



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 134 • NUMBER 091 • 2nd SESSION • 35th PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, October 28, 1996**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

## CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

The House of Commons Debates are also available on the  
Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 28, 1996

The House met at 11 a.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

#### CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

**Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-307, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (polling hours), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, today I would like to discuss my private member's bill, Bill C-307, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (polling hours). This bill provides that every polling station on election day will close at the same time regardless of the time differences across the country.

[*Translation*]

As you know, Canada is a large country where distances sometimes make things a lot more complicated, in spite of new technologies and means of transportation.

The fact is that when British Columbians are waking up, Canadians living in St. John's, Newfoundland, are having lunch. The time difference is a major problem for all those who travel, and more so for westerners on election day.

In British Columbia, results from the Atlantic region are in just after 4 p.m., while those from Quebec and Ontario are known an hour later. In British Columbia, where the population is much smaller than in eastern and central Canada, this means that voters always feel excluded from the federal election process.

[*English*]

Many British Columbians feel they are second class citizens. They feel alienated. They have felt alienated all along. The other western provinces have the same problem, although not as much as British Columbia.

It is not right that such a large part of Canada is left out of a process that touches all of us and determines the future of our country. For this reason I have tabled a bill that provides that every polling station on election day will close at the same time regardless of the time differences across the country.

The current elections act gives the following provisions: Section 79(3) provides that elections be held on Monday or Tuesday. Section 109(5) requires that polling hours be from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. across the country. Section 324 carries exceptions for constituencies with two or more time zones. Section 160 asks that ballots be counted immediately after closing of polls. There is no provision for delay. Section 328 says that it is an offence to publish election results in any area before voting ends in that area.

• (1105)

In my bill changes would occur in the hours of voting. They would increase from 11 to 12 and the times would be as follows: B.C. from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Alberta from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saskatchewan and Manitoba from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Ontario and Quebec from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; the maritime provinces from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; and Newfoundland from 11.30 a.m. to 11.30 p.m.

After discussions with the Chief Electoral Officer who asked that the hours not be increased from 11 to 12 because of increased costs, I am proposing that we vote for 11 hours as it is done today and that voting from Ontario to the maritimes be from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and from 11.30 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. in Newfoundland. In this case British Columbia would receive the Atlantic Canada results around 6 p.m. or 6.30 p.m. which would be acceptable. What is disconcerting is getting the Quebec and Ontario results before the closing of the polls in British Columbia.

[*Translation*]

Generally speaking, this proposal is acceptable. We know that, in Ontario and in Quebec, 10 p.m. is not very late in the evening. A lot of people start relaxing at this time. However, my colleagues from the maritime provinces tell me that 10 p.m. or 10.30 p.m. is too late in Newfoundland.

If this bill is referred to a committee today, we will have an opportunity to review it and make appropriate changes if necessary. There is a lot of opposition to the idea of voting at the same time and not counting votes until all polling stations are closed, because those working in polling stations located in eastern Canada would

*Private Members' Business*

have to wait for a long time. Moreover, we do not want to stop the publishing of results, something which is clearly an offense under the act. The problem comes up every time an election is held.

[*English*]

Only two bills have been presented in the past to change the system. In 1982 Bