the loss of coast guard influence on boating safety; that is, to provide information, advice, inspections and demonstrations. The coast guard is also responsible for providing navigation aids, buoys, beacons and other conventional marine aids.

• (1345)

The decision has been made to discontinue visual aids based on the presumption that the GPS, the global positioning system, will overtake them and make them redundant. However, our neighbours to the south have had GPS in place for a number of years and they

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have made no such move. They have left the visual buoys, the visual shore markers and the long range navigation system in place.

In my region many U.S. boaters who come up to sail in the Gulf Islands, one of the most beautiful spots in the world, are navigating on Esso road maps. I guess we could say they are not taking enough precautions, but surely we cannot ignore the fact that they are in Canadian waters and it is our responsibility to provide support to them if an emergency should arise.

The reductions result in an increased response time for search and rescue emergencies, an increased response time and reduced capability in the case of oil spills and a reduced effective response area for the coast guard in general.

The total staff reduction has not yet been explained in detail. My concern is how much of the reduction will take place at the tail and how much will take place at the tooth. Surely we could do away with some bureaucrats and keep the coast guard at the sharp end, available to do the job.

Local government and citizens have provided me with very strong and very irate feedback. The letters protesting the relocation of the Ganges station, which is on Saltspring Island, come from the capital regional district, school district 64, which is the Gulf Islands district, the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce, the Gulf Islands Teachers Association, the Saltspring Island fire department, Local 788 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and many more from individuals on Saltspring Island and other affected B.C. coastal areas.

Yearly traffic in B.C. waters surrounding the Gulf Islands consists of a quarter of a million pleasure craft, which is increasing every year, 6,000 fishing vessels, more than 3,000 merchant ships and increasing traffic from our neighbours to the south. On an average summer weekend there will be 30,000 pleasure boats in B.C. waters. Added to this are chartered seaplanes, or float planes, bringing in tourists from a number of areas.

I do not want to lobby for a local coast guard on Saltspring Island, but I do know that these cuts have had a detrimental impact on the presence of the coast guard on the west coast.

This is an area of very heavy traffic. It is the heart of the ocean playground. There is a plethora of ocean and tourist traffic in the area. There is an abundance of sport fishing. Yachts love it. Tourists and float planes are present at all times. Shipping lanes run through the area and many deep sea vessels anchor in and around the Gulf Islands waiting for authority to enter the port of Vancouver.

The area also houses the Victoria international airport. There are twelve ferry terminals. Ferry traffic between the mainland and Vancouver Island alone consists of more than 20 million passengers annually. There are innumerable marinas and yacht clubs. The area is teeming with boats the year round.

• (1350)

The area around the Gulf Islands and Powell River have become two of the most popular scuba diving destinations in Canada. Unhappily, in the case of decompression sickness in scuba divers minutes count. It is vital that the coast guard be there to provide immediate response if an incident does occur.

Unlike many communities in the rest of Canada, students attending the high school in the Gulf Islands on Saltspring Island use school boats rather than school busses. There are three school boats operating out of Ganges, the *Scholarship*, the *Graduate* and the *Ganges Hawk*. They operate twice a day over 190 days a year, starting at 6.45 in the morning when they pick up the students and deliver them to school and returning at 3.30 in the afternoon, taking them back to the islands where they live. Obviously during the winter the return journey takes place after dark. Therefore there are added hazards.

Our gulf enjoys a Mediterranean climate but the water temperature is not very variable. It goes from about 4 degrees in the summer to about 2 degrees in the winter. Estimates are that an individual in that water will lose consciousness in between 30 minutes to a maximum of 45 minutes. This depends on the condition of the individual, the attitude and the what the individual is wearing at the time. Additionally, the area is subject to strong tides, rocky shores and shoals, and in winter the waters are subject to fog, storms and darkness. It is a lovely area, but one which people need to respect rather than simply take lightly.

The Gulf Islands school district also depends on the coast guard locally for safety training of students travelling by the water taxi and for doing safety inspections on those taxis. The requirement is that they be there in case of an accident.

There is talk that the Ganges station will be relocated to Victoria. When that happens it will reduce the response capabilities substantially. This is an issue of cutting the sharp end rather than the wagging tail.

When this happens the proposal is to replace the present coast guard vessel *Skua* in Ganges with an roving vessel called the *Atlin Post*. The *Skua* is capable of speeds up to 24 knots. The *Atlin Post* is an 8 knot vessel. It is going to journey between Nanaimo and the Gulf Islands. If it should be at the northern end of its sweep when an emergency happens there is just no way the vessel is going to be able to respond in time. It may take two and half to three hours for the coast guard to get from that position to where it is required.

Moving the *Skua* to Victoria is placing the vessel and its crew in danger. The *Skua* is designed for inter-island operations. The area down to Victoria exposes them to open waters in which the seas and the storms will be beyond the capacity of the vessel. In point of

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fact, the vessel will be replaced in the winter with a 44 foot ship from Port Hardy.

The Ganges coast guard at the moment is on call 24 hours a day with a 15 minute launch window, even during standby hours. This has been depended on to maintain the safety standards in the area. The removal of this unit from that area will definitely degrade its ability. It has responded to requests from the fire department. It has taken equipment and emergency calls from the various islands around. There is a certain safety in numbers. However, we cannot always count on someone being there to help a vessel in distress. We can stay beside a broken down car on the road. But if a boat breaks down it is likely to be washed on to the rocks and be in extremely serious trouble before help can arrive.

Michael Turner, the deputy commissioner of the coast guard, has said that the merger between DFO and the coast guard will have a minor impact on users. Some jobs would be lost but most would be at the admin end and not the pointy end. The closure of Ganges station proves this is not so.

• (1355)

With the move of the coast guard from Ganges, unit 36 of the coast guard auxiliary will be involved in providing assistance to boaters with problems.

This is a super outfit. There are thirty active members who have units in Sidney, Mill Bay, Oak Bay, Victoria and Sooke. They serve the Saanich Inlet to the San Jauns and throughout the gulf islands. They have done an excellent job. They have been called out 69 times since April of 1995 and they have highly trained volunteer crews on call. They accept the requirement to be on 10 minutes call from their boats 24 hours a day.

But they are in trouble. The two vessels are located at Sidney and Brentwood Bay. They receive coast guard tasking money for fuel, maintenance, which is based on the size and power of the vessels and the number of hours on the water for extra funds. But they require extra funds, which are not provided and they have to raise, for weather cruiser suits, for life jackets, for hand held radios. They presently have one hand held radio, which cost about \$400, and they require six.

It costs about \$10,000 to keep that unit operational for six months. Currently it has \$1,000 in its budget, so those cuts will hit that auxiliary unit hard.

The federal Emergency Preparedness Act states that every minister accountable to Parliament for the administration or affairs of a government institution is responsible for identifying civil emergencies that are within or related to his or her area of accountability and for developing a civil emergency plan for such situations. I contend that lowering the coast guard presence on the

west coast, particularly in the Gulf Islands and on Vancouver Island, is not accepting that as a realistic requirement.

I also point out that the Deputy Prime Minister in her position as minister of heritage has managed to give away \$23 million and counting on flags. The coast guard cuts are \$31 million. The money the minister was able to find for the flags might have been better applied to the coast guard.

The base closure at Chilliwack is probably the worst case of ignoring B.C. problems that I have seen. I have a personal acquaintance with that base. It has real estate, it has plant, it has a climate that is incomparable and irreplaceable anywhere else in Canada. The reason the engineering school was moved there from Dundurn was climate. That cannot be replaced. It is a mistake and that policy should be reconsidered.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I see you are standing to put some questions to the hon. member, but I think that with the shortage of time we will take the questions immediately after question period.

It being almost 2 p.m., we will proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to take part in the Durham Federation of Agriculture's fact finding tour of area farmers last Friday.

Agricultural sales are second only to the automotive sector in total economic production in Durham. Farmers engaged in the production of beef, eggs, milk and wine were part of our stops where they could voice their concerns to federal, provincial and municipal representatives.

Farmers are part of small business as well, which is why the Scugog Chamber of Commerce hosted a subsequent dinner which also included small business operators. Reinventing government means government, farmers and small businesses working together to solve common problems.

I would like to thank the Durham Federation of Agriculture as well as the Scugog Chamber of Commerce for an opportunity to listen to their concerns. They can be assured their voices are being heard here in Ottawa.

• (1400)

[Translation]

THE LAVAL COSMODÔME

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the white elephant known as the Cosmodôme in Laval is another fine example of wasted public funds. It has already swallowed up \$31 million and there is talk of another \$10 million being needed to keep it going.

I am in no way questioning the educational value of the establishment, but I think there is a serious management problem. I urge the provincial and federal governments to resist the temptation to pour more money into this losing concern and I hope that the City of Laval will get its act together and quit thinking that the solution to its problems lies in our pockets.

This reminds me of something former federal minister André Ouellet said a few months ago about the Mirabel airport. "After twenty years", he said, "it can be concluded that Mirabel was a mistake".

Taxpayers have already contributed more than their share to pay for this white elephant: another bottomless pit just like Mirabel airport.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, melatonin burst on the alternative medical scene with a flourish. Produced naturally in the brain of humans it has claimed to have benefits for jet lag—something MPs know about—and aging, which no politician needs worry about.

The health protection branch in Ottawa says this natural product has not been studied enough to guarantee that it is safe. No evidence of direct harm, mind you, after millions of doses.

Its solution is to ban the sale of melatonin in Canada. However, it allows the purchase of three month's personal supply from the U.S. Recently health food stores in B.C. have been charged for this infraction.

If melatonin is really unsafe, ban it. If it is okay to buy melatonin from the U.S., let it be sold by Canadians. We thought jobs, jobs, jobs meant jobs here at home.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small and medium sized business is the engine of the economy and is vital to the economic well-being of Canada. A great number of jobs have been generated from these businesses,

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and now, more than ever, Canadian small and medium sized businesses are seeking export opportunities abroad.

In Etobicoke—Lakeshore we have many success stories which include the LifeTech Corporation, a scientific research company that has developed technology to sterilize blood products; Harmony Printing, a high quality computer printer; the local Great Lakes Brewing Company, and the new state of the art European bakery and food production facilities of the Future Bakery and cafe.

These are but a few of the businesses contributing to the growth of our local economy. Not only are these small businesses creating jobs, they are at the forefront of the innovation necessary for survival in today's competitive economy.

All Canadians benefit from these successes and the government will continue to work in partnership with the private sector to develop programs encouraging growth for small and medium sized business in Canada.

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[Translation]

CHILD LABOUR

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we read in a report from the humanitarian group Human Rights Watch that there are now close to 65 million children in India being used as cheap labour, particularly in carpet and brick factories, and in mines. Of this number, 10 to 15 million were sold into slavery by their parents.

Yet, close to eight months after Team Canada's visit to that country last January, nothing concrete has been done to prevent products in whose manufacture children are involved from entering Canada.

Given that the problem of the exploitation of child labour is not limited to India, but is a world wide problem, what is the Liberal government waiting for to take concrete action against offending countries?

* * *

[English]

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize and thank the personnel in the Library of Parliament for their outstanding efforts in assisting my constituency office, legislative office and myself personally as we endeavour to serve and represent the people of Huron—Bruce.

In this place, as parliamentarians we can, at times, become so absorbed in the excitement and fervour that surrounds an issue or debate that the work behind the scenes and the people who are responsible for that vital service are often forgotten or taken for granted.

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Today I would like to extend to each and every staff member at the library my personal gratitude for their assistance to my offices over the past three years. Their contributions have enabled me to significantly increase my effectiveness and the level of service that I can provide to my constituents. Again I say thank you.

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• (1405)

CANADA GAMES

Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House to tell members about some exciting news for young Canadian athletes.

For close to 30 years, the Canada Games have given athletes from Victoria to St. John's a chance to perform at their best on the national stage. As we all know, television coverage has played an essential role of presenting these athletes on this medium.

I am pleased to announce that this evening, the Canada Games Council, TSN or the Sports Network and Le Réseau des Sports are announcing a new partnership that will more than triple the amount of air time over the next three Canada Games already on the drawing boards.

This stability will attract corporate support for the games, which means more support for the young athletes.

As Brandon, Manitoba will be the host city for the 1997 Summer Games, I would like to invite all members of the House to the announcement and to the reception this evening.

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[Translation]

**THE MEMBER FOR
BONAVENTURE—ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE**

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, because he wanted to hold hearings on the language of advertising in Ottawa, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine is no longer co-chairman of the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages. He naively thought that he would be allowed to defend the historic philosophy of his party.

Here is what the member said, and I quote: "Organizing public events when people are accused of having broken the Referendum Act is acceptable. But it is not acceptable to defend bilingualism in Ottawa. Yet this is not what I learned from Pierre Trudeau and the current Prime Minister when I was young".

Our colleague has tripped up in the Liberal logic of the double standard. The member now finds himself faced with a difficult choice: follow the example of another great Liberal from his region, René Lévesque, and leave his political party, or follow his

whip's orders and wait until the next election for the public to put him out of his misery.

* * *

[English]

BILL C-68

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last year the justice minister repeatedly stood in the House and assured all members he had consulted extensively on Bill C-68.

He also stated that he was in continuous consultation with the offices of the provincial attorneys general. The attorneys general from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Yukon appeared before the standing committee and testified that these statements were not accurate and that only minimal consultation had occurred at best. The James Bay Cree and the Yukon First Nations also told us they had not been consulted. Yet the minister emphatically insisted that consultation had occurred.

We now have irrefutable evidence that the minister's statements were inaccurate. Many feel, as I do, that we have been misled. The proof is this. The governments of Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Yukon have launched a court challenge against the registration portion of Bill C-68.

The lack of consultation has led to an unnecessary legal confrontation with huge financial repercussions for taxpayers. It has also destroyed the credibility of the justice minister of Canada.

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INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, September 30, is International Translation Day. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to all the translators, interpreters and terminologists who help us understand each other better every day.

These industrious people, who nearly always work behind the scenes, are part of our day to day lives. For example, all the official activities of the Government of Canada are translated, and this is a huge undertaking.

Here on Parliament Hill, we enjoy the uninterrupted services of translators, interpreters and terminologists. *Hansard*, which we receive every morning, is translated and revised overnight by translators from the government's translation bureau. Debates in the House are interpreted by teams of interpreters who relieve each other at regular intervals, maybe because the debate is so heated at times.

[Translation]

This morning, in conjunction with World Translation Day, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, which is responsible for the Translation Bureau, officially launched a project for distributing *TERMIUM* throughout the Public Service. *TERMIUM*, the Translation Bureau's terminology bank, is now

accessible on CD-ROM. It contains over 3 million entries and is an indispensable tool for effective communication in Canada's two official languages.

To all the translators and interpreters—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon member. The member for Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle has the floor now.

* * *

THE LEADER OF THE BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, collectors of historical and precious statements will surely gobble up some of the comments made by the Bloc leader at the general assembly of his party this past weekend in the Quebec region.

In his speech on Saturday, the leader of the Bloc Quebecois accused the Prime Minister of having forced Canada back into the constitutional debate on five occasions during the past year.

• (1410)

How can the leader of the Bloc make such a claim with a straight face, when everyone on this earth knows that the constitutional debate was revived by the election of the PQ and the referendum it organized on Quebec independence?

Can someone here please tell us where the hon. member for Roberval has been these past 24 months?

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[English]

ALISON KORN

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, six athletes from Nepean competed for Canada at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. One of those six was Olympic rower Alison Korn, a member of the women's eight team which won a silver medal for Canada at the games.

Atlanta was Alison's first Olympics. She began rowing in the fall of 1992 in Montreal and trained seriously for only two years. With only 400 metres to go, her team was in fourth place. This was more than Alison and her team members could bear so they stormed to a dramatic second place finish.

A former Bells Corners elementary student, graduate of McGill, participant in a Young Challenge International Project in Costa Rica and former hockey player, Alison is a positive role model for young women across Canada and most certainly a star in Nepean. Bravo, Alison.

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Tomorrow, October 1, parliamentarians look forward to welcoming and honouring the Canadian medalists from the Olympics and paraOlympics right here in Ottawa and in the House of Commons.

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[Translation]

THE DEATH OF CLAIRE BONENFANT

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, early this morning, we received the news of the death of Claire Bonenfant as the result of a stroke. The women of Quebec mourn her passing. Claire Bonenfant was a woman of heart, head and action, a woman whose life was lived in total harmony with her deepest convictions, whether on Quebec women's right to equality or Quebec's right to sovereignty.

Cofounder of the Ralliement pour l'indépendance nationale, chair of the Conseil du statut de la femme for six years, Ms Bonenfant contributed to the creation of Quebec's first policy on the status of women. A bookseller and publisher, her activities included chairing the book fair, Salon du livre de la Capitale, co-ordinating the Department of Education's equal access program, and acting as a consultant on wage parity.

All those who had the privilege of meeting and working with this warm, dynamic and spontaneous woman will remember her open-mindedness and respectful attitude, and how it united all those around her.

Claire Bonenfant may have left us, but memories of her presence, her energy and her perseverance will be with us for a long time.

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[English]

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday 5,000 police officers marched through the streets of Ottawa, assembling outside Parliament Hill to honour comrades fallen in the line of duty.

The names of six brave police officers who died in the past year while serving their communities were added to the Canadian Police and Peace Officers Memorial.

I was on duty May 24, 1977 when a brave colleague of mine, Constable William Shelever, was shot down in the line of service. On behalf of my police colleagues who served their communities so vigilantly, I salute Constable Shelever and others who served us so well. We will never forget them.

On behalf of my constituents, I extend condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones. We share their loss. On

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behalf of all Canadians, I thank those who paid the ultimate price for doing their part to keep our streets safe. We will always hold their names in highest regard.

Fallen colleagues, we salute you, we thank you and we will never forget you.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than 1.5 million Canadians have been unable to find employment and that does not take into account the thousands of Canadians who have given up trying to find work.

The Prime Minister claims that his government has created more than 600,000 jobs. Well, this total is almost 150,000 less than what the previous government claimed were created over the same period of time.

For almost three years I have been calling on the government to lower interest rates. Recently the chief economist of the Royal Bank of Canada conceded that the bank rate could be lowered even further to create employment opportunities.

I call on the Prime Minister to deliver on his promise to create jobs by lowering the interest rates further so Canadians can get back to work.

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[Translation]

THE LEADER OF THE BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at his party's general council in Beauport during the weekend, the leader of the Bloc once again changed his position on the issue of partnership. He told his supporters on the weekend, and I quote: "Just because a federal minister will not consider partnership does not mean we will stop talking about it."

This is rather surprising, because we all remember that the same leader of the Bloc said a week earlier, and I will quote him again: "As far as I am concerned, we are not going to make it the Bloc's mission to sell partnership in the rest of Canada".

• (1415)

The question that arises today is whether the leader of the Bloc Quebecois believes that to follow in the footsteps of Lucien Bouchard, he will have to make as many quick changes in politics as he did.

* * *

THE BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to a SOM-La Presse poll, 57 per cent of the population of

Quebec wants a ten-year respite until the next referendum on Quebec's independence. I hope you are listening.

This poll is a clear indication that the majority of the population has had enough of the disastrous economic impact that the PQ and the Bloc are having with their threats to hold another referendum.

When asked to comment on this poll, the leader of the Bloc decided, as he usually does when at a loss for a reply, to put the blame on the Canadian government, claiming that his party's priority is economic issues.

Hansard is a faithful witness to the subjects that interest the Bloc Quebecois, and anyone who bothers to read *Hansard* will soon realize that economic recovery and job creation are not among the top priorities of this separatist party.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the following is a copy of a letter received from Darlene Boyd to the justice minister: "The minister has said he is listening to the Canadian people. C-45 does not demonstrate this.

"You have referred to us as the 'victims industry'. We never classified ourselves as part of any industry. We are ordinary people who have paid a price, far too great, to establish such a petty organization. We never asked for this fate, and we are not victims, we are 'survivors'.

"There is one thing I need advice on, that is how I tell our son, who has not yet put his life back together since his sister's murder, that the man convicted and sentenced to life in prison will be applying and probably be granted his day in court, to tell everyone what a good person he has become in the past 15 years.

"Who will take responsibility when he falls apart? C-45 will be guilty of this crime!

"Does the charter of rights protect us, or was it written for just murderers?"

"I appeal to you not as a politician, but as someone who holds family and friends dear. Because murder shows no bounds, please reconsider repeal, and make it impossible for these killers to once again exploit my family and the families of others".

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

THE REFERENDUM QUESTION

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the passage of time, the government becomes increasingly confused about its decision to stop a future referendum in Quebec by asking the Supreme Court's opinion on Quebec's

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right to determine its own future. None of yesterday's allies on the no side are on side of the Prime Minister as he makes this clumsy attempt to get all of Canada up in arms against Quebec, as he did so successfully in 1982 and 1990.

What kind of answer does the Prime Minister of Canada have for Daniel Johnson, the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party, who has invited him to resign and run for a seat in the Quebec National Assembly if he wants to draft the referendum question?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Johnson is entirely correct in saying that the National Assembly is free to ask any questions it wants. But when such a question involves negotiations on an issue as serious as secession, the question must be such as to elicit a clear response from the people. What is needed is a clear question. And to have a clear question, we need a clear process. To have a clear process, there must be a commitment to make it that way.

So far, however, the Quebec government has given us no guarantees to that effect. We are asking the Supreme Court to clarify matters, and the Quebec government does not want to go before the Supreme Court. Why? Because it knows that confusion works to its advantage. The forces of division gain from confusion; the forces of reconciliation gain from clarity.

And if we must quote Mr. Johnson, I will quote him, in concluding: "Mr. Bouchard and other sovereignists, who for three or four years have been telling us that international law is clear on the subject will have a forum to explain why it is clear. If the train is there, they can always get on board and tell Quebecers what their theories are about", but they will not go, because they know they are wrong.

• (1420)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you will allow me to point out to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that, on the subject of clarity, he is the one who has constantly contradicted himself. He and the Minister of Justice are sending two completely different messages. He is certainly in no position to talk to us about confusion. He is creating confusion.

Seriously, I realize the Prime Minister wants to give his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs a chance to make his mark in the House, but my question was directed to the Prime Minister.

I would appreciate it if the Prime Minister would tell us whether he realizes that, by insisting on his reference to the Supreme Court and by wanting to assume the powers of the National Assembly, he no longer enjoys the support of any of his federalist allies who were with him during the last referendum? Does he realize he is isolating

himself, even from the Quebec federalists who supported him during the last referendum?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the Leader of the Official Opposition in Quebec urges the Quebec government to come and argue its case before the Supreme Court. He does so, using the same arguments that the Minister of Justice of Canada used to invite his counterpart, Mr. Bégin, to argue his case before the Supreme Court.

The reason they are not going there is that they now realize, after being told by two judges of the Quebec Superior Court, as well as by all the experts, including some U.S. experts last week, that international law provides no basis for a unilateral declaration of independence, that this gospel they believed, because their separatist leaders, Mr. Parizeau, and Mr. Landry kept preaching it all the time, is not true, and that if they want to bring about something as serious as secession, for the sake of the people of Quebec in particular, it must be done within a specific framework that is acceptable to all concerned, and not unilaterally.

The problem is that they now realize that Quebecers and other Canadians will never give up their ties of solidarity in a clear situation. That is why they need confusion, stratagems and other tricks.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs should be careful because, when he was a university professor, he wrote that in Quebec people would never let the federal government draft the referendum question. To create a diversion, it was necessary to appeal to the Supreme Court so that Quebecers would then agree to let Ottawa be involved in the drafting of the question. So they are not in a position to teach us anything.

Does the Prime Minister realize that by wanting to draft the question for the next referendum, to determine the percentage required for the results of the referendum to be considered positive, and to set the rules for holding this referendum, he is usurping the role of the Quebec National Assembly, which is an attack on democracy? We know he is familiar with this strategy, and we wish he would stop this exercise before launching another attack.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, since I entered politics, I have never had to back down from anything I wrote as a university professor and I am prepared to take up the gauntlet.

Second, the official opposition would do well to study foreign cases and international law. It will see that in many democracies, the very concept of secession has been excluded from public debate. In the United States, Italy, Spain and other democracies including France, which the official opposition treats as a good

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friend, in fact in section 2 of the French constitution it says that the French Republic is one and indivisible.

Here in Canada we are actually more democratic than average, in this area as in others. We are more conciliatory. We accept the idea that our country can break up if part of our population no longer wishes to remain in the country. However, we have the right to ensure this is done according to the rule of law, in a clear context, since this is a very serious decision which cannot be made if confusion reigns.

• (1425)

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs stated: "It is not reasonable for Prince Edward Island to be able to block Quebec's departure from the federation, because that is not democratic, not Quebecois, not Canadian".

Does the Prime Minister share the opinion of his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are polls, there are statements made by the moral authorities of this country, by various public figures. Obviously in Canada there is a convention that a population is not to be forced to remain against its will. The Minister of Justice has explained this in his speech.

We are, however, entitled to the assurance that this is what a given population wants, and in that connection, yes, PEI is entitled to its say.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, talk about total ambiguity—I thought the minister was at least in agreement with himself, but even that is not the case. I will therefore direct my question to the Prime Minister.

Does the Prime Minister agree with what his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs had to say yesterday, or today, depending on which version one chooses: that it is not reasonable or democratic for a single province to prevent Quebec from leaving the federation? Which version is the right one?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for providing me with the opportunity to repeat my statement. Perhaps then she will understand that we in this country have accepted the idea that the country could break apart, if a population were to indicate very clearly that it no longer wished to remain in the federation.

There will, however, have to be assurances that this is clear and fair for everyone. Prince Edward Island, therefore, is entitled to assure itself that the people of Quebec have been consulted in a clear process, acceptable to all, with terms of negotiation that are also acceptable to all.

It is clear that the decision to break up Canada would have serious consequences for the people of Prince Edward Island. I am very confident that Quebecers and other Canadians will to avoid negotiations as painful, lengthy and difficult as those on the breakup of this country would be.

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[English]

SOMALIA

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today's *Globe and Mail* reports that members of U.S. special forces teams wore Canadian uniforms in covert operations in Somalia, and one of them ordered a Canadian soldier to "fire at a guy, shoot him, drop him, take the guy out".

Is this report true and if so, when did the minister become aware of this covert operation?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should realize that the specific allegation contained in the newspaper report to which she referred occurred during the Canadian forces deployment to Somalia in 1993. Therefore it would only be reasonable that the commission may wish to look at this matter to see whether it is true.

With respect to the concept of sharing equipment and uniforms, there are a number of joint exercises that are taken on an annual basis between Canada and our allies. But the kind of thing that has been described in the article is something unusual. The chief of defence staff is going to look into it on a conceptual level. But on the specific level, because it does relate to Somalia in 1993, this may be of interest to the commission.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe it. Talk about joint exercises. What about joint uniforms? Certainly these people have their own uniforms to wear. We do not do a complete swap on that, heaven help us.

Canadian forces have not been under foreign command since World War I. The terms of the 1992 memorandum of understanding of orders, signed by former Chief of Defence Staff John de Chastelain, clearly state that the complete operational control of the Canadian forces will be under Canadian command. Yet these direct orders were disobeyed regardless of how he tries to explain it away by talking about joint exercises.

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What has the minister of defence done to ensure such an incident will not recur? He cannot just stand behind the fact that this was in 1993 long before he was elected. What is he going to do about this and how will he enable the Somalia commission to look into this and investigate it?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we first have to ascertain whether the allegation in the newspaper is actually true. And I am sure that will be of interest to the commission.

The commission has all the means at its disposal to look into the deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces to Somalia in 1993, and the department will co-operate in every way.

• (1430)

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is the toleration of this kind of behaviour. We have had somebody admit on the news nationally here already that he ordered that this person take him out, drop the guy and shoot him. I hardly think that is something the minister needs to look into a great deal more.

Jean Boyle said: "We were aware that the Americans were working with Canadians jointly in terms of intelligence and support in Somali" and added to nobody's surprise that he had no knowledge of any behaviour outlined by a former Green Beret.

This is a pattern we are seeing develop with this minister, blaming things off on cuts and blaming it off to a subordinate. Also with Jean Boyle, again and again say "hey, I had absolutely no knowledge about it". Why did Jean Boyle have absolutely no knowledge about it? Just what does he have any knowledge about?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member could only listen to herself.

First of all, General Boyle was not the chief of defence staff in 1993. Second, she talks about a pattern. The only pattern I see is the pattern of her party not allowing the commission to do its work.

This party in opposition called for the inquiry. We set it up. We want the inquiry to do the job. I believe Canadians want answers. They do not want answers from the Reform Party because they know they cannot trust those answers. Canadians want answers from the commission.

* * *

[Translation]

THE SOMALIA INQUIRY

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We were astounded to learn today that U.S. army soldiers belonging to commandos sent to Somalia apparently deliberately represented themselves as soldiers of the Canadian armed forces. According to the *Globe and Mail*, a U.S. army captain even ordered a Canadian forces soldier to kill a Somali, which he did.

How can the Prime Minister explain that U.S. army officers could have dressed in the uniforms of Canadian soldiers and even given them orders?

[English]

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have just answered to earlier questions, this is an allegation that has come to light today. It is something that obviously concerns everyone, but to get to the truth of the matter I think we should perhaps wait and see if the inquiry wishes to pursue it because it does raise certain troubling questions.

With respect to the whole concept of joint exercises and as to whether there is exchange of equipment and that type of thing, the chief of defence staff is looking into it. I will be able to have something more to say at a later date once we look at the conceptual question. On the specifics, we have to wait for the inquiry.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in order for the commission to be able to get to the bottom of this, the documents that have gone missing may have to resurface. That would be the first requirement.

My supplementary is for the Prime Minister. While his chief of staff is looking into these new revelations, can the Prime Minister assure us or not that such practices did not take place under his leadership and that they are not now taking place?

[English]

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the practices are clear of the Canadian Armed Forces. Canadian soldiers operate under Canadian control. There is some sharing of individuals on specific missions, and those are bilateral agreements with our NATO allies, specifically with the United States on air crews. That goes on all the time.

The allegations to which the hon. member referred which appeared in the newspaper this morning have just come to light. It is something we are going to look at in a general nature, but specifically this may be of interest for the commission.

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Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians agree that any attempt by Quebec to secede would have to proceed by the rule of law.

On another constitutional front we are equally adamant that the government not offer distinct society status to Quebec as a way to try to buy constitutional peace. In fact, in some provinces, including my own, such a constitutional proposal would have to pass a provincial referendum. I can assure you that in British Columbia that concept will never fly.

Does the government understand that the distinct society proposals contained in the throne speech will be totally unacceptable to the people of British Columbia and to the people of Canada?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what strikes me is the absence of any argument to support the idea that the distinct society clause or whatever you may call it is against Canada. I think it is a great thing to do for Canadians to recognize that in an anglophone North America there is a strong francophone society and we are proud of it.

• (1435)

We explained that this does not mean more money for Quebecers, privileges for Quebecers. Other Canadians will be so proud to recognize the great Quebec society.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize the great Quebec society also, but the Liberal government should know that there is no appetite in Canada for the distinct society clause it is proposing.

A report by the member for Simcoe North, a member of the government, given to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, leaked to Barbara Yaffe of the Vancouver *Sun*, states: "British Columbians feel a profound sense of alienation from Ottawa over the federal government's handling of the national unity issue". The government's own member goes on to say they feel the national agenda is controlled by separatists.

Will the Prime Minister listen to the people of British Columbia and will he abandon the idea of a distinct society status for Quebec?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent much of my professional life at university, fighting the claim of many of my Quebec colleagues who said "we in Quebec think this, we in Quebec think that". I know Quebec is a pluralistic society. And I am sure that British Columbia is a pluralist society.

The hon. member does not have the right to say "we in British Columbia think this or that". I know that many people in British Columbia think that to recognize Quebec would be a great thing. We will work with them in order to convince our fellow citizens.

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[Translation]

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Canadian government's position on the crisis in the Middle East appeared confused, to say the least, last Friday, when the Minister for International Cooperation refused to commit the government regarding the closing of the Jerusalem tunnel.

At a time when the Security Council has passed a resolution calling for the tunnel to be closed, can the minister give this House a clear indication of his government's position in the current crisis?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the speech I gave during the meeting of the Security Council, I mentioned the importance of having a period of calm in the Middle East, particularly in order to reduce the number of incidents that could lead to general conflict, including keeping the tunnel closed during the period of discussion and negotiation between the two parties.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the President of Palestine is saying that his participation in the Summit is conditional on firm commitments from Israel, the Israeli government is refusing to close the tunnel, and is deploying tanks on the West Bank and threatening to disarm Palestinian police.

Given the impasse, I ask the minister whether he can tell this House exactly what the Canadian government's position will be?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained that we have made our views known very clearly to the security council on Friday night. I had direct discussions with the acting Israeli ambassador at the UN on Friday. We expressed our very strong concern that the two parties come back to the negotiating table. The president of the United States has now invited the head of the Palestine authority and the new prime minister of Israel to do that. Negotiations are underway now to determine the meeting.

I think it is really in the interests of all Canadians, not just the Government of Canada, to express strongly their great hope and earnest feelings about the importance of the two parties coming

back to the table and continuing to follow the Oslo accords so there can continue to be negotiations toward peace in that area.

* * *

• (1440)

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the government introduced amendments to the Immigration Act, the previous minister of immigration stated: “When this House approves the amendments we will see a significant improvement in our enforcement procedures and the speed in which we can remove foreign criminals from our soil”. However, out of 734 criminal immigrants certified by the president minister as a danger to the public, only 140 have actually been removed.

Can the minister explain where the improvements in enforcement and speed have taken place when over 590, 80 per cent of the criminals, are still in Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the legislation passed in this House facilitates the expulsion of criminals from Canada far more rapidly.

This is a law which has been passed by the hon. members of this House precisely in order to make it possible for Canada not to harbour dangerous criminals. This is very clear and is what the act was intended to do. We are seeing the results today in a number of cases.

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I fail to see where 80 per cent still in Canada are results.

This summer, Dennis Garcia, a declared dangerous offender serving a 20-year sentence in Montana, escaped prison and fled to Canada. He claimed refugee status and was released by an adjudicator and disappeared in the Vancouver area.

Is this an example of the government’s commitment to protecting Canadians from foreign criminals?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada will never be a country which welcomes dangerous criminals. It will, however, continue to be a country which welcomes refugees in need of protection and immigrants who wish to live in our country. Clearly, in this connection, our view is totally different from that of the Reform Party.

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AFGHANISTAN

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A few days ago, Islamic fundamentalists seized power in Kabul, and the situation for women there has become intolerable. Women are being beaten, enslaved or killed by those who are now in control of the country.

How does the Canadian government plan to react to this tragic situation in Afghanistan?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be very realistic in terms of the actual influence Canada can exercise in the conditions that accompany the takeover of Kabul, there is very little we can do other than to join the international community in expressing our great outrage at the travesties of justice that are taking place and to try to provide as much protection as we can for those who are continuing under siege.

It is a takeover by a group of militants who are exercising very extreme tactics. The matter was discussed at the security council this weekend. Expressions of concern have been raised and we join in those very strongly. We will do anything we can to assist the United Nations and other bodies to try to bring about some form of calm and an end to the violence in that area.

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can the Canadian government make a firm commitment before this House, as it did in the past with respect to South Africa, not to recognize the Taliban regime, since it is against fundamental values held dear by the people of Quebec and Canada?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly in any recognition we would take into account the values, the stands and the behaviour of the recipient state. I will certainly take the hon. member’s point of view as a strong representation.

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PARLIAMENT HILL

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

A number of newspapers reported on Saturday that the Department of Canadian Heritage refused to lower the flag on the peace tower to half mast for Sunday’s ceremony to honour police and peace officers killed in the line of duty.

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Can the parliamentary secretary please explain why the flag was not lowered to honour these brave men and women?

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. It gives me an opportunity to inform this House and all Canadians that the article in question was entirely inaccurate.

The flag was lowered to half mast at the memorial services yesterday. The Deputy Prime Minister was informed of the concerns of the Canadian Police Association on Friday and at that time immediately asked her officials to ensure that the flag was lowered to half mast. It is truly unfortunate that the news reports failed to report this fact.

* * *

• (1445)

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the DFO is proposing to remove over \$7 million from the Canadian Coast Guard fleet thereby putting Canadian lives at risk on the waters of Canada's west coast. However outside of its budget, as a result of the heritage minister's wild imagination, she is blowing away \$23 million on her free flag program.

What are the Liberal government's priorities that it would cut funding for the coast guard while flying feel good flags?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government's concern is primarily with safety. Our standards are going to be maintained to the highest order. What the hon. member talks about is a required adjustment to the budget in order to contribute to deficit reduction.

I am not sure what the hon. member would do with his party and the speed with which they would go forward with deficit reduction, but we are proceeding in a responsible manner. It is in a manner that will ensure the main concern is safety for Canadians.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it begs the question: How responsible is it to blow away \$23 million on flags while cutting \$7 million from the coast guard? The Liberals are also proposing a \$3.5 million lighthouse staffing budget cut to save money. Of course that is necessary because the heritage minister's unnecessary expenditures are driving it. An example is her Canada Information Office. There are information after information after information offices available to Canadians right now; \$4 million on Inquiries Canada alone.

I ask again: What are this government's priorities when it gives a free hand to the heritage minister to blow money as she sees fit yet makes cuts that put people's lives at risk on the waters around Canada?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is taking this entirely out of proportion.

What I want to tell him in respect to DFO and the budget for which I am responsible, we are in fact reducing in four years \$450 million, largely at the behest of the opposition to reduce budgets, and 2,700 person years as well. It is difficult to do that without rearranging priorities. However, the priorities will be and will continue to be. That is the way it is now, that is the way it should be and that is the way it is going to be.

I want to ask the hon. member: What does he have against Canadian unity?

* * *

[Translation]

THE TOKAMAK PROJECT

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

Last spring, in order to justify cutting off federal funding to the Tokamak facility, the Minister of Natural Resources maintained that the sale of the CANDU reactor to China would generate spinoffs of over \$400 million for Quebec and the creation of hundreds of additional jobs. The main enterprise to benefit from the spinoffs from this sale, CANATOM, has lost the main contracts related to the construction of the CANDU reactor sold to China.

Since CANATOM no longer has the main contracts for the Chinese project, how can the government continue to maintain that the sale of the CANDU reactor to China will generate spinoffs of \$400 million for Quebec?

[English]

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the focus and priorities of this government are creating a climate for economic growth.

The Candu business brings significant benefits to Quebec. As the minister has said over and over again in this House, the sale of one Candu reactor brings significant jobs and economic growth to the people of Quebec.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid she did not get the question.

[Translation]

Last spring, the Minister of Natural Resources declared that she was looking for a way to continue federal funding for the Tokamak

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project. We have just learned, however, that Tokamak staff will very shortly be receiving their layoff notices.

Can the Prime Minister finally tell us, after three months, whether or not his government has found alternative funding for the Varennes Tokamak?

• (1450)

[English]

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is making difficult choices and it is setting priorities.

In the field of R and D, let me remind the hon. member that Quebec gets its fair share. Quebec receives about 23 per cent of all federal R and D expenditures. Our agenda is clear.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, several years ago national defence announced that the Nanaimo army camp would close. Since that time the city of Nanaimo, Malaspina College and the local school board have been trying to get an agreement out of Ottawa for the use of the land. They have been trying without success. Yet when there is a base closure in the maritimes or Quebec, it seems to be quite a different story: they not only get the land quickly, they get money to go with it. Why the double standard?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no double standard.

The hon. member has written to me about this matter on a number of occasions and I have explained the process to him. Once an amicable arrangement can be made by the department, Treasury Board and the city of Nanaimo, then obviously the land could certainly be given to the city for its uses.

We follow the same disposal procedure of land across the country whether it is on the east coast, on the west coast or anywhere else.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there are other examples. When land was given away in Chatham, New Brunswick, they got \$15 million to go with it. In St. Hubert, Quebec, they got an extra \$1 million plus the land. In Cornwallis they got the land plus \$7.5 million. Obviously there is a difference in criterion between the east and the west.

Why the difference in criterion? What is it? Is it the number of Liberal members in the area or what is it?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Royal Roads Military College closed a couple of years ago, a very favourable arrangement was made with the Government of British Columbia. As a result those lands have been kept for educational use. Not only was there a transfer of lands, there was a cash settlement. That shows fairness. It is the same principle which is applied across the country.

What the member is talking about is not an actual closure. He is talking about land which is surplus to DND's requirements. It is certainly different from closing the whole facility.

The member knows the answer. He knows that negotiations have to conclude. We want them to conclude very favourably. Why is he bringing the question on the floor of the House of Commons? Why does he not go back to the city of Nanaimo and tell them to negotiate in good faith?

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The government has just announced that it will allow Canadian companies to export PCBs to the United States. Last fall an interim order was issued preventing Canadian companies from exporting this substance.

Can the minister tell the House what measures were taken before a decision was made to lift the interim order banning the export of PCBs to the U.S.?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Brampton has as I understand it a number of companies in her riding which are obviously interested in this issue.

It is right that my predecessor put an interim order against opening the border last fall. It was the right thing to do because the United States Environmental Protection Agency had not given Canada a copy of the regulations by which any PCBs would be destroyed. Not only have those been provided to the Canadian authorities since the interim order, we have also been able to convince the American authorities to improve and enhance those regulations. As a result, the government and the cabinet felt assured that for thermal and chemical destruction only, not land filling, the systems in the United States were compatible.

After gazetting the regulation, we anticipate that the regulation opening the border to thermal and chemical destruction should be made around the end of this year. This will allow for the timely disposal of many PCBs which are being stored.

Oral Questions

• (1455)

[Translation]

THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS

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

Yesterday, tens of thousands of people marched in sixty or so Canadian cities in order to raise money to fund the fight against AIDS. In Montreal alone, 30,000 people took part in the march. All of them hope that the federal government is setting aside money to help in the fight against the spread of AIDS.

Will the minister promise to respect the public's wishes and extend the national AIDS strategy?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly respect the request that is being made of governments by activists in the AIDS community. I wish to congratulate them for the efforts they put forward yesterday in terms of their fundraising activities.

The role of the Government of Canada to date has been very significant particularly for fiscal years 1996-97 and 1997-98. Thereafter moneys will be provided under a population health strategy. Over the next number of months I will continue my consultations with AIDS activists. If there is to be a change in that policy, I will certainly take the House into my confidence.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since activists, persons living with AIDS and medical researchers unanimously called on the minister in Vancouver at the 10th International Conference to set aside funds for the fight against AIDS, can the minister tell us when he intends to announce phase III of the national AIDS strategy?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have attempted over the last number of months to explain to AIDS activists that for the seeking of finances for the year 1998-99, our budgetary process does not allow for that.

I also suggested to community activists and AIDS activists that they would be much better off if they were to outline across the country the various successes the federal government and the provincial governments have made co-operatively in terms of fighting this terrible disease.

I say to those who raise this question: yes, AIDS is a very serious issue; yes, the Government of Canada takes it very seriously. I would hope that AIDS activists instead of protesting, instead of thrashing Health Canada booths and things of that nature, would

stand up and let the country and Parliament know the successes they have had in co-operation with governments and all others.

* * *

CHURCHILL FALLS HYDRO PROJECT

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, page 22 of the Liberal red book reads as follows: "A Liberal government will be committed to the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers within Canada and will address this issue urgently".

The Churchill Falls conflict is an issue of one province controlling the resources of another province. Does the Prime Minister recognize that Newfoundland's inability to access U.S. markets obstructs its ability to utilize its own resources?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I answered this question last week.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is a noteworthy answer.

The Prime Minister is fully aware that the energy section of the agreement on internal trade is literally a blank page. The type of urgency the Liberals talked about in the red book really demonstrates how ineffective this government is.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been denied the jobs and prosperity that a new Churchill Falls hydro development would bring. The Quebec government will not allow the transmission of electricity across its territory.

Will the Prime Minister address this issue urgently by committing himself to the elimination of this interprovincial trade barrier and establish a power corridor through Quebec so that Newfoundlanders can finally reap the benefits of any new project at Churchill Falls?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said last week and I repeat that it is a contract between private parties.

I know there is a problem. I said that it is for the two governments to sit down and find a solution. Quebec and Labrador have a lot of potential. They have to work together. I am sure that if they sit down they will find a solution. But they signed a contract and under the rule of law in any country a contract between parties has to be respected. That is exactly the position of this government.

• (1500)

I know the premier of Newfoundland and the premier of Quebec can sit down and find a solution. If the member had listened he would have understood that 10 days ago the spokesman for Hydro Quebec said that they are willing to sit down and they understand that some changes could be made. And if the atmosphere is proper they will find a solution.

*Tributes***AGRICULTURE**

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister of agriculture.

Wet weather on the prairies for the last three weeks and snow yesterday have threatened a very good harvest of a very good crop on the prairies.

Is the minister of agriculture considering any contingency plan should the revenues expected from that harvest do not materialize?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the weather conditions over the last couple of weeks, at least in some parts of the prairies, are most definitely a matter of concern to many farmers. Hopefully this fall will still materialize in such a way that the weather person will co-operate and we will see that in due course.

Naturally the Government of Canada is concerned. We are watching the situation closely. Of course, we have a rather elaborate safety net system already in place to deal with production and marketing problems that affect agriculture from time to time. If necessary, we do have special provisions for special advances under government legislation which we would consider invoking if that should become necessary.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw to the attention of the House the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Luiz Filipe Palmeira Lampreia, Minister for External Relations of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: A few days ago one of our former colleagues of this House passed away. I am referring to Mr. Bert Hargrave. We will now have tributes.

* * *

THE LATE BERT HARGRAVE

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with some sadness to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada to pay tribute to a former member of this House from the riding of Medicine Hat, Alberta, Mr. Bert Hargrave, who passed away last week.

Aside from being extremely well known and liked in his province and in his riding, Mr. Hargrave selflessly devoted a large part of his public and private life to the promotion of agriculture in Canada.

Aside from being a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Hargrave also served in World War II as a captain in the tank

brigades. Following the end of the war he returned to Canada and took over the family farm in Walsh, Alberta in 1945.

● (1505)

In 1972 he ran and was successfully elected a member of Parliament. As a side note to his victory back then, he defeated the person who was then the minister of agriculture in the government of Mr. Trudeau. He then took his seat in the House as a Progressive Conservative member until his retirement in 1984.

He spent his whole career in opposition, except for the brief term in government in 1979 under the leadership of Mr. Clark where he served, as members probably have already guessed, as parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture.

Following his career as a parliamentarian he served as president of the Walsh Cattle Marketing Association, the Western Stock Growers Association and the National Cattlemen's Association, to name a few. He was also southern Alberta chair of the Farm Debt Review Board until the late 1980s and early 1990s.

His tireless and constant dedication to agriculture was recognized when he was inducted into the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Mr. Hargrave was a true gentleman and was well respected, I understand, on all sides of the House of Commons. He was unquestionably considered one of the most informed and knowledgeable parliamentarians on all sides in the realm of agriculture. Although I did not have the opportunity or the privilege of knowing him personally, I am told he was recognized as being someone who was tough, sincere, but most of all a very generous man.

He passed away last Tuesday at the age of 79 and will be laid to rest today in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Hargrave today for his years of service to Canada, to his community, to his province. I want to offer my personal condolences on behalf of my party to his family members and wish them well. But most of all, I would like them to know that this place, this Parliament, his province and his country will forever remember him as being a statesman.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join with my colleagues in the House in expressing our sorrow and the sorrow of the Government of Canada at the passing of Mr. Bert Hargrave.

I spent one term in the House of Commons from 1974 to 1979 serving with Mr. Hargrave. Although we were not on the same side of the House, we shared a strong commitment to Canada, particularly to its agricultural concerns where beyond all doubt Bert Hargrave was an expert.

Tributes

Anyone who had spent any time with Bert would come away with a far better understanding of agriculture, most especially the cattle business. Bert, a fourth generation cattleman, was tireless in his efforts to promote and defend his fellow cattle producers. Whenever the subject of beef came up in the House one could be assured that Bert Hargrave would be on his feet supporting his industry.

Bert, who served his constituents from 1972 until 1984, fought most of his battles from the opposition benches. He fought very well. I recall one incident during my time earlier in the House in 1977 when a five year lobby by Bert Hargrave ended in success when 90,000 acres of the Suffield, Alberta defence research station were opened to cattle producers for grazing purposes. These were not the kinds of victories that create great national headlines, but they are the kind that truly help one's constituents.

Mr. Hargrave did get to spend a brief period of time on the government side in the House of Commons in 1979. As the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has pointed out, he was during that period appointed parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture, a recognition of his commitment to the agricultural sector.

During that time the government further demonstrated its confidence in the former member for Medicine Hat by naming him chair of its beef consultative committee.

• (1510)

Let me join with others in paying tribute to the late Bert Hargrave, one of those who took the concerns of his friends and neighbours in the most direct way possible, the electoral process. Through that process he served with great distinction. We extend our sincere condolences to the Hargrave family.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party I would certainly like to pay tribute to someone I thought was a great man, Bert Hargrave, a man respected by all people who knew him.

I was personally involved with Mr. Hargrave on a number of occasions, at a variety of meetings, a variety of delegations and a variety of presentations not only in the provincial legislature but in other meetings across the province dealing with agricultural issues.

Bert's constituency of Medicine Hat overlapped with the constituency of Little Bow, my provincial constituency, and as two elected persons, although not of the same political party, we often dealt with issues together.

One of the qualities of Bert Hargrave was that he was able to step over partisan barriers and deal with issues in a very common sense way. In my memories of Bert Hargrave that will be the marquee of

his gentlemanly, sophisticated and rational way of dealing with responsible matters for his constituents in southern Alberta.

If we recall part of Bert's history, he was born in 1917 in Medicine Hat and attended school in that city. He received a bachelor of science in agricultural engineering from the University of Saskatchewan in 1942. Bert served the country in World War II in the Canadian army RCME corps from 1942 to 1946, serving in northwest Europe.

After returning he married Amy Reinhart and they lived near Walsh, Alberta. Often in our conversations we talked about the beautiful rolling hills, that gem of the southeastern part of our province of Alberta.

Bert was an active member of the agricultural society, in particular the cattle industry. Once in a while I would say to Bert: "You come to meetings and you are so proud that you would even wear a little bit of that on your shoes for us". He was known for that. He was certainly an active member of the Canadian Cattle-men's Association and gave that organization good leadership.

Entering politics was something that Bert had not really thought about until the early 1970s when he became increasingly concerned over Canadian agricultural policy. Thus at that time he sought the Progressive Conservative nomination for Medicine Hat. He never looked back, winning in 1972 by a margin of 5,600 votes, and won re-election in 1974, 1979 and 1980.

In 1979 he was appointed as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture where his firsthand knowledge of agricultural issues and his common sense shone through. He fought for the average farmer, whether it was urging tax relief for drought stricken farmers or fighting for the rights of cattle farmers against U.S. beef bans or the injustice of the Crow rate.

Bert retired from Canadian politics in 1984, citing his own failing health and the loss of his beloved wife one year earlier. He returned to his farm which was never far from his heart but kept abreast of federal politics. Bert served as a member of the senate of the University of Lethbridge during the period when my wife Ingrid was the chancellor. He made a common sense contribution to the institution's success.

In 1993 he was inducted into the Alberta Agricultural Hall of Fame. He lived on his farm until this past June when he moved to the Central Park Lodge in Medicine Hat. He passed away in his room on Tuesday, September 24, 1996. Bert is survived by his son and his daughter and four grandchildren.

On behalf of the Reform Party of Canada I would like to extend my sincere sympathies to his family and his friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you remember Bert this afternoon.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1515)

[English]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (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 one petition.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 32nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the associate membership of some committees.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 32nd report later this day.

* * *

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL STANDARDS ACROSS CANADA FOR EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE PROVINCES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-328, an act to establish national standards across Canada for education provided by the provinces.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to establish national standards for education through a consultative process among governments, educational professionals, industry, labour, parent use, voluntary organizations and individual Canadians representing all sectors of the population, recognizing that education is a provincial responsibility.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL LITERACY STANDARDS ACROSS CANADA

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-329, an act to establish national literacy standards across Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to provide for a process that would be a catalyst for the establishment of national standards for literacy through consultation. Nothing in this bill abrogates or derogates from the jurisdiction of a province. However, the bill calls on the minister responsible to consult with the provincial governments as well as with experts in the education and the literacy field, with representatives of business and labour and representatives of the media and literacy students.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-330, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (donors to food banks).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill would permit the donation of food to a food bank to be treated as a charitable gift, notwithstanding that the value of the food has already been deducted as a business expense of the donor.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-331, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, (tax credit for mental or physical impairment).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill would ensure that a taxpayer who has a physical or mental impairment that prevents him or her from performing housekeeping activities at his or her place of residence would be entitled to a tax credit under section 118.2 of the Income Tax Act for a portion of the remuneration paid to another person by the taxpayer for performing those activities.

• (1520)

Such tax credits would apply particularly to senior citizens provided that they establish through a medical certificate that they are incapable of performing housekeeping activities. Apart from some pay for the performance of housekeeping activities, the taxpayer would also be entitled to a tax credit for physical or mental impairment under section 118.3 of the act.

Supply

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 32nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the following member be added to the list of associate members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: John Solomon.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

PETITIONS

BILL C-205

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions on one issue signed by individuals in the national capital region and particularly in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

The petitioners call on Parliament to enact Bill C-205 to ensure that criminals do not profit financially from selling their stories of crimes committed.

LAND MINES

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions I would like to present to the House.

The first petition deals with the issue of land mines. It makes the point that there are 100 million uncleared land mines affecting 64 countries and that an estimated 26,000 civilians are killed and injured by these mines annually.

Therefore, the petitioners ask Parliament to legislate a comprehensive ban on the production, export and trade or transfer of anti-personal land mines.

BILL C-205

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with Bill C-205 presented by the member for Scarborough West. This bill wants to outlaw criminals profiting from crime.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition deals with the issue of euthanasia. It is against assisted suicide.

BILL C-205

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate you recognizing me way down here. It is a long way from where I am to where you are. I really attribute that to my not changing my hair over the summer. I left it pretty much the way it was. You see, if you do that you get recognized, not like some over here and quite a few around us here. It takes you a while to pick it up. The only thing that helps you along is the seating plan. I hope you have one there near you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my riding which is very timely. The petitioners are very concerned about criminals profiting from their crimes.

• (1525)

I want to get serious for a minute. The hon. member for Scarborough West has a private member's bill before the House which suggests a law to prohibit criminals from profiting from their crimes, whether it be by writing books, producing tapes or the like. I want to lend my support in a very positive way to the suggestion that the law be changed to disallow that from happening.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—BRITISH COLUMBIA

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to what my colleague in the Reform Party said. He went out of his way to make the point that he is very unhappy that the government is making cuts in certain areas, such as in the defence sector and in some other sectors in his province.

I want to go on the record as saying that the area which I represent, the national capital region, has seen its share of cuts. Many of my colleagues have experienced cuts in their ridings. The government has been downsized by approximately 45,000 public servants. Agencies and crown corporations have been shrinking on a regular basis.

I share my colleague's concerns, however, it is a fact of life. The government takes no pleasure in making the cuts. It does not want to see people on the street. The cuts were part of an overall strategy

Supply

to stimulate the economy, to streamline services across the country and to eliminate duplication of services.

I am sure my colleague will agree with me that the government has done a bang on job of ensuring that inflation is at an all time low. It is the lowest it has been in 20 years. Canadian interest rates are lower than those in the United States. Also, in a matter of three years the deficit has decreased by approximately \$12 billion. That is something of which my colleague should be taking note. He should be congratulating the government on a job well done.

With respect to job creation, the government should not be satisfied until the last person who is seeking a job finds a job. However, I am sure he would agree with me that the record on that front is excellent.

We cannot have the syndrome of "not in my backyard". Last week Reform members were on their feet attacking the government on the Newfoundland issue. They were trying to pit one government against another. This week they are trying to pit the government of British Columbia against the federal government.

Reform members are here day in and day out calling on the government to introduce cuts. When the government takes action they turn around and say: "Yes, but not in my backyard". I want to tell my colleagues that they cannot sneeze and breathe at the same time.

Why would the hon. member not tell the government that it is doing a great job in handling the economy and in dealing with complicated, cumbersome issues?

The hon. member is condemning the government for some of its actions, one of which has to do with the movement of grain to Prince Rupert, B.C. When the vote was taken in the House of Commons my colleagues in the Reform Party were not out in full force trying to defend the interests of the farmers. In fact, only 11 Reform members showed up for that vote.

• (1530)

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, the reason I am not about to congratulate the government on its fine job is that I tell the truth and I do not believe that to be the truth.

With regard to the government's having to pare the defence department to some degree, what I am talking about are sensible reductions that reflect the reality of the situation.

What the minister of defence has shown is a lack of knowledge and understanding of military requirements. He closed the base at Chilliwack against the recommendations of the military itself.

I happen to have some personal knowledge of the base at Chilliwack. I was stationed there for three years. Chilliwack has unique qualifications. It has a good climate that allows year round

training; it has real estate available that is irreplaceable anywhere else in the country; and it has plant that will provide the training facilities that are badly needed.

Over the last five years \$40 million has been spent upgrading the plant at Chilliwack. The minister is about to walk away from that. Even at this moment there are engineers who have been moved to Edmonton who are back training in Chilliwack because they cannot do their training in Edmonton.

It does not seem logical to me that we would deliberately close a base that is required for the support of Canada's third largest province with a known danger from earthquakes. It is not if an earthquake is going to come, it is when. I understand from reading some recent scientific articles that the earthquake is likely to measure nine on the Richter scale, far stronger than any other earthquake that has occurred until now. They are talking about the west coast of Vancouver Island dropping one metre and moving three metres westward when the plates slide under one another. This will create cataclysmic damage to the plant and property there.

The minister said: "Oh, we will look after you from Edmonton. We will fly people and equipment in". I have got news for the minister. If the weather is at all inclement, every control tower in B.C. will be out of action. The minister will simply not be able to meet his promise and he does not appear to care.

There are three million people on the lower mainland and the Vancouver Island area. The minister is letting them hang out to dry because he has taken away the support that was readily available in Chilliwack and has moved it 1,000 miles to the east.

The same thing applies to the unhappy prospect of a civil disturbance of major proportions in the province. This means that there is no regular force left within the province of British Columbia to respond. We can expect or anticipate that such might arise in the near future. The equipment and the regular force personnel should be available to respond. Not doing so in my estimation is irresponsible on the part of the minister.

Lastly, the closure of base Chilliwack does not meet the fairness principle between the federal government and the provinces. The defence department has reported that B.C. is under-represented financially by \$700 million by virtue of our population.

The minister seems to have no interest whatsoever in achieving a fair distribution of resources, financial and otherwise, between Canada and British Columbia.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very sad that the Reform Party has again decided to pit Canadian regions against regions. Last week it was Newfoundland against Quebec with Churchill Falls and this week it is B.C. against everybody else in Canada.

Supply

Does the hon. member think that our government has ignored B.C.? Does he recognize the government's effort in the Asia-Pacific region? The government agenda has been beneficial to the province of British Columbia. B.C. alone gained the most from this agenda.

Can the hon. member tell us if he understands the impact of our Asia-Pacific agenda on economic development in B.C.?

• (1535)

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that B.C. figures very strongly in the Asia-Pacific region for trade. The fact is that B.C. has succeeded in increasing the Asia-Pacific trade in spite of the federal government, not because of it. It is because there are good people there.

British Columbia is under-represented in the House of Commons by the Liberal members from B.C. They do not carry B.C.'s message to Ottawa; rather they carry Ottawa's message to B.C. They do not accurately represent the needs and requirements of the people of British Columbia.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development)(Western Economic Diversification), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the motion of the member for North Island—Powell River.

One thing which is very important is that the government has set the stage for a major thrust to increase trade in the Asia-Pacific. My colleague the Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific has been at the forefront of this effort. The Prime Minister has been at the forefront leading trade missions to various countries in the Asia-Pacific. When we look at the trade statistics, clearly we are making major progress in Canadian trade with the Asia-Pacific region. Right up front is the presence of British Columbia as the gateway to the Asia-Pacific.

Next year is the year of the Asia-Pacific. I would like to point out to the hon. member that this January, Canada assumes the chair of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation. I would also like to point out that the government is well under way at this point in planning events throughout the year and that these activities will culminate in our hosting the APEC economic leaders meeting in Vancouver in November next year.

As all members of the House know, British Columbia is indeed Canada's gateway to the Pacific. This is becoming more and more important, not just for British Columbia but for the whole of Canada.

[*Translation*]

To mark this meeting of Asian and Pacific leaders, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada also inaugurated the year of the Asia-Pacific. Cultural, academic and trade activities, as well as other related events, will take place throughout Canada in order to

showcase the solid relations that exist between Canada and its Asian and Pacific partners, and to raise their profile.

[*English*]

The Department of Foreign Affairs, working in close co-operation with other federal departments and the province of British Columbia, has already opened an office in Vancouver to support the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation activities which will highlight British Columbia as the gateway to the Pacific rim.

The government recognizes that British Columbia has a strong and growing economy. We know well that this economy relies on small business and trade and on exports, and that the growth in the Asia-Pacific is very important to the growth of the economy and the well-being of people in British Columbia.

Our government is making sure that businesses throughout Canada have the information they need to grow, to expand and to participate in these new markets in the Asia-Pacific. As an example, in British Columbia the Canada-British Columbia Business Service Centre responds to thousands of queries every month from people all over the province who are starting or expanding their businesses or expanding their markets. The centre, which has been developed under the tenure of our government, is an excellent example of how the federal government can work in partnership with provincial governments. It shows how we make use of innovative technology to meet the needs of those businesses that create the jobs in the current economy.

• (1540)

I should point out that just two weeks ago the Internet web site run by the Canada-British Columbia Business Service Centre won the Distinction 96 Gold Award for renewing services and program delivery. Each month this web site helps more than 50,000 visitors find the practical information they need to start and expand their small businesses. This is very important for British Columbia and it is very important for small business in British Columbia.

Our government has also worked in new ways to develop a program called Strategis which we have put onto the worldwide web so that businesses can find the information they need, the information they want when they want it. On Strategis there are thousands of new technologies which are available. On Strategis there is the ability to connect up very easily with business partners across Canada. Indeed for foreigners interested in doing business with Canada, Strategis is a virtual marketplace for Canadian goods and services. It is but one component of what we are doing as a government.

Let me point out another effort which is helping British Columbia to participate as the gateway to the Asia-Pacific. This is the international trade personnel program. My department, western economic diversification, is delivering this program. It is helping

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companies in British Columbia and across western Canada to hire recent graduates to help them develop their export market.

The program has been very successful and its reports already show significant market penetration as a result of the activities of these eager young graduates. Many of the markets that are being penetrated are in the Asia-Pacific region, and this means jobs for young people, for recent graduates in British Columbia.

Growth in British Columbia and in the Asia-Pacific relies on these small businesses, the emerging industries. This is where we are putting a considerable effort.

My department, western economic diversification, has also recently created investment loan funds in co-operation with banks and other financial institutions. These loan funds provide access to capital on fully commercial terms for small businesses in new growth sectors like biotechnology, health, environmental technology, information technology, telecommunications, tourism and other knowledge based industries. This is a further example of what we are doing in partnership with financial institutions to provide loans in areas where the risks are higher and where the needs are great.

Not only do small businesses need access to financing but they need help in knowing how to expand and grow their businesses. Western diversification officials in British Columbia are working with firms in the emerging economy to help with their business planning as well as responding to calls from entrepreneurs who are seeking advice. Members of the third party from time to time have found western diversification so useful to small businesses that their offices are now regularly referring clients to the western diversification office for help and advice.

Throughout British Columbia, WD supports a network of 32 community futures development corporations. These CFDCs are run by volunteers who work hard to create jobs and to help with the growth of small businesses in their communities. Let me give a few examples.

- (1545)

In Powell River the CFDC has helped to develop the waterfront. The Strathcona CFDC in Campbell River on northern Vancouver Island has helped to solve a pollution problem caused by fish waste and at the same time helped develop a local industry, turning organic waste into marketable compost. It was able to do this with financial help provided through western diversification to make sure that we have a strong on the ground organization.

In the Campbell River area of northern Vancouver Island nine loans totalling \$316,000 using the working opportunity fund have been made to local small businesses. This is another example of the CFDCs working and helping locally in economic development.

In the Terrace area of northwestern B.C. we recognize the importance of aboriginal businesses to the development of a strong economy. Here the CFDC is making loans to businesses run by aboriginal people to foster the creation of badly needed businesses and services in the First Nations communities.

The government believes that in the future it is the young people in particular who are important to growth and it is opportunities for young people of which we need to be most aware. In April of this year western diversification provided \$200,000 in new loan capital to each CFDC to provide financial assistance to British Columbia's young people to create their own businesses.

I have visited with several of these CFDCs and talked to many of the young people who have benefited. The experience has been excellent with this program and the response from young people and from the CFDCs to this program and this funding have been very rewarding.

Western economic diversification has also established the women's enterprise initiative, recognizing that more and more of small businesses are being operated by women. In British Columbia the Women's Enterprise Society is working hard to bring more and more women into the economy as entrepreneurs, sharing and participating with other entrepreneurs.

The hon. member says he is concerned about the closure of DND bases in British Columbia. Let me remind him of the government's commitment to assist communities during these times of economic adjustment. In areas where the downsizing of a facility will have a major effect on the local economy the government has stepped in to help. In the communities around CFB Masset, responsibility for solutions to economic adjustment has been delegated by the government to the community. The community is charting its own future with financial support from the Government of Canada.

Similarly, through the infrastructure works program local communities have identified needs. Over 400 projects have now been approved in British Columbia with the federal share exceeding \$220 million or one-third of the total cost. These projects are expected to create or maintain more than 9,000 short term and 400 long term jobs. Eighty-five per cent of the program funding is allocated to water, sewer and local transportation projects. These will not only enhance the local infrastructure but they will also improve health and the environment.

We are looking to the future to build a strong base of science, research and technology in British Columbia. The federal government is contributing \$167 million over five years to the Tri-University Meson Facility at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. TRIUMF is one of the world's leading facilities for subatomic particle research. The applied research conducted at TRIUMF has already resulted in the creation of new commercial

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products in biomedical, radiopharmaceutical and medical isotope research, products like PET scanners and pion therapy beams.

• (1550)

TRIUMF generates economic activity for western Canada through its purchase of products and services, and through technology transfer and commercialization. In addition, some 700 scientists from around the world come to British Columbia to conduct research and attend scientific conferences organized by TRIUMF.

The hon. member should also know that the federal government has supported many networks of centres of excellence headquartered in British Columbia. British Columbia is home to the networks for research on telelearning, on bacterial diseases and on genetic diseases. In addition to that, the federal government has invested some \$600 million in the Centre for Advanced Wood Processing and \$3 million in the Biopharmaceutical Innovation Resource Centre Fund.

The good news is that these investments in critical research and development, coupled to their commercialization, are likely to have very substantial benefits for the British Columbia economy for many years to come.

In partnership with the provincial government, the federal government has provided \$5 million over the last two years under the agreement on communications and cultural industries. This money has been invested in over 45 projects to promote culture and technology development in British Columbia.

To make sure that people in communities throughout British Columbia have access to the information highway, the government created a community access program and to date 34 rural and remote communities in British Columbia have been hooked up to the Internet and even more will be connected over the coming two years.

The government has been active in making sure that there is information available for small business, that communities have support for economic development, that science, research and technology in British Columbia have solid support. It has also negotiated open skies agreements with the United States to increase tourism in British Columbia. It has successfully managed the infrastructure works program in partnership with the provincial government and local levels of government.

The government has done a substantial amount for and with the people of British Columbia as part of the partnership which is this country of Canada, people working together to make things happen.

British Columbia is a major contributor to Canada, not only from an economic point of view but, more important, through the contribution of all its citizens. It contributes to the strength of our

country culturally economically, scientifically and to the unity of our great country.

The hon. member should also know that in the time I have been here the Liberal members from British Columbia have spoken strongly, loudly and forcefully for the province of British Columbia and that is one of the reasons why British Columbia and British Columbians are doing very well at the moment.

I ask that my time be shared with my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. secretary of state will appreciate that to do that he cannot speak for 18 minutes and then ask to share two minutes with his colleague. It has to be indicated at the outset of an intervention.

• (1555)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. parliamentary secretary the following question. I listened quite attentively to his 18-minute dialogue about how great a job the federal government has done with the economy in British Columbia and about the tremendous involvement of western diversification, and I wonder if he could answer a question in connection with the department for which he is responsible. It has to do with the initiative called community futures which WED is now looking after.

I have asked this question before. Why do we have these community futures enterprise centres throughout British Columbia, and indeed across the country but I am speaking specifically about B.C. today, and there is now a duplication in having women's centres? There are a couple in the province that specifically deal with aboriginal issues.

I support the idea that there is a role to be played to assist small entrepreneurs who cannot get assistance, especially in the area of training and helping them to put together a business plan, but I would think that the criteria for something like that would cross all boundaries. If people is going to a resource centre or a community futures centre and looking for assistance, it should not matter if they are male or female or whether they are aboriginal or non-aboriginal. I wonder what justification there is for having these separate centres based on either gender or race. I cannot see that.

I have heard the argument before that the difficulty is that some women have felt intimidated when they go to a community futures and have to deal with a male loans officer. I would assume that the natural chain of events would be to ensure that there are women working at these centres. I know the one in my home town has all women working in it now and I certainly do not have a problem with that. Why have separate programs set up just for women or just for aboriginals?

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to explain what is happening with the situation in British Columbia.

The Community Futures Development Corporation, where it is responsible for a region, deals with men, women and anybody who lives in that region, on an equal basis. However, it was discovered that the needs of women historically have not been sufficiently met. Therefore, the Women's Enterprise Societies have been set up in the four western provinces.

In order to make sure, in British Columbia in particular, the Women's Enterprise Society and centre have an agreement with the Community Futures Development Corporation so that there is a partnership. They work together to make sure that men and women are both very well served.

Certainly the experience in all four western provinces has shown that the Women's Enterprise Centres targeting women are badly needed. The example we have in British Columbia of a very strong partnership between the Community Futures Development Corporation and the Women's Enterprise Society is an example of how we can deliver services to all effectively and without having duplication.

• (1600)

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Fraser Valley East.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to discuss a topic that seldom gets mentioned in the House by the Liberal government, British Columbia. Perhaps it is the time difference, perhaps it is the mountain barriers, but in any event B.C. is not a big deal here in Ottawa. That is usually okay with British Columbians; we feel that is just fine.

I have listened with a lot of amusement but some distress at the Liberal members taking full credit for the economic well-being of the province of British Columbia. It is making a mockery and undermining the sacrifices, the investments, the time and effort of the business community in the lower mainland, which is responsible for the economic development. If anything, it is in spite of the government that these business entrepreneurs have been able to withstand the high taxes, the rules, the regulations and the red tape. The only thing I have seen Liberal government members do is travel overseas and wine, dine and schmooze. I have not seen anything more concrete than that. It is the business community which takes the responsibility for the economic well-being.

We are glad that years ago the federal government quietly transferred the ownership of Vancouver's international airport to a local non-profit authority. Without the interference of Ottawa politicians and bureaucrats, Vancouver international airport has transformed itself into an elite international airport. It has successfully been able to handle the phenomenal growth in the travelling public and is now able to look ahead to even more expansion.

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I was at a Vancouver morning club the other day where they were toasting and roasting David Emerson, the CEO of the Vancouver airport authority. I did not see the Minister of Transport, the minister responsible for B.C., at that function honouring the individual who has led the airport authority into tremendous success.

Contrast Vancouver's quiet airport success with the Pearson airport disaster that this government has led us through. Since the day this Liberal government got elected it has been consumed with the Pearson airport deal. The best thing the government is hoping for now is that this deal will cost Canadian taxpayers tens of millions of dollars instead of hundreds of millions of dollars. Meanwhile in Vancouver the amount of money that the federal government has received from the airport authority has more than doubled.

That is the way we do things out west. Ignored by the federal government, we keep adding great amounts of money to the federal treasury while in the rest of Canada the Liberal government keeps sticking its nose into issues that it should not and keeps costing the taxpayers millions of dollars.

For the most part, British Columbians do not look to Ottawa for the big government projects or government handouts. The attitude in the west is that we can be successful on our own and we only hope that Ottawa does not screw it up for us.

In the last 1970s representatives from the British Columbia provincial government were hard at work trying to get one of the big Japanese auto manufacturers to set up an assembly plant in B.C. Toyota showed a fair amount of interest and formal negotiations began. Then in the early 1980s the federal government entered into its own negotiations with Toyota at the exclusion of the British Columbia representatives.

Soon the big announcement came that Toyota would be building a new North American assembly plant in Ontario. As a thought to B.C. Toyota did announce that it would build a wheel assembly plant in Richmond, B.C. This plant has proven to be very successful for Toyota and we welcome the jobs. However, it probably would have been more appropriate if Toyota had set up a drive train plant in B.C. Then the Liberal government of the day could have announced that Toyota would open up a major assembly plant in Ontario and at the same time British Columbia would get the shaft.

We have heard about the big projects that the previous government threw our way to try to get our votes. And we are still waiting for the Polar-8 icebreaker to rejuvenate our shipbuilding industry. We are still waiting for Kaon linear accelerator to make B.C. a leader in atomic research.

In reality we are not really waiting. British Columbians know that these projects were just cheap political promises by the previous Tory government. Now that the Tories have disappeared

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from B.C.'s political map things must have changed with the Liberal government, right?

• (1605)

The Liberal government is not making any outrageous promises or creating any megaprojects to get the voters' attention. Not yet anyway. It is still working on its election platform. Instead, the Liberal government has taken an entirely new approach. Rather than promise us projects which it has no intention of delivering, it is simply removing any vestige of the federal government out of the province. Lighthouse keepers, coast guard officials and the only military base on the mainland of British Columbia are on their way out.

Let us look at the lighthouse keepers. On Saturday an American pilot was flying from Alaska to his home in Washington state when his plane went down near Bella Bella. However, due to the diligence of the lighthouse keeper on McInnes Island, a fishing boat was dispatched precisely to the crash site and was able to rescue the pilot. Of course this lighthouse is scheduled for automation.

What would have happened without a human lighthouse keeper? Perhaps the Minister of Transport would like to tell the House what would have happened to him that day when he needed a person to rescue him when he got into distress in his boat. On second thought, maybe we do not care.

The cutbacks to lighthouses and the Canadian Coast Guard are going to cost lives. The problem is the government's priorities. The priorities of the Liberal government are all mixed up. It is cutting the coast guard at a time when those services are desperately needed.

There was a case in my riding where there was a crab boat in the bay that was on fire. If not for the United States coast guard coming to the rescue, the crew of the crab boat would have perished.

The powers that be at the coast guard headquarters here in Ottawa think they can save money by closing down a few coast guard stations in B.C. and by having the main stations manned only during certain hours. The message to B.C. boaters is do not get into trouble in B.C. waters unless you are around a major city during working hours.

This type of policy would appear to have been dreamed up by some bureaucrat whose idea of high sea adventure is taking a ferry across the Ottawa River.

All of this is in an attempt to save money. Why does the government not cut some of the bureaucrats in the offices instead of those on the front lines who deliver the services?

How will the coast guard spend the rest of its money? While the coast guard is going to close down stations in B.C. and put lives at

risk, it will use some of the money it saves to send 170 senior bureaucrats to Cornwall next month to "meet and have fun". That is how the government memo reads. It will be a great relief to B.C. boaters to know that while the coast guard is cutting back on rescue services, senior bureaucrats will still have the opportunity to meet and have fun.

It is not just the coast guard which is cutting back. Our military is doing it as well. By closing CFB Chilliwack the government is closing the only military base on the mainland of British Columbia against the recommendations of senior military officers still capable of independent thought.

This move by the Liberal government is costing hundreds of millions of dollars in building facilities in Edmonton to receive the base from Chilliwack. This is after having just spent hundreds of millions of dollars on new facilities in Chilliwack. It just does not make any sense.

It made sense to have Canada's military engineers stationed in the province with the most difficult terrain in the country as well as near a major urban centre which has the highest probability of a major earthquake. However, because it did make sense, the government is closing the base and shipping the engineers across the country.

Who will British Columbians have to rely on in the event of a major earthquake? Certainly not Ottawa. If the greater Vancouver area suffers a major earthquake and needs military assistance, the only people in a position to help will be our friends south of the border.

That is why most British Columbians think north-south more than they think east-west. That is why most British Columbians are quite familiar with the concept of Cascadia. When I mentioned Cascadia in the House a couple of years ago nobody knew what it was. The library had to phone my office to find out how it is even spelled. British Columbians are strong supporters of the Canadian ideals of fairness and equality. They are still waiting for this government to understand the concept.

• (1610)

Last month the federal government quickly came up with an extra \$6 million for Quebec after that province complained it was taking on over half of Canada's refugees.

Never mind that Quebec already receives \$90 million a year or over 35 per cent of all the federal moneys spent on settlement of immigrants despite the fact that Quebec only takes 13 per cent of these immigrants and despite the fact that 77 per cent of economic immigrants to Quebec leave that province.

Contrast this reaction to how this Liberal government treated B.C. when it cut welfare payments to people who had not lived in the province for three months because of a dramatic increase in

numbers when other provinces started giving their welfare recipients bus tickets to B.C.

The Liberals responded by withholding \$45 million in federal funds to British Columbia. Fairness and equality are what British Columbians are looking for. That is what we have learned not to expect from this Liberal government.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech we just listened to in the House. I am wondering whether I should change the emphasis of my speech from how disappointed we are about the lack of attention we are getting from the feds and maybe take the hon. member's advice. Maybe we are better off without them.

Be that as it may, we raise this issue today not because we think B.C. issues alone are important in Canada. The Reform Party has been a national opposition party. We had supply day motions on Churchill Falls and on the Canadian Wheat Board. Today we are talking about issues that affect British Columbia specifically.

I would like to spend a little time talking specifically about CFB Chilliwack. It has been mentioned by previous speakers. The announced closure of CFB Chilliwack, the move to Gaagetown and to Edmonton, Alberta of the men and equipment previously at CFB Chilliwack is something that has added another log on the fire of the feeling of western alienation.

Today during question period I mentioned the hon. member for Simcoe North, the Liberal government member who toured B.C. on behalf of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. There was a document leaked to Barbara Yaffe of the Vancouver *Sun*. Much to his surprise, he found out that there was a profound sense of alienation in British Columbia from our masters here in Ottawa. There is a profound sense of distrust toward what goes on here in Ottawa. They ignore this at their peril.

There is no separatism movement in British Columbia per se. However, what is smouldering right under the surface is a growing discontent, alienation and feeling that we are not going to put up with this much longer.

We have the move of CFB Chilliwack, taking the last land forces base in all of British Columbia and sprinkling it across the country. Imagine what would have happened if this had been in another province, perhaps Quebec.

Imagine the reaction that would have occurred if someone said "there are no more armed forces bases in Quebec, we are pulling them out". Many people would argue we should not be building infrastructure in Quebec at a time when things there are so uncertain politically.

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Be that as it may, the Liberal government thought nothing of it. It pulled it out. It was a lousy decision. It was a poor decision then and it is a poor one now.

The reasons it should have been retained are obvious, to protect Canada's infrastructure in British Columbia. The value of that property and buildings was \$470 million. That will be lost. They will recoup a small portion of that when they sell. That is what the value of the property and infrastructure was.

They should have maintained a military forces presence in British Columbia. I tried to explain to the ministers. Imagine what this is doing when people in the military are told that their tour of duty will go from Gaagetown, through Edmonton, forget B.C., back to Gaagetown and around we will go. British Columbia has been cut out of that. If the government thinks that is a good way to increase our feeling of being part of Canada and part of the decision making process it is sadly mistaken. There is ample evidence that we should have had CFB Chilliwack in place in case of the need for aid to the civil power.

• (1615)

CFB Chilliwack was formed in 1946 because it is Canada's only year round ice free training facility. It was put in place because the engineers said they needed a place like that to train. As a matter of fact, they have been transferred to Edmonton and they are in Chilliwack right now to practise their bridge building as we speak. It cost \$100,000 worth of damage to the bridge when they moved their equipment in, which is the only bridge over the Chilliwack River, because they should have been there all along. They are back because they know this is the kind of facility they need.

Major General Clive Addy, now retired, on July 29 spoke to the Pan-Pacific Hazards Conference in Vancouver: "We suffered quite a compromise from the closing of Chilliwack. Chilliwack is closing and I have lost the regular force presence in British Columbia, which I find a military risk. It is a civilian risk as well because our presence there was in my view necessary".

What about the claims from the defence minister that the base was closed on the advice of his officials? He got all the advice from land forces command and it was the thing to do. Here is what we got from our access to information request some time ago. From a memo dated October 14, written by Colonel Daigle who at that time was in land forces command: "It is estimated that only about 60 per cent of the savings that the minister is projecting would be actually materialize. CFB Chilliwack should be retained. Some of the dollar savings anticipated by the program review could easily be eaten up by the up front costs of relocation and reconstruction needed for reinstallation elsewhere, and potentially significant costs at the new location must also be taken into account".

It is no wonder that British Columbians feel a sense of alienation from the federal government. National policies seem to be con-

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ceived somewhere in the halls of power here in Ottawa. They are dictated down to the furthest provinces and they are carried out in this case without consequences to what it might mean to British Columbia.

What about the costs of CFB Chilliwack? I said time and again to the minister: "Come up with the dollar figures that show how you are going to save money. I am with the Reform Party and I have made a lot of noise about saving money, about doing the right thing fiscally. You show me on a piece of paper where you are going to save the money and maybe I will have to support you".

Here is what is actually going to happen. According to DND in 1995, the cost of closing CFB Chilliwack would be \$230 million. That included everything. That included new construction, severance for staff who were going to be let go, environmental clean-up, moving costs, miscellaneous. The total was \$230 million. Total savings were supposed to be \$66 million a year by moving our facilities out of Chilliwack.

Last October we released access to information documents that showed that the government could only realize 60 per cent of these savings, and that nearly doubles the payback period that the minister has been bragging about that he will get a return on his investment.

Since then we have received other documents and it is now estimated that for construction alone the cost would be \$93 million in Edmonton, \$17 million in Galetown and the cost of moving CFB Calgary, which is part of this reorganization, would be another \$27 million. That is \$137 million just for the costs there.

Our access to information documents show that construction contracts already awarded to reconstruct CFB Edmonton and CFB Galetown total \$204 million. The total cost of the whole package was going to be \$230 million, and just the construction now is \$204 million. It is impossible to say exactly how much was actually spent on each of these places because of the way the government gives us the information. There appears to be a \$67 million discrepancy so far.

• (1620)

On September 11, the Calgary *Sun* announced that DND would spend yet another \$42 million on CFB Edmonton for a new rifle range and all the other facilities that already exist at CFB Chilliwack. In total, the Calgary *Sun* article points out that changes to the Edmonton base alone could approach half a billion dollars. Two hundred and thirty million to a half a billion dollars is the inflation in one year.

The closure of CFB Chilliwack was the wrong decision from a military point of view. We have heard that. It was wrong from an emergency planning point of view and now we see that it was also wrong from an economic point of view.

There is obviously something wrong with the federal government. It is not listening. If the minister does not want to listen to me, I accept that. The minister does not listen to anybody from British Columbia so why should he listen to me? But he should be listening to the needs of British Columbia. He has closed his ears to any arguments and has said that it will be done, do not confuse me with the facts.

It begs the question why is the government really moving CFB Chilliwack. Is it politics? Is it partisan politics? This could be military politics, pure and simple. It could be that somebody in the general staff decided they did not like to come out to British Columbia so just get rid of them. It could have been, but it is increasingly becoming obvious that partisan politics has played a role in closing the last armed forces base in British Columbia.

General Boyle was in our town not too long ago. He told officers at CFB Chilliwack I have since talked to that whoever is going to close this place down must be nuts. He was not in command at the time the decision was made. It does not matter whether you're from Galetown or the chief of defence staff; it is a wrong decision to close the base, and anybody who goes out there will see it at a glance.

It has been asked if it was nasty partisan politics, military politics or just a bad decision. It has been said never to attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity. I am not sure to what we can attribute the closure of CFB Chilliwack but on either count, whether malice or stupidity, I believe the Liberal government is guilty of a gross mismanagement of public funds.

The people of British Columbia will hold it to account for it years from now and even in the next general election. People are already starting to line up and say that if CFB Chilliwack was closed for partisan politics—and the proof is starting to roll in—then they will never again be able to support a Liberal government.

The last five base commanders in my riding, now living in Chilliwack, have all given me the same story, that CFB Chilliwack should have been retained. CFB Chilliwack is an integral part of the Canadian Armed Forces and certainly plays a key role in any engineering efforts by our armed forces.

The decision to close it is another decision that I think years from now this federal government or successive federal governments will live to regret.

Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member attentively. I find his remarks about partisan politics in the decision with respect to Chilliwack to be offensive, and I really mean offensive. This is not partisan politics.

The announcement to close air command was made well over a year ago. I think it was in the 1995 budget. Where is air command?

It is in the riding of Winnipeg St. James, which I have the honour of representing. It has nothing to do with partisan politics whatsoever.

Sometimes we have to make tough decisions. Sometimes they come down hard and these decisions are difficult for members of Parliament, be they Liberal, Reform, Bloc or whatever.

In addition to air command being closed, naval command was closed. And where is naval command located? It is located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. As far as I know there are not too many Reform MPs from the province of Nova Scotia. In fact, I do not think there are very many Conservative or Bloc MPs. They are all Liberal.

• (1625)

The fact is this government has a responsibility to run the armed forces and sometimes that means there has to be reorganization. Sometimes it means closing air command, sometimes it means closing naval or army command in the province of Quebec. This has nothing to do with partisan politics.

I suggest the viewers watching this program, having listened to the hon. member from British Columbia make that kind of charge, will be very upset hearing those kinds of allegations because they are totally without foundation.

Mr. Strahl: Mr. Speaker, the government does have a responsibility to run the armed forces and it is running them into the ground, as we have seen week after week here in the House of Commons.

I started out with a different attitude. I begged the minister to show me the documentation on how he could save some money. I said: "If you can save some money and you lay it out for me in a document, and I am not talking about a one-page press release, I am talking about showing me how you can save the money, if you can save the money and still fulfil the role of the armed forces then hey, I am a Reformer and I will go for it. Let us do it. If that will save some bucks I am all for it".

This is not about saving money. That is why Colonel Daigle said in his analysis, the memo sent to the minister on which bases should be closed, that CFB Chilliwack should be retained. He went on to say they will not save money shutting down CFB Chilliwack.

General Clive Addy said you cannot do your job if you shut down CFB Chilliwack. The last five base commanders, all of them engineers, all who have seen the development of CFB Chilliwack and realized the role it plays in the greater military, the whole engineer training school and so on, have written to me and have all said the same thing, that this base should not be closed.

It should be retained and you cannot save money by sending people to Gagetown or to Edmonton and ask them to use ground

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engaging equipment in December. You cannot ask them to practice their grading techniques in January. You cannot ask them to build a road or practice their bridging techniques on February 5. You cannot ask them to build Bailey bridges and to practice their rafting on March 4 in Edmonton.

Right now they are trucking all our guys from Edmonton back to Chilliwack to practice their bridging and rafting. As a matter of fact, to move their equipment in they damaged the bridge and it is going to cost \$100,000 just to fix the bridge. It is not a good move. It is not a good move militarily. We heard that from General Clive Addy and others.

It is not a good move economically. We have heard that from our own access to information documents and from the government's own analysis. It is not a good move even right down to the idea—I do not want to make this into a national unity issue—of understanding what is going on in the regions of the country. It is important that the military have some institutional knowledge of British Columbia.

It is interesting and I hate to say it is typical but as an aside they changed the boundaries of my riding. It is now going to be called Fraser Valley. I phoned Elections Canada in Ottawa and I said I needed some maps to let me know exactly what it is I am looking at. The response from the people in Ottawa was: "Fraser Valley. Where in Alberta is that?"

I get the same feeling from this government when it comes to issues related to British Columbia. It is like the official who phoned me up one time on a speaking tour and asked if they went to Vancouver Island could they drive the George Massey Tunnel to get back to the mainland by quitting time. I deal with this all the time.

On my phone consistently are messages saying: "I am sorry I did not catch you in the office, Strahl, what is the matter with you?" Of course the message is 6.30 a.m. Why? Because they do not even understand there is a stupid time change in this country. On that side of the House they do not understand that the country does not end at the Rocky Mountains.

• (1630)

On military endeavours the Liberals are making a serious error. They recognize that B.C. should have a constitutional veto because it is a separate region. I do not want to get into a whole national unity debate. But they seem to understand at least that there is a region called British Columbia and it is separated by the Rocky Mountains. It is a hard doggone thing to get across in the middle of a landslide or an earthquake or in the case of a natural disaster.

However, the Liberals do not have clue one when it comes to understanding that the military needs an institutional knowledge of

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what takes place on that side of the Rocky Mountains. They are going to pay a price for this. I hope that Canadians and British Columbians do not pay too big a price for the ignorant decision of this federal government.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting if somewhat unresponsive debate. I will raise some of the key points that have emerged as I have listened to the various orators.

It is charged that it is a grievous crime that there are not enough Liberal members from B.C. That can be corrected in the next election. But I would raise the basic point that it is not the number of members, it is the quality of the representation. I made the point in another context with the former Conservative government, which I think was historically well accepted, that they had more effective representation of B.C. in the period 1984 to 1988 with only one powerful minister than in 1988 to 1993 when there were four or five ministers, one being a prime minister in waiting. It is the quality of the advice and whether the people work together as a team that counts.

Let me run through some of the achievements of which B.C. people can be proud in this period of office of B.C. members. One is the TRIUMF facility. Does anyone know how many hours of work that represented, carrying it to the cabinet, discussing it bilaterally with a minister, discussing it with the western caucus, persuading other regions of the country to waive their claims? We made the case that B.C. leads in these areas of fundamental scientific research and there is a significant spin-off to export industry. We brought forward the statistics: \$200 million export contracts in foreign trade spun off from TRIUMF, in order to retain TRIUMF. Give us the money for that. B.C. leads. \$167.5 million spread over five years is a significant gain. That took some hundreds of hours of work from my office and that of other members.

Canadian Airlines. We made the point to the cabinet that it is vital to have two national airlines in Canada and that it should use its power as a federal government to control the international air routes, which were given under the foreign affairs treaty making power. Use that to persuade one of the parties to cease aggressive litigation. The result of another few hundred hours of work, discussion in the western caucus, discussion in the national caucus before a Prime Minister who listens was 7,000 jobs retained in the greater Vancouver area. That is an achievement. A minister who listened and a minister who said the work was there and who said he had been persuaded.

B.C. as a distinct society, the notion that we should be considered as distinct a society as any in Canada, but with the important constitutional implications. B.C. is a fifth region and if there is to be any constitutional veto, we are entitled to that as much as anybody else. That was accepted again. It took arguments with

ministers, arguments with cabinet, the case presented in the caucus. That is teamwork.

Softwood lumber. My colleague, the member for Vancouver South started this. But the argument that historic rights were a key part of federalism in Canada and should be respected were key in maintaining B.C.'s historical quota. That argument was made by the B.C. members and it won and the results are there. Not everybody was happy with this. In fact, some of my colleagues from other provinces have asked: "Have you not managed to get too much"? We said: "We have made the case. If you have a good case, carry it forward". That is the essence of a good MP carrying the case for his or her province in Ottawa. It is the not the number of MPs but in fact the quality of their representations and whether they do their homework. Somebody was referring to the media and its power. I have appeared frequently on CFNW. I have been there for 20 years off and on with my old combatant and good friend, Rafe Mair. I was on his program and was congratulated on what we had managed to do on the airlines. Someone asked: "What have you done about the francophonie Olympic games?" I said: "Look, I am working on softwood lumber. It is a full time job. Give me some extra colleagues and maybe we can delegate to them the francophonie Olympic games". This is not to say that it is not an important question but there is a limit to our physical capacity to handle many jobs together.

• (1635)

On the record, I believe we have done well. It reflects the basic condition in British Columbia. We are the fastest growing area of the country but it is more than that. It is more than the influx of population. It is the new dynamism. It is the feeling that Canada is moving and we are moving more quickly than anybody else.

It is one of the reasons why, in this repeated discussion of constitutional change, that we have said we would like a larger vision. It is mistake to jell the status quo. We want to build a Canada for the future.

Is British Columbia opposed to Quebec? Not on your life. I know no reasonable, responsible British Columbian who is opposed to Quebec, to French Canada or the French language and culture and its influence on our society. If it is simply a matter of repeating what is already international law and constitutional law by virtue of the military agreements of 1759, the Treaty of Paris 1763, the Quebec Act of 1774 and the Supreme Court Act of 1875 so far as it relates to Quebec representations in the Supreme Court of Canada, there is no problem in British Columbia. In fact, there is no particular constitutional obstacle.

It is when we get into the specifics of constitutional change that we face the basic issue that we have been in some respects in a constitutional straitjacket since 1982. We have pointed out that some matters for change require 10 out of 10 provinces to agree. Other matters require only seven out of ten but it may take a

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Supreme Court decision to say which is which. In the meantime, we have to recognize that politics is the art of the possible.

That is why I and others welcome the agreement, in which we have played some part, between the Government of British Columbia, which is not of the same political ideology as the present Government of Canada, and the Government of Canada, the memorandum of understanding to study together the future of the west coast fishing industry.

If we want to change the Constitution, we are into this basic problem, section 91.12. It is section 91 and 92. On many views change in section 91.12, by formal amendment, is a 10 out of 10 question. It is at least a seven out of ten and with every constitutional change involving British Columbia's consent, we have to have the prior approval of the people in a referendum. Former Premier Van Der Zalm's government introduced it and it is the law. It is respected by everybody.

However, there is nothing to say that we cannot change the Constitution in other ways, that we cannot reach co-operative federalism by a joint understanding of principles and policies for future development that we would work out together. This is changing the Constitution in a practical way if it works, and the best energies of the British Columbia government we are assured and certainly the federal government are devoted to this.

I will repeat again that the Constitution is changing. British Columbians welcome the change in the Constitution. Probably at a certain point we will be suggesting the simplest of all methods, a constituent assembly. However, it is a country still in growth and, as we know from the experience of the 19th century codification, to act too early is frankly to jell social change prematurely. We are looking at this, but in the meantime we are doing our best to change the Constitution in practical ways.

• (1640)

The decision of the federal cabinet on softwood lumber is a vindication of the classic principles of federalism. The intervention of the British Columbia caucus was very positive and very direct.

I respect the problems to which hon. members opposite have referred. I understand the concern of members of the Bloc in relation to the marine service fees. There has been reference to the fact that 75 per cent of the witnesses took one view and only 25 per cent the other. Have they considered the reality that in British Columbia we work collegially? It is much better to have one or two solid pieces of testimony from British Columbians in favour of the differential fee for the main services fee, the principle of user pay, if they represent the same number of people as the 75 per cent. In

other words, the numbers game does not work. It is the weight of the testimony which is crucial.

I would remind members of the official opposition who raised this issue that the matter is still open to examination as the experience with the marine service fees is worked out.

With respect to the closing of military bases, I argued the case successfully for extending the Chilliwack base by a year. I argued the case in relation to Royal Roads. The difference in the two cases is that in Royal Roads the provincial government and the local communities came up with alternative plans which were accepted.

I regret the closing of Chilliwack, but I accept the notion which all opposition members have raised. If we want to balance the budget and reduce external debt, then something has to give. The sacrifice, as long as it is equal, is something which we can share.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before beginning I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Reform Party is once again trying to pit some regions against other regions in Canada. Last week it was Quebec against Newfoundland with the Churchill Falls issue. This week it is trying to pit British Columbia against other regions of the country. It is sad.

I would like to suggest that the reason the Reform Party is playing politics this way is because it is continually dropping in the polls which are taken in British Columbia. In September the Gallup poll showed that it only has about 21 per cent support in B.C. I would like to advise the third party that doing politics this way will not earn it any more brownie points.

During Question Period I asked the Reform member if he understood the Asia-Pacific agenda of the government and, in particular, as it pertains to B.C. He said no. He said that trade in British Columbia is thriving in spite of government efforts.

I would like to take this opportunity to share some information with him. The Prime Minister and the Liberal government in November 1993 recognized how important the Asia-Pacific region is and how important it is to British Columbia. It is no coincidence that Canada's first Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific is from British Columbia. I want to share the efforts which the government and I have made over the last three years for British Columbia.

One of the reasons the Asia-Pacific region is so important for us is because of the job and economic growth agenda which is a priority of the government. We led Team Canada missions into that region: China in 1994, and India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia in January 1996. These missions have led to some \$17 billion in new business deals and follow-up activities. Other missions led by

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other Canadian ministers and myself have also promoted our commercial interests and through them, jobs and growth at home.

• (1645)

It is estimated that every billion dollars of exports in Canada which are exported through British Columbia generate about 11,000 jobs for Canadians. In British Columbia alone, 50 per cent of our exports are to the Asia-Pacific region. I can share with the members some of the successes from British Columbia.

Innotech Aviation of Richmond, a company in my riding has recently signed an agreement with the Chinese General Administration of Civil Aviation Authority to complete a major maintenance project for Chinese Cessna Citation jets. Sun-Rype Products of Kelowna signed a memorandum of understanding that is worth \$13 million while on a recent trade mission. Chai-na-ta Corporation has two projects worth \$27 million which will sustain 100 jobs in its Langley operation. Kryton Technologies of Vancouver will create 10 jobs as a direct result of its joint ventures in Asia through participation in Team Canada.

Improving Canada's trade performance and links between countries is one of the best moves we can make to create jobs in Canada. Another way of linking Canada and the countries of the Asia-Pacific is through the open skies agreement. We understand how important the open skies agreement is to Canada and how the overall transportation system on the west coast is so important to British Columbia. It is no coincidence again that Canada's transport minister is from British Columbia. The Minister of Transport has done a great job.

I still remember that when we first got elected, the first thing I did was to meet with the airport authority to talk about how important the open skies agreement was. The former Minister of Transport and the present Minister of Transport, who is an hon. member from British Columbia, have done a tremendous job in implementing that policy. In February 1995 the agreement was signed.

How important is the open skies agreement for British Columbia? It has made Vancouver the gateway to the Asia-Pacific. The reason the tourism industry has flourished and so many airlines have started using us is that we have the open skies agreement. Talking about high tech industries in British Columbia, because of that agreement, Richmond will no longer be at a competitive disadvantage because of poor airline connections.

I am proud to announce that Vancouver has been chosen as the site where Canada will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation conference in November 1997. It is no coincidence the Government of Canada decided that Vancouver should be the site. We recognize it is important for Vancouver to have that opportunity, to showcase Vancouver, British Columbia and in fact, the whole of Canada to the Asia-Pacific region. This is also why the Prime Minister will announce later that 1997 will be the year of Asia-Pacific for Canada. This is all because we want to put

emphasis on helping Vancouver and British Columbia and Canada to do much more in the Asia-Pacific region.

• (1650)

Talking about the technology industry, I would like to remind the member that in the 1995 budget we planned \$165 million for TRIUMF, which is one of the flagships of the high technology industry in Canada and indeed in British Columbia. This was done at a time when a lot of research and development projects in other parts of the country were being cut back.

The reason we managed this is that all six caucus members of the Liberal Party from British Columbia worked very hard to convince our colleagues in the rest of the country that it is important for British Columbia to continue with the TRIUMF project. It is important that those scientists and technologists who are so important for this country stay in the lower mainland to continue to provide a lot of spin-off benefits for the high technology industries in British Columbia.

It is no coincidence either that because of the hard work of the Liberal caucus members from British Columbia as my colleague, Mr. McWhinney, has mentioned—

The Deputy Speaker: This mistake has been made repeatedly this afternoon, colleagues. We are not to refer to a sitting member of the House by his or her name and only by his or her constituency.

Mr. Chan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier my colleagues mentioned the efforts we have put forward to make sure that we kept our entitled quota on softwood lumber. It is because we all worked so hard that we were able to convince the ministers in charge that softwood lumber is critical for the future of British Columbians. We finally won what we set out to do.

Talking about the deficit, whenever I go back to my riding to meet with British Columbians they all talk about the necessity of keeping our irons in the fire to make sure that we do a good job to maintain our target goals on our deficit reduction project. Even though the agenda we put forth on the deficit reduction process has a great deal of impact on the other regions of Canada, and at the same time British Columbians have less of a burden in this process, the cabinet and the Prime Minister have been able to pursue and continue with—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver North.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member some questions about his representation in B.C.

My first question is: Why did the member ignore the input from two, not just one but two public meetings in his riding which told him not to support any recognition of distinct society for Quebec

when he voted for the government's initiative against the wishes of his constituents?

The second question is: Is it true that the member mentioned that he would not be a minister if it was not for the fact that he was Asian? If that is true, how widespread is this problem of racism in the Liberal Party?

My third question is. On the issue of astronaut families, the member comes from a riding that contains a high percentage of Asians. I have an article here from the *Vancouver Sun* of September 25. It states: "In the past two months dozens of high-end homes on Vancouver's west side have been listed, including four priced at \$2.5 million or higher, that went on the market the same day because Asians are fleeing the country, because they are going to be required to pay taxes on their worldwide incomes by the new provisions introduced in the budget last year".

To link the article, it describes reports from KPMG Accountants and a number of others who estimate this astronaut family problem to be a major problem. That is certainly the experience that came from New Zealand when they clamped down on this tax evasion. Three years ago Reformers were called racist for even trying to bring this subject up. Now it is clearly a major, major problem here. I would like the member to tell me, does it affect 10 per cent, 20 per cent, 30 per cent or 40 per cent of his riding? How many tax evaders are there in his riding?

• (1655)

Mr. Chan: Mr. Speaker, I have no apologies to make. If the distinct society clause is what will keep Canada united, then that is exactly what I believe was necessary at the time of the referendum. The Prime Minister came out boldly to support that cause and carried through with the legislation to honour his promise to keep Canada together.

As an immigrant who came to this country—and I love this country—I came here for freedom, but I want a united Canada. I have no apologies to make to support the initiative to keep Canada together. On the contrary, I would ask the Reform Party: Where were you in the referendum? Where were you to be seen? During the referendum I went into Quebec three or four times—

The Deputy Speaker: Will the hon. member please put his comments to the Chair rather than across the floor.

Mr. Chan: Mr. Speaker, I get excited when it comes to the unity of the country.

I was in Quebec three or four times to urge Quebecers to vote no in the referendum. I have no apologies to make in that regard.

Speaking as the minister for the Asia-Pacific, right after the report was made in the *Vancouver Sun* I made a strong statement to

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tell the public that it was not true. Indeed the fact that I as an immigrant of Asian origin am able not only to share the wealth and well-being of Canada because of the generosity of Canadians but also to share in the political power of the Canadian establishment is a true indication of how generous Canadians are, how open our society is. The statement was false and I make that very clear. I thank the hon. member for giving me this opportunity to clear those points.

On the astronaut family issue, this is where we differ with the Reform Party. Mr. White suggested that every immigrant that comes into—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister has been here now for three years and I think he should know to address members by their riding rather than by their names.

Mr. Chan: The hon. member opposite who asked a question suggested that all immigrants who come to this country should report to the customs officers at the border whether they have paid taxes or not. How could the Canadian government treat immigrants differently from Canadians? I do not think it is practical to treat every immigrant as a criminal before they come into this country.

For the hon. member opposite to ask me how big the problem of astronaut families is, I do not know. I do not think any one of us would know. I do not think it is a big problem because most immigrants from Asia are no different from immigrants from any other part of the world. Most of them are law-abiding citizens and most of them have contributed greatly to the success of this country. I look at myself as a great example. I came to Canada with \$20 in my pocket. I completed my education here. I have built a family and a career and I am contributing to the country. I am an Asian immigrant.

I hope that the Reform Party and the members opposite will not continuously attack Canadians or immigrants because of their ethnic origin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you will, of course, permit me to comment on the discussion that took place between the member of the Liberal Party and the member of the Reform Party, earlier, when they were speaking about distinct society. On a number of occasions today, we have heard our colleagues in the Reform Party berate the Liberals for supporting this concept.

That being said, government members have on each occasion been at pains to make it clear that they were supporting the concept only in so far as it meant as little as possible and that absolutely no power was involved. One minister even told us this during question period.

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• (1700)

This is a clear illustration of the fact that distinct society means different things to different people. Today, during the debate between government members and members of the Reform Party, the government took the trouble each time to make it clear that this concept did not involve any specific or additional power. In that sense, they supported it. It is very worrisome to hear such things. These people are saying that they have promised to recognize the concept of a distinct society, and that they will keep their promise, as long as it does not mean anything. We could doubt their good faith and sincerity when they come selling us all sorts of promises.

That being said, let us return to the motion proposed today by the Reform Party. This debate always leads us back to the constitutional debate, because there are many problems associated with the division of powers in this country.

Today, the Reform Party is complaining that the federal government is impeding progress in western Canada through its mismanagement of the affairs of the nation. It gives a series of examples: discontinuation of Coast Guard services, the closure of military bases, the elimination of federal Ports Canada policing, and so on.

I will take the few minutes allotted me to draw a parallel with the situation in Quebec regarding the federal government. One of the problems, and the problem that will eventually lead to the reconfiguration of Canada without Quebec, in which Quebec will simply be one of Canada's trade partners, is this centralizing tendency that has always dominated thinking over the years here in Ottawa.

We see there has always been a movement in western Canada that favours decentralized government, a movement that never found favour with a government that has always been at the mercy of the bureaucracy or the bureaucratic inertia of the people who make the real decisions here in Ottawa.

That also led to the current situation: excessive debt. It also means that we have a federal government that is responsible for spending more than \$160 billion annually, which is disproportionate to the role government should play if we had a real confederation instead of a federation. What the Reform Party proposes today brings us back to the crux of the problem, where there are certain choices we will have to make, choices that will be made in the years to come.

As I said earlier, I will discuss the similar situation that exists in Quebec, without necessarily commenting on the situation in British Columbia, with the exception of a few areas for which I have some figures. I will start with defence spending.

I find that ridiculous. We often hear people, especially on the government side, harp on the fact that unemployment levels are higher in Quebec. They get all excited, they are in fact delighted,

and they think it is just one more weapon to fight the sovereignists, and they told us that to our face.

I say this because last night I was watching a news feature on RDI, I think it was "Le Point". In this program they explained, using statistics and interviewing an economist with Statistics Canada, why there was a difference of about 3 per cent between unemployment levels in Quebec and Ontario. With the automotive industry removed, we could see it clearly accounted primarily for the difference. If the automotive industry had been transferred to Quebec, Ontario would have had 3 per cent more unemployment than Quebec.

The same sector is responsible for the fact that the level of investment in Canada is higher in Ontario than Quebec. Historically, who made the decision that the automotive industry would be concentrated mainly in Ontario? These are political decisions that were made here in Ottawa.

This, together with spending on research and development, on which I will say more later, means that the interests of the province of Ontario have always come first. Ontario, in the final instance, has had the advantage of an economy that attracted productive investment, often at the expense of Quebec and perhaps of other regions as well. All this has made one region stronger economically, while other regions have been able to improve their economies thanks to other factors.

We have heard a lot about British Columbia today. The main economic advantage of this province is based on a growing Asian market that will continue to grow in the years and perhaps decades to come. They have managed to position themselves strategically between the Asian economy and the U.S. economy.

• (1705)

However, when we consider the situation in the Maritimes which, up to a point, has been similar to that in Quebec, we see that the federal system has not been very favourable for partners other than those who control the decisions here and are located mostly in Ontario.

The Reform Party members mentioned the defence aspect, because they have lost a major infrastructure in British Columbia as a result of what they consider to be unfair distribution of federal spending. Let us look at the expenditures per province, and more specifically per capita, for the Department of National Defence. The provinces benefiting most are, in order: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba, with Ontario ranking fourth, PEI fifth, and Quebec sixth.

I can, of course, understand the Reform Party members' disappointment with this, since they are not the ones to benefit most from these expenditures. But the situation in Quebec speaks volumes: \$316 per capita, on the average, compared to \$1,200 for Nova Scotia, for instance, or four times more; \$1,050 for New

Brunswick; \$471 for Manitoba; \$420 per capita for Ontario; \$365 for PEI, and \$316 for Quebec.

There has, moreover, been a study saying that the federal defence underinvestment in Quebec had deprived Quebec of \$650 million in economic fallout every year for 15 years. Just think, these are considerable amounts which, when recirculated into the economy, increase the development of the service sector, as well as investments in other sectors. They generate economic activity, and we are not talking of a pittance here, but of \$650 million annually.

Now, for some other figures. Personnel expenditures account for 15 per cent of the budget. I am referring here to the 1992-1993 budget. There may have been some changes to the figures, but nothing drastic. Personnel expenditures, therefore, represent only 15 per cent, while the figure for DND infrastructure investment in Quebec was 13 per cent.

Other things that have happened have also triggered strong reactions. In August 1995, for instance, the federal government had a major contract to award, relating to personnel carriers. It will be remembered that this was awarded without a bid process—and where? To Ontario, of course, GM to be precise.

Yes, there was a contract for parts and so on to be awarded to Quebec, but it did not come at all close to generating the same economic activity, and certainly was not of the same magnitude as what went to Ontario without a bidding process.

Once again, this was an arbitrary decision, one which has always, over the years, favoured the same area. How, after that, can one wonder why in Quebec certain sectors have a higher unemployment rate than elsewhere?

There is no doubt that, when the federal government decides to be an active player, it comes and takes billions of dollars in revenue from each of the provinces, \$30 billion from Quebec, and spends them in a rather arbitrary manner, often with questionable judgment. Obviously, this leads to distortions. Some lose, and others gain.

Furthermore, Statistics Canada officials are doing some very interesting studies, although they are not known to be sovereignists or to have any political association, and they said that Quebec's share of federal investments, and they had studies to back them up, was clearly below the percentage for its population. They said that Quebec's contribution to Gross Domestic Product was 18.6 per cent, while we represent 23 per cent of the population. There are those who may say that 5 per cent is no big deal, but when you are spending billions of dollars, each percentage point adds up to hundreds of millions. So when you are talking 5 per cent, obviously that is a lot of money not invested in a province like Quebec that should have been invested there.

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Obviously, I fully expect to hear members from the Reform or Liberal parties say: "Yes, but, on the other hand, you benefited from equalization payments, you received transfer payments for more than your share of the population, for example, for unemployment insurance, welfare and so on". That is true, but because of an infrastructure that was not well enough developed and was distorted by political choices made outside Quebec, we ended up with a higher rate of unemployment and a higher jobless rate, leading inevitably to greater numbers of people on unemployment insurance and welfare, as well as additional costs.

• (1710)

We are compensated, less and less I might add, through transfer payments and told: "Quit whining, we pay a sort of social assistance to the provinces and you should be happy with that".

But never in a month of Sundays does this make up for all the political decisions that led to this situation. I would much prefer that we receive a fairer share in research and development, in procurement and in all these sectors that help us take control of our economy.

I will give you an example. During the last referendum campaign, I had the opportunity to visit a plant involved in the purchase of goods and services—this time by the Government of Quebec, but the example still shows how important an issue this is. This company had obtained a government building maintenance contract which enabled it to develop a computer-controlled system for ventilation, air conditioning, electric power and so on. Thanks to its government contracts, the company was able to develop an extraordinary technology, which it is now exporting throughout the U.S. for use in a large number of buildings.

But, first of all, they received the necessary jump start from having obtained a government contract, which added to their credibility. Of course, when the federal government does not give Quebec its just dues, contracts like this, with their significant long term economic fallout, are not obtained. The obvious results of this are less research and fewer investments in such a province.

I do not want to get carried away, to overdo it, blaming the federal government for everything that is wrong in Quebec. Far from it, but we do have to face reality. They talk about not wanting to make a connection between the economic debate and the political one, but one is possible. I am not afraid of doing just that. I am a sovereignist, and a great economics enthusiast, and I can tell you that, while there are cultural and historical reasons which cause me to opt for sovereignty, there are also some very pragmatic ones which are linked to the economy. If one looks at the situation, one cannot reach any other conclusion.

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Now, moving on to research and development. This is another sector in which, over the years, Quebec has not been overwhelmed with federal expenditures. For example, in 1990-91, Quebec received 19.5 per cent of federal expenditures, compared to Ontario's share of 53 per cent. Once again, these are Statistics Canada's figures.

In 1990-91, 13.8 per cent of federal R&D expenditures in federal laboratories went to Quebec. Here again, Ontario was the big winner. Between 1979 and 1989, in a study over the longer term, Quebec received an average of 18.5 per cent of the federal government's total R&D spending. For those ten years alone, this represented a loss of \$2 billion in R&D spending.

I can give you more figures. There are plenty of statistics. Ontario has 73 federal research centres. This works out to one per 150,000 inhabitants. There are 50 in western Canada, 30 in Quebec and 24 in the Maritimes. If we compare Quebec and Ontario, we have a ratio of 30 to 73.

I remember that in university I had a chance to do a study on research and development, and it was clear that the way spending was distributed was most unfair. There was a definite bias in laboratory expenditures in Ottawa or in the Outaouais, where 3 out of 41 centres are in Quebec. Hull, Gatineau and Aylmer are not that far away, so it would not have been a problem to have more, which would have made for more balanced statistics on research and development.

It goes on and on. Look at what happens with procurement. Here again, Quebec has never received more than 19.1 per cent of spending on goods and services. That was in 1981. A long time ago. This percentage has varied between 15 and 19 per cent. I repeat, we always get several percentage points less in procurement and research and development than our population sends in taxes to Ottawa. About 23 per cent of taxes collected come from Quebec, but we never get more than 17 or 18 per cent of investment spending.

It should come as no surprise today to see more people drawing conclusions about the positive impact of political systems like the one we have now. This government has had ample opportunity to change its power structure, to limit its spending powers and decentralize its jurisdictions, but it has always failed to produce a positive response, even when at times western Canada showed an even stronger political will to demand some level of decentralization.

• (1715)

Today, we see practically everyone on the Canadian side rallying behind Ottawa's strategy, which is to go for broke. It has taken a

very hard line and painted a threatening future for Quebecers. They say there will be total chaos, legal chaos and economic chaos, uncertainty, and so forth.

However, they offer no alternative because they are incapable of defining one. They do not want to. Deep down they probably think that fear of the unknown will lead people to opt for the status quo. Surprise. Since last October, we see more people drawing different conclusions, and next time, there will be even more.

Before I finish, I may recall the program I watched yesterday—very well presented and very objective—on the economic situation. The program explained the difference in unemployment levels in Quebec and Ontario.

With figures to prove his point, an economist with the Bank of Canada explained the variables: investment, the unemployment rate, the importance of the automotive industry in Ontario. These are the reasons why today we have the kind of differential in the unemployment rate that we see between Quebec and Ontario. The difference is about 3 per cent. It has always existed. This is not new. This has been going on for 25 or 30 years.

I would like to send a message to our federalist friends opposite, especially those from Quebec. They should take another look at the statistics they are spreading around left and right and stop getting excited because jobs were lost in Quebec for two consecutive months. I urge them to start digging, to see what is behind all that, instead of always blaming everything on political uncertainty, which is being used as an excuse for just about anything today. Let them look at how political decisions made over the years have had a negative impact on the development of Quebec.

I am not talking about the situation of the airports in Montreal or the Borden line or the rest, I am simply talking about a few major sectors. I am talking about how decisions made over the years by the government for which they work, where their tax money is administered, to the tune of \$30 billion coming from Quebec, how those decisions have had a negative impact on Quebec's development.

I would ask them to take a realistic look at the situation. If they want them, I will be glad to provide the statistics and discuss the issues with them to get the right picture and find out how to get this economy on the road to recovery. They will want a federalist solution, of course, but that being said, they should convince the people here in Ottawa to check the imbalance in investment which has grown over the years, but I doubt they will succeed.

In concluding, people are complaining about the situation in British Columbia, for instance. I want to provide a picture of the situation in Quebec which is scarcely better, a picture that the federal government has certainly not helped to improve.

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[English]

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to enter into this debate on the Reform Party's motion.

Some people will think it odd that the member for Durham, part of Ontario, possible home of General Motors, et cetera, would be speaking about an area on the west coast. However, I have some family members who are engaged in the west coast fisheries at Comox. I had the great pleasure in February of this year to go to Prince Rupert to talk to many business people and people engaged in government services, et cetera.

One interesting thing about Prince Rupert and the people who live there is that there was a certain degree of isolationism not just from the government in Ottawa but from their own provincial government in Victoria. I think the problem in our country is that many rural communities feel dislinked, for whatever reason, from our urban centres.

It is very important that we as a government find ways to bring those people together in a common cause. There has been a great deal of stress in our country because of a traumatic shift away from an east-west based economy to a north-south one. This is no less so for the people of Prince Rupert. I spent a good deal of time with these people and I have discovered that Prince Rupert has tremendous potential. It is clearly 35 hours closer to the Asian ports of Korea and Japan.

● (1720)

Many people spoke to me about the cost of shipping through the port of Prince Rupert and that grain could be shipped cheaper through the port of Prince Rupert except for a number of economic determinants which belittled that.

I was able to bring back some of the issues to Ottawa to have them addressed by the government. I am happy to see that as part of that process the minister responsible has recommended a task force to deal with the whole issue of Prince Rupert and the northwest transportation routes.

I spoke to some of the good friends I made in Prince Rupert and I discovered today that the task force has been travelling to places like Prince Rupert, Terrace, Smithers and that there has been little or no representation by the Reform Party.

It would appear to me that the Reform Party is not particularly interested in the process of renewal but rather wants to focus on regionalism and wants to try to divide the country by pitting region against region. That is not good enough. That is not the policy of the government because it sees the importance of linking all our communities together.

Members of the Reform Party talk incessantly about dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board. If that happens it will be the port of Prince Rupert and the people of that area of British Columbia who will be most devastated by that process. It will fractionalize the marketing of grain in this country. Right now the preference is to go through the port of Vancouver for a variety of economic reasons which I will get into. By breaking down the structure of the Canadian Wheat Board it will be even more devastating to the people of Prince Rupert.

The port of Prince Rupert grain handling system was partially closed down last year. I am happy to report that the terminal on Ridley Island and the Prince Rupert grain authority has opened again with an expected larger crop this year from the west.

It is interesting that the ability to load freighters in the port of Prince Rupert is a lot faster than at any other terminal on the west coast. We then end up with many ships waiting in the port of Vancouver to fill up when they could be moved more efficiently through the port of Prince Rupert. There are a number of reasons why this happens under the Crow rate system and also the rationalization of how CN charges freight rates.

They often do not properly account for the cost of grain cars which are held in storage prior to being unloaded. In fact, I believe there is a very nominal rental fee in their accounting system which works against the port of Prince Rupert. Even though the port of Prince Rupert technically is somewhat further away from the main transportation routes it can move the cars through the port much more quickly. The ships can be loaded and unloaded much more quickly which means that the shipper does not face demurrage charges and other charges by ships being anchored in the port waiting to be filled.

From all accounts the port of Prince Rupert should be the preferred port for grain shipments from the west. Why is it not? Because of the things I spoke of earlier. In addition, there is an ownership structure which exists within that terminal that is owned by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Cargill and a number of other owners. Many people in the region note that one of the larger terminal shippings is owned by the same consortium in Delta. Some people wonder whether a different ownership would provide more competition in the area and create more business for Prince Rupert.

● (1725)

The Reform Party has been totally silent on this issue. It does not seem to be addressing these problems of major concern to the people of Prince Rupert and the hinterland of that area.

Coal is another big shipping item from the port of Prince Rupert. Much of that coal comes from Alberta. A lot of it could be shipped more efficiently through the port of Prince Rupert. Once again I do not hear the members from those parts of Alberta represented by

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Reformers talking about how they could more efficiently move coal through the port of Prince Rupert. Indeed it would appear to me that the representation from the members in this area is almost silent.

I had some other interesting things happen to me when I was out there. People would talk to me about government problems and I was able to help some of those people. One of the issues was in a town called Port Edward. Mayor Wampler was having significant problems with the infrastructure spending program. The House will recall that the Reform Party never liked the infrastructure spending program. These people thought it was an excellent program.

The town of Port Edward is a town very close to Prince Rupert but it basically had no sewage treatment system. It was dumping its raw sewage into the ocean. It has wanted to deal with that for years and years to find some way to treat the sewage so it would not be a pollutant. The town had an arrangement with the local pulp mill. The pulp mill would allow it to use part of its sewage treatment system and upgrade it so it could treat the whole town. It made application for infrastructure spending money for that very purpose.

By the time I got there it was of some concern. The pulp mill had decided for one reason or another that it did not want the liability that went with that project and had withdrawn from the application. People in the town were very concerned. They thought that even though they had made an application under the program it was going to fall back to the bottom because the nature of it would change.

They wanted to create their own unique system and not use the pulp mill's facilities. They had found a way to do this for equal or less cost than in the original application. Because of the way the applications were, they felt that the province of British Columbia for whatever reason was going to not only delay their application but also put it at the back of the pecking order and therefore they would not be able to develop the system.

I was able to talk to some of the B.C. people who were dealing with the infrastructure spending program to get this rectified. I am happy to say that the mayor has come forward and thanked me for representing that area and getting the problem solved.

What I am saying is there is a real question about the issue the Reform Party is bringing forth today, which is basically that these people are not being represented by their own representatives. It seems to me that is the bottom line of what they are saying.

People in Prince Rupert and others on the west coast are very much part of this country. They want to continue to be part of this country. They want to share in what we have to offer as a government and they want to be plugged into the system.

There are many other problems that concern the people of Prince Rupert. As I said, with the grain handling aspect they have a tremendous potential. It is a port that is under utilized. As a government, we need to do more to recognize that our markets are in southeast Asia. The whole issue of trading with southeast Asia is an important feature and our government is very focused on that.

That is why we have implemented a task force to do just that, to go around and ask the people how they see their community and their economy evolving in the years ahead. I am happy to say we have had many many fine suggestions. I believe that the task force is to report very shortly on how to regenerate the economy of Prince Rupert and the whole northwest transportation route.

• (1730)

For the Reform Party to come here and say that we are ignoring the west is just two-faced. The reality is that in some ways it is not doing its own job of representing its own people.

I would like to thank all the people in Prince Rupert and on the west coast for their kind hospitality when I was there. They are some of the nicest people I have ever met and we continue to have a great friendship. I look forward to helping them in any manner I can in dealing with their government which is very much concerned about their issues, about their problems, about their continuation and about the underpinnings of their economy.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of comments about the speech of the previous speaker. First, we are going to talk about Prince Rupert. Our next speaker will do that.

Second, when it comes to the infrastructure program and the various dealings with the infrastructure program, as the member knows, that was a federal-provincial initiative. The provincial member who represents Prince Rupert also overlaps with my riding. The federal member for Skeena is not here today and so I feel some obligation to talk about how that infrastructure program works in British Columbia and about how there has been much co-operation with the provincial MLA in terms of expediting projects.

In my case my overlap is in the Bella Coola area. Indeed we have co-operated and we have created a good project with their waterworks program. I know that type of thing would be very possible with the influential member of the provincial legislature who is a cabinet member. This is not a unique thing that the member talks about and it is not foreign to the British Columbia members.

Third, the mayor of Port Edward and many of the other municipal politicians from that area of the province met in Penticton from September 19-20. They all have common concerns with Reform members of Parliament in British Columbia. We did

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indeed have conversations and areas of common concern, many of which were brought up earlier today in addressing our motion.

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Speaker, I was very interested in the member's comments. The motion before the House today is basically criticizing the government for not taking into account and failing to recognize the people of the west coast generally. It also mentions the movement of grain. It talks about the movement of grain to the port of Prince Rupert.

I remember sitting in this House on a Sunday about a year ago when we had a rail strike in this country. The issue was that we were not going to move grain through the port of Prince Rupert because the rails were going to be strike bound. There were only 11 members of the Reform Party in this House at the time. Are they going to tell me that is a commitment to the west coast? I am afraid not.

• (1735)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, in rebuttal to the last point of the hon. member, if the government had listened to Reform, there would not have been a rail strike. We wanted some pre-emptive legislation that would have prevented that very thing from happening. The hon. member talks about this type of nonsense.

He is questioning the representation of Reform members from northern British Columbia on the issue of the port of Prince Rupert. I will quote from a letter I sent to the previous minister of transport.

I sent this November 17, 1995 and detailed three issues dealing with grain transportation, for the hon. member's information. That is almost a year ago. One dealt with the allocation of grain cars in my region of northeastern British Columbia.

The second issue dealt specifically with the pricing policy dealing with the grain transportation rate, the differential between the Peace River country to Vancouver versus Prince Rupert, how it was damaging to the port of Prince Rupert, what could be done about it and some suggestions on that.

The third dealt with the differential, the inequity between the domestic and export grains, the transportation rates in this country along with the demise of the Federal Freight Assistance Act and what that would mean for the domestic transport of grains.

They were three very important issues dealing with grain transportation. I sent that on November 17, 1995. The new Minister of Transport responded finally on March 1, 1996 totally inadequately.

He said—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I am sorry, hon. member. Resuming debate.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I could be corrected, but I understood that the government side was using the 20 minutes plus 10 minutes questions and comments, which would mean that time is not up. Am I incorrect in that?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The hon. member used only 10 minutes, therefore we have 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, in any event, let it be very clearly understood that I am sharing my time with my colleague, the member for North Vancouver. I am not sure that point of sharing was clear previously.

As a British Columbian, I would like to point out that governments over our history in Canada have not totally understood British Columbia. People cannot do so without a bit of appreciation of our geography and history.

Geography is terrifically important. We know about the Rocky Mountains, of course, going north and south. We know, more or less, there are other mountain ranges in there: the Purcells, the Selkirks, the Monashees, the Cariboo Mountains farther to the north and the Coast Range. All these mountains going north-south have had quite an effect on the history and economy of British Columbia.

There are only four passes that have been used for rail or road traffic through the mountains. There again, it is an integral part of the history and development of the province. There is the Crow's Nest, Kicking Horse, Yellowknife and even the one I was unfamiliar with, the Pine, farther to the north. These are important bits of what makes B.C. the province it is.

The rivers that flow through B.C. are just as important as are the fiords on the coast. Our history is a function of that in part, the geography. Our history starts really on the coast of B.C. It can go back 6,000 to 8,000 years with the native population having been recorded as being in that area. In latter years, only the last 200 years really apply.

• (1740)

We are talking about the Spaniards who travelled here in 1774. We are talking, after that, of British sailors, Captain Cook and George Vancouver. We are talking about enterprises such as the Hudson's Bay Company with its fur trade. We are talking about explorers who came here as recently as 1793 such as Alexander Mackenzie, who went overland through the mountains to reach the west coast. All of these things are part of the make-up of British Columbia.

There was the gold rush of 1857. Prior to that there was the American influence. They said they would claim land to 5440. *They had the campaign slogan "5440 or fight"*, which was finally settled by the Oregon Treaty.

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All of these things have shaped British Columbia. There is inadequate feeling or knowledge of all of the history and geography of British Columbia in central Canada.

Transportation, when we come down to it, is one of the most important things still today. We will get around to Prince George and Prince Rupert on this matter.

In 1867 people in eastern Canada were joining Confederation. Four years later British Columbia finally agreed to join, provided there was a railway. It took 15 long, agonizing years for the railway to get through. The railways are still important.

I heard the Crow arrangement mentioned today. The Crow's Nest Pass agreement goes back to 1897. It said that there would be an adjustment of rail tariffs to accommodate settler supplies going one way and grain the other. That continues to be important. As long ago as 1897 we were talking about the Crow. We are still talking about it today.

Then we come to the Trans-Canada Highway. When was there pavement in B.C. which went from east to west? Not until 1962. Prior to that those of us who travelled through British Columbia had to dip down into the United States if we did not want to go over dicey gravel roads.

All of that, I suggest, is lost on a lot of the establishment of central Canada.

Let us move on to talk about the Prince Rupert grain terminal within the context of the history and geography which I have laid out. In doing so, I would like to pass on congratulations to my colleague, the hon. member for Skeena. He has done a lot of work not just with respect to the port of Prince Rupert but to all of the northern area, integrating the knowledge that is up there and making it available to people such as me.

The points my colleague has made I would like to make again. I acknowledge, at the very least, that the hon. member for Durham has visited Prince Rupert and has come away with some good points. I was happy to hear him mention them.

First, the Prince Rupert grain terminal is one of the most efficient terminals in the world, but it is under-utilized. Prince Rupert is a day and a half in shipping time closer to the Pacific rim markets than is the lower mainland of B.C.

Compared with most other terminals in Canada, the Prince Rupert terminal turns around its grain cars in a fraction of the time it takes other terminals.

• (1745)

When a ship comes into Prince Rupert to take on grain it only has to go to one berth whereas other terminals require ships to move to different berths, up to four times, before getting their full load. There are lower pilotage costs and lower berthing costs; that

is berthing as of ships not of babies. Maybe there are lower birthing costs of babies in Prince Rupert, I do not know. However, business is there to be done. The facilities are there but we are not taking sufficient advantage of them.

The member mentioned the amount of operating time that this port has been under. Before July 14 of this year there were two shifts operating in Prince Rupert but from July 14 to September 29 it was closed down. Just last week it received word that it would open up again to two shifts starting today.

Maybe the member for Durham, with all of the information that he has been able to glean from his visit to Prince Rupert, would be able to tell me what has been happening. Why is this? We encourage the use of Prince Rupert much more than has been done. Why is it suddenly coming back on stream? Will we go to three shifts at Prince Rupert to fully utilize the facilities there? I would like to know.

I would also like to know on the point where the member said: "Oh yes, I have been there and I was certainly very helpful to the folks around Prince Rupert and Port Edward". That is great, but did the member come down and talk to our minister of agriculture and our current minister of transportation? That is the sort of help that is needed.

I am going to quote from a letter from the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce addressed to the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. It states: "The Prince Rupert and District Chamber of Commerce is very concerned over the current and suggested status of the Prince Rupert grain terminal".

This letter is dated September 3. Madam Speaker, you are standing?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): It is because you are sharing your time and your 10 minutes are done. I will give you 30 seconds to close your comments.

Mr. Ringma: Madam Speaker, I will try to wind it up. I have not been keeping tabs on the time. I thought it was way under 10 minutes but I have to accept your ruling.

The Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce letter continues: "We urge that your ministry, in conjunction with your colleague, the minister of agriculture, appoint a co-ordinator as outlined in the enclosed report. We believe minor concessions by each of the parties involved could put the terminal back on a firm footing while some of the more complex problems facing the grain transportation industries are resolved".

All the chamber has had in response to that is an acknowledgment—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Questions or comments.

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Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for the brief geography lesson he gave us on British Columbia. I must admit to the member that there were some things that I did not know and I appreciate him expounding on the history of British Columbia and how it was developed.

I was a bit disturbed when he said that we in central Canada, which is where I come from, do not understand British Columbians. I wonder if the reverse could be said also, that he, as the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, does not understand central Canada?

I grew up in Prince Edward Island. I must admit that when I came to the big province of Ontario to live I did not remember that Toronto was the capital of the province of Ontario. I assumed that Ottawa was the capital of everything here. I hear from members of the Bloc Quebecois that Quebec is very special to them. As individuals each province is very special to us wherever we live across the country. To say that we do not understand one another seems to come right down to the point where we are talking about national unity in this country.

• (1750)

Why do you think I as an Ontarian do not understand you as a British Columbian? I hope I do. I recognize you as a brother from B.C. and I hope that you would look on me as a friend from Ontario.

Do we need to navel gaze quite so much? Can we not recognize what happens in other provinces and recognize that we are each unique in what we do and where we live? Can we not try to respect each other without saying we do not understand you or you do not understand us. I would like to hear your comments in relation to national unity in this country in that regard.

Mr. Ringma: Madam Speaker, I am delighted to respond to that question.

I happen to be from British Columbia but I have lived in Manitoba, I have lived in several parts of Ontario, I have lived in several places in Quebec, in New Brunswick and other parts of the world. I think I have picked up an appreciation of what Canada is all about and having travelled continually back and forth I have a reasonable appreciation.

I have given the history and basic geography lesson by way of pointing out that all of this understanding of the mechanics out in B.C. are not understood. We get people like Allan Fotheringham writing in *Maclean's*. He does it in a jocular way but he is always talking about the lotus eaters or those of us from lotusland. Fine. He does it in a jocular way but underlying it is sort of a sense that

we are different out there. I guess we are different but it is these physical and economic circumstances that make us different.

To address the member's last question, where I would love to see us get together is here in this House and in the committees of the House. There should be much less confrontation, much less of the old line party politics dictating this is the way you are going to go. There should be an open atmosphere, of saying let us discuss things toward a solution for all of Canada or for its various regions. Perhaps that is what we should work on first. Eradicate some of our ignorance of other areas of the country and build on some sort of atmosphere where we would dialogue easily and not in a confrontational way.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Madam Speaker, with regard to this motion I am going to concentrate on accountability from the government with respect to B.C.

Madam Speaker, if you were in business and your partner took 50 per cent of your income, you would surely want to be able to question any actions the partner took which affected that income, especially if the partner never did any of the work.

Today in Canada the average family is paying close to 50 per cent of its income in taxes to various levels of government, so it is really not a surprise that the average Canadian wants more input into the running of its government. They are not happy with the lack of accountability that we see from the partner that takes 50 per cent of their income.

Mismanagement of the country's affairs by this Liberal government affects all of Canada but we are certainly perceived by the public and particularly in B.C. to spend a disproportionate time focused on the affairs of Quebec, that it really affects everything we are doing here because of the political situation. This feeling of alienation from the governing processes is especially strongly felt in B.C. because of the natural barriers of the Rockies and the time zone differences, and because there is hardly any representation on the government side from that province.

Even the government knows that there is a serious communication problem between the federal government and British Columbians. That is a quote from a report written about by a local commentator in B.C., Barbara Yaffe when she wrote in Saturday's newspaper about a report prepared for the intergovernmental affairs minister by the MP for Simcoe North, the parliamentary secretary to the minister. He had travelled the province, asked questions, had meetings with British Columbians. According to his report there is a perception in B.C. that the national agenda is controlled by separatists and that there is a real sense of alienation, that all of the decisions are being made elsewhere. British Columbians feel that Ontario and Quebec are dominating the agenda. This is a very strong feeling. It is right there in a report to the minister by a member of the government side.

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• (1755)

We saw the reaction of the transport minister in the House this morning when I asked him why he would not appear on a local radio talk show to answer questions from the public of B.C. about his conduct. He insulted the people of B.C. with his answer. He espoused the old line party system of: "Basically they are too stupid to understand, so I am not wasting my time going on the show". These ministers are obviously part of the problem. They just do not want to hear what we Reform members have been telling them in the House for three years.

There is another minister who is a big source of irritation in B.C., the Minister of Canadian Heritage. My office, as I know are the offices of my colleagues, has been receiving a steady flow of calls and letters complaining about the minister's free flag program. There is nothing in government that is free. The minister's giveaway is consuming the entire amount of taxes remitted to Ottawa by 1,600 families this year. One thousand, six hundred families are paying taxes for that program.

I would also like to mention another minister who is a source of significant irritation in B.C., the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who like the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport, refuses to make himself accessible to the people of B.C. on the most listened to radio station in the province. There is no accountability.

Let me quote from an editorial by Rafe Mair on the morning of January 16 of this year.

"Well, Mr. Minister of Indian Affairs, you are not the first to come up with this evil "pied piper" theory which has me appealing to the baser instincts of my stupid, insensitive audience. I heard this during the 1992 referendum from John Crosbie and, indeed, Prime Minister Mulroney and I have heard it from your colleague, the oh, so humble Minister of Transport.

"You have betrayed the same rock-headed notions held by all Ottawa politicians, Mr. Minister. The public are stupid, ill read, unable to think for themselves and easy prey to anyone who can talk a good game.

"What is wrong with the public, Mr. Minister, or dare I say it, is governments which are utterly unable to lay any facts supported by any evidence before the public on the excuse that it is all too complicated to understand".

He goes on to say: "The fact is, Mr. Minister, that the courts, that is to say the Supreme Court of Canada and the B.C. Court of Appeal have said with astonishing clarity that there is no aboriginal title in land. There is no aboriginal title to a commercial fishery and there is no aboriginal claim to the inherent right to self-government. Whatever you may say, sir, that is indeed what the cases say.

"I have consistently stated that there are aboriginal rights in land, rights as opposed to title, Mr. Minister, an important distinction. These rights must be honoured and where possible restored where they have been impaired or taken away.

"Why then do the senior governments constantly say that there is an unextinguished aboriginal title to land, that there is an aboriginal right to a commercial fishery and an inherent right to self-government? If we are going to ignore the law of the land, why bother going to court, Mr. Minister? And you can hardly say that you are using these court decisions as a guide to your decision making, when you are telling the public that they say just exactly the opposite to what they actually do say".

The problems that I have illustrated talking about three different ministers are really examples that I have chosen to illustrate how different the vision of this government is to what the people of B.C. feel and want done in their province.

We have 98 Indian bands in our province. Land claims are tremendously complex negotiations. There have been specific court rulings which set guidelines for us to start negotiating. For some reason our senior level of government chooses to go on its own way ignoring all of the guidelines, ignoring the wishes of the people and wanting to give away our province without due consideration and discussion with the people of the province.

• (1800)

One of the things Mr. Mair said in his commentary on January 16 I think is worth mentioning here: "Mr. Minister, I have consistently agreed that land presently held by your government should be turned over immediately to the tribes and bands occupying those lands as reserves. Put your money where your loose lips are, Mr. Minister, and transfer your land before you snipe at me for not being too quick to give up mine".

There is another minister who creates some irritation in B.C. and that is the minister of immigration. There appeared in the *North Shore News* on September 6 the results of a survey taken in the ridings of North Vancouver and Capilano—Howe Sound. The survey indicates that 85.2 per cent of those surveyed want criminal refugees and bogus refugees deported immediately. What does the minister do about it? Nothing. We heard the answer which she gave in the House today to the question from the member for Surrey—White Rock—South Langley. It was a joke. It was no answer at all.

There are 1,300 people in the Vancouver area under deportation order today. It is a disgrace. I have people in my riding who have been convicted of passport forgery, bogus refugee claimant; bogus refugee claimant with drug trafficking; bogus refugee claimant with breaking and entering and sexual assault. I have five criminal

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cases in my riding under deportation order and I cannot get rid of them because the minister will not act.

The minister does not listen to the message from B.C. She is quite happy. The province of Quebec gets more money per immigrant than anywhere else in the country. Here we are in B.C. with the biggest problem and getting no attention at all.

In winding up, I do need to make one correction to an earlier statement I made. I did say that B.C. has 98 Indian bands. It is actually 198, so the House can see that the problem is twice as big as I portrayed.

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I sat here quietly, but after listening to the Reform Party members, it is difficult not to stand up in this forum to respond and question.

What the Reform says is more a reflection on democracy, that they have the right to speak, than the substance of what they are saying. They are saying that we do not know B.C. The member for Nanaimo—Cowichan says that we do not know B.C. I just came back from spending four days in British Columbia. I was in his riding at a big event at which there were ministers, provincial politicians and to which he was invited. He did not even bother showing up or sending his regards. That is not ancient history; that was Friday.

The member for North Vancouver quotes from the paper and calls the conduct of a minister a disgrace. He talks about the misuse of public funds on flags going for unity which was done above board. Everybody knows the way it is done in a democratic forum.

I will give him a quote. The Reform Party has an expert called Thomas Flanagan. Maybe the member can give us reflection on Mr. Flanagan. He wrote last week on misuse of public moneys, that the leader of the Reform took tax money and used it to go to Hawaii, which he says—this is Reform's expert—breaches their democratic constitution.

• (1805)

The member talks about disgrace and how we treat aboriginal people. Yet it was a member from the Reform Party who said of ethnic minorities that in our society we can send them to the back of the shop.

I sat here one day and heard Reform members talk about native people living in a south seas environment, and they know. This is a member who has never been to a reserve but comes here full of the whatnot of the Reform Party and says that he knows native people: "I know these people. The men sit around and they burn the women".

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Irwin: The Reform members laugh but they said that and that is a disgrace. If we want to talk about disgraceful conduct, I suggest the Reform members should look in the mirror. They should view what they have said on the record in this House over the last three years. To me that is the biggest disgrace that the taxpayers of this country are paying for.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Madam Speaker, I am not going to deal with Mr. Flanagan in this reply because Mr. Flanagan is from Alberta. I will be pleased to deal with that on a day when we talk about Alberta.

I would like to concentrate on the issues in B.C. I have never heard such a load of rubbish in my life as what has come from the minister. I have two Indian reserves in my riding, and the member who is in the riding next to mine, the riding of Capilano—Howe Sound, also has a reserve.

I can see on a daily basis what happens to them. I am the one who gets the calls from the Indians on reserve saying that because there is no democracy down there they are suppressed by their leadership.

A lady called me from the reserve. For 30 years she has been trying to get a house, but because she is not related to somebody in high places she is ignored and she is living in a trailer home. I wrote twice to the chief. I phoned the chief three times. I never got a letter back, I never got a phone call. Nothing was resolved.

In another instance a lady called me. She had received a special grant from the province to open a corner store on reserve land on a main road in north Vancouver. The chief nixed it because it would compete with his sales of cigarettes from his back door.

I could go on with a list of infringements on democracy that occur.

Mrs. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion concerning a province that I consider one of the cornerstones of Canada's future prosperity and economic development. I refer of course to British Columbia, a province which in the past few years has been a leader in economic growth and expansion in the all important area of the Pacific rim.

In the Liberal red book there was a commitment to focus on the Pacific. Other hon. members today have dealt with various accomplishments such as Team Canada missions to Asia which have brought home new business deals and jobs for British Columbians. Nationally, Canadian businesses announced business deals worth \$20 billion. These trade missions show how much can be accomplished when governments and businesses work together.

Revenue Canada has also played a key role in partnership with the private sector and other government departments to make Vancouver the gateway to Asia and the Pacific. We are proud of

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this role because in doing so we are participating not only in the creation of jobs and the enhancement of the economy of British Columbia, but for Canada as a whole.

We have to talk about Canada as a whole. Let us make no mistake about it. The prosperity of one part of the country is something in which all parts of our country should rejoice, not bellyache, rejoice.

In a modern, integrated economy where goods travel across a continent in the space of hours and information in a fraction of a second, the prosperity and the economic activity of one part of the country cannot but help be beneficial to Canada as a whole. That is what being a country is all about, not pitting one region against another. Whether it is any of our provinces, we are a united country and we want to stay that way.

Canada is not only an Atlantic nation but a Pacific nation. Across this vast ocean which occupies half of the world's surface are some of the most interesting and promising trading partners we could imagine.

- (1810)

We have Japan, a nation which in the space of a century went from being a very closed and medieval society to one of the world's leading economic engines. We have countries like China, a nation old in years but whose economy has been growing at an incredible double digit rate. We have resource rich countries like Australia. And let us not forget the growing economies that we have to the south, Mexico and countries in western South America, which are also Pacific rim countries.

What role can Revenue Canada play? What role can our government play in such a scenario? The proper role for any government in a free enterprise system, which is to facilitate the creation of wealth, to regulate only as much as is necessary for the common good and to act as the partner of business so that we have a strong economy.

I will now explain how Revenue Canada has translated this philosophy into concrete programs and initiatives, such as the accord on our shared border, and programs such as ACROSS, CANPASS and a host of other initiatives, all which are beneficial across this country, particularly in B.C.

Revenue Canada has played the key role in developing a new terminal at Vancouver International Airport. This airport is strategically placed to become North America's premier gateway between Asia-Pacific and the United States. From 1992 to 1996 the Vancouver International Airport Authority undertook a \$400 million four-year development program to add a new international terminal building.

Revenue Canada tripled its customs terminal area. The largest one we now have in any province of Canada is in B.C. The department added more inspection lines and doubled the baggage

carousels. It added 30 new customs staff which means it can process 40 per cent more passengers per hour than it did before, all in B.C. I might add.

Revenue Canada is working to facilitate the flow of more tourists, more travellers and more trade through its open skies agreement and its shared border accord with the United States. Through the smart border concept the department is taking advantage of its new agreements with the United States and helping to position British Columbia to take advantage of these agreements.

Revenue Canada is discussing with the Americans a one stop, in transit preclearance process at the Vancouver International Airport to make travel through Vancouver more attractive and to promote Vancouver as Canada's gateway to the growing world of the Pacific rim.

If British Columbia is strategically located on the Pacific, it is also strategically located north of one of the most populated and dynamic rapidly growing areas of the United States, namely California and the great Pacific northwest. California has become America's most populous state, while the states of Washington and Oregon are also two of the most rapidly growing areas of our neighbour to the south. That is why Revenue Canada's initiatives have also been of immense benefit to improving service at the land border crossings between British Columbia and the United States.

Revenue Canada's initiatives are of importance to B.C. both in terms of facilitating the movement of travellers but also in the facilitation of the movement of commercial goods.

The importance of facilitating the movement of travellers can hardly be underestimated. We know that tourism is B.C.'s second largest industry, contributing over \$4 billion to the provincial economy and providing 80,000 jobs. We do not want to harass people at the border. We want them into Canada. We will target high risk travellers, but we will facilitate low risk travellers to Canada. A cornerstone of facilitating the movement of travellers is the CANPASS program.

This program, which exists in the form of CANPASS airport, CANPASS highway, CANPASS private boats and CANPASS private aircraft, is designed to streamline customs and immigration clearance of low risk travellers at select border crossings. I am proud to inform members that all these forms of CANPASS, except for the initiative relating to private aircraft, were initiated and pilot tested in British Columbia.

The precise operation of CANPASS varies from one part of the program to the other. For example, at an airport, a traveller uses a smart card and a hand print to identify themselves at a machine that is very similar to an automated bank teller machine. At highway crossings CANPASS participants are identified through a decal on their windshields. Other procedures are used in the case of private boats and private aircraft, but whatever type of CANPASS is used the principle remains the same. The vast majority of travellers can

be trusted to self-declare, making their travel easier and freeing up our valuable resources for concentration on high risk areas.

• (1815)

CANPASS is a refinement and an enhancement of an earlier customs clearance program known as the Peace Arch crossing entry program, called PACE, which was successfully piloted at the customs border point at Douglas, British Columbia. Now under the name CANPASS Highway, this program is available at Douglas, Boundary Bay, Pacific Highway and Huntingdon.

Concentration on high risk areas and preventing the illegal importation of drugs, weapons and other contraband is indeed important for all Canadians, but especially for British Columbians. We all know that along with the increase in population and prosperity urban areas of British Columbia are suffering hard times because of the social plague of illegal drugs, a plague which affects all Canadians. It is hard to over estimate the individual suffering and cost to society of drug addiction which certainly exists in all parts of Canada but which has been particularly acute in areas of western Canada.

That is why Revenue Canada is proud of new contraband technology which has been installed at Pacific region border services at airports and land crossings. In this connection I would mention the vivid x-ray unit which was installed at Vancouver international airport in 1994. This equipment has the unique capability of specifically targeting organic materials, various types of drugs and explosives.

There are also the ion mobility spectrometer units which detect minute particle residues of cocaine and heroin on surfaces of documents, currency, boxes, luggage and clothing. This equipment has been installed at the Pacific Highway border crossing and at the Vancouver marine terminal.

These are but two technological advances that also include contraband detection kits and narrow beam laser range finders that help to detect the presence of false walls in marine or truck containers without the requirement of unloading the contents.

These are important measures which Canadians now have at their disposal for the protection of our economy and the protection of Canadian citizens.

In addition to making things easier for travellers, on the commercial side Revenue Canada has initiated the ACROSS system countrywide to speed up the release of commercial goods. The department has taken part in designating an international commercial centre in Vancouver. This is a bonded warehouse where value added operations are permitted by Revenue Canada to level the playing field for small and medium size companies.

Supply

Border protection and facilitation is not the only area in which Revenue Canada has been working to better serve British Columbians. Another important initiative, designed to facilitate and simplify our dealings with business, is the business number, which the department has piloted and introduced on behalf of the federal government. The business number is designed to replace the multiple account numbers which businesses have needed to deal with the federal government. British Columbia has expressed an interest in using the business number for provincial business programs.

On April 18, 1996 British Columbia began a one year pilot of six one-stop business registration work stations. This allows businesses to register for a series of federal and provincial programs by visiting one office and using the self-help work stations to complete the forms necessary for their programs, both federal and provincial.

Another way Revenue Canada has been able to benefit British Columbia has been by administering the British Columbia family bonus program, something which is very important to the families of British Columbia.

Mr. White (North Vancouver): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It seems to me that perhaps the member's time is up, since we are on the shorter time for the government side now.

• (1820)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): This is not a point of order. The hon. member has 20 minutes and 10 minutes of questions. The hon. member may continue.

Mrs. Barnes: If I may, I will continue with my 20 minute speech.

I was talking about the British Columbia family bonus program in which Revenue Canada is applying the programs on behalf of the provincial government. This program is entirely funded by the province of British Columbia but is being administered on a full cost recovery basis by Revenue Canada using information that the department maintains for the child tax benefit program as well as information from personal tax returns.

The Revenue Canada tax centre at Surrey, British Columbia has been equipped and is ready to respond to inquiries generated by this program. This example of co-operation, a word I think we all need to understand, reminds us that while we may have provinces and a federal government with different agendas and different programs, there is only one taxpayer who must pay for these programs, who expects to be served by them and served by them well and also by their representatives.

Any form of co-operation that decreases costs and improves services is welcome. I am sure all members of this House can at least agree on this point.

Supply

What is the future? Revenue Canada has accomplished a great deal through its partnerships with businesses and the provinces and a lot more can be done. For example, the new national revenue agency, which was supported by the western premiers during their June 1996 conference, is something we can talk about. The B.C. government has expressed support for the federal government's desire to reduce overlap, duplication and compliance costs for businesses and to increase efficiency in revenue collection.

As I said earlier, the prosperity of one part of the country is of benefit to all of us. Revenue Canada is proud to be a partner in the development of British Columbia with programs that facilitate its economic development.

In the last century Canada built its industrial base mainly in connection with the Atlantic world, the industrialized countries of Europe and the United States. Now the Pacific world is rapidly being added to the equation. This is a challenge of the future and it has to be faced not only by Revenue Canada but by every department of government, by the federal and provincial governments and by Canadians from coast to coast. I am sure that those parties representing the province of B.C. will be there to help us in developing these programs that are good not only for British Columbians but for all Canadians.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I was particularly interested in the member's comments in reference to the wonderful job she claims the government and especially the department of revenue is doing on checking the smuggling problem in this country.

I have to be in Vancouver a lot. I have talked to many police officers and many agencies along the border of British Columbia and they have a major problem. In fact, the problem is so great when it comes to drugs that it is now filtering into the rest of the country.

The government's answer to the problem of drugs in B.C. is to disband one of the more dedicated police departments in the region, the ports police. The ports police have made it clear that there is a serious problem with organized crime and that 40 bikers and associates have been engaged in criminal activity on the waterfronts. Most of that activity is of course in drugs. It was the ports police who identified that group of people.

There have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$3 million in drug seizures over the last several months and the problem grows. The problem is so great that many people are dying from drug overdoses. In 1989 there were 67 people who died from heroin and cocaine overdoses. In 1990 it was 82, in 1991 it was 124, in 1992 it was 154, in 1993 it was 358, in 1994 it was 311 people. That is a total of 1,100 people in a very short period of time.

• (1825)

The Liberal government's answer to that problem is to cut back on enforcement at the borders and at the ports. I would like to inform the government because it does not seem to want to listen to the police agencies in this country, and so we will say it here in the House. Crime results from drug abuse and abusers. Heroin addicts and cocaine addicts commit more crime than anyone else because that is how they feed their habit.

Now the problem is coming through the port of Vancouver and it is growing to such a degree that heroin addicts and cocaine addicts are being developed right inside our prisons because of the free access to that particular drug. It is coming through the port of Vancouver. As a matter of fact, the port of Vancouver is the central point of distribution for heroin in all of North America.

What does the Liberal government say? It says: "Cut back on enforcement, let us not do anymore enforcement in that region, the matter is not a problem". It is a major social problem in the province of B.C. What does the government do again? It cuts back on the numbers, it keeps decreasing them until what?

I would like to know what the Liberal member who spoke prior to me thinks of the CLEU report that clearly indicates what hacking away at enforcement agencies on our waterfront will do to the country. What is it going to do as far as organized crime is concerned? What is the hon. member's answer to the problem of enforcement in criminal activity, organized crime, if you are going to pull the port's police?

Mrs. Barnes: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that we have some eyes open from our member across the way here and he agrees that there is a drug and smuggling problem in British Columbia. That is why Revenue Canada has the responsibility for customs. It is a responsibility that we take very seriously.

I must tell the member about organized crime. They do not exactly open their books to Revenue Canada and that is why it is very necessary that we have intelligence. The intelligence that we have is not only from our own resources within customs Canada but between our border crossings, between those different points where Canadians, Americans and other world travellers enter and depart our city.

We have the RCMP under the responsibility of the Solicitor General of Canada. We work very closely in Revenue Canada through our customs agents and customs department in making sure that we have the best intelligence. We co-operate not only with the RCMP but police forces across this country. We make sure we are getting the use of and putting our resources into the highest and best technology available. We are putting in extra money, not decreasing. We have added 30 customs officers, for instance, in the Vancouver airport alone.

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We are also involved specifically with drugs and I have been with RCMP members when they have brought the drug dogs along. We use dogs not only in our airports but in our vessels and we use them because they are an effective method. We are going to continue to train our personnel because we think it is important.

Last year the minister of revenue was in Halifax where there was a new marine facility established so we could better train our officers in search. These are very important issues. They should not be taken lightly. They are important issues to Canadians to make sure that when we target our high risk we put the appropriate resources in the right places and with the right magnitude. This is not something we are going to announce here in the Chamber that we are going to be somewhere tomorrow because it does not work that way with organized crime. Drug smugglers do not send us a telegram saying they are going to bring their shipments across.

Unfortunately the other side fails to understand this. There is not only intelligence needed in this House on the other side, we also need it to do our job effectively and properly. We will continue to do so despite what the other side says.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have a short question for the member.

I listened to her saying what a wonderful job Revenue Canada had done but she did not mention the high taxes of Revenue Canada. I would like to ask her a question.

It is estimated that about 40,000 jobs have moved across the border from Vancouver to Bellingham, which is in the United States for those who do not know anything about B.C. Forty thousand jobs have been forced across the border. Canadians own companies in Bellingham because of the high taxes in B.C.

Is the member quite happy to take the credit for that as well?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The hon. parliamentary secretary has one minute left.

Mrs. Barnes: Madam Speaker, unfortunately with only one minute I have to advise the hon. member opposite that tax policy is done by finance. Revenue Canada is the administrative arm and we do our job well. We make sure that taxes are collected in a fair and equitable way across the country.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): It being 6.30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that proceedings on the motion have expired.

Therefore, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24 (1).

(The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)

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45 boulevard Sacré-Coeur,

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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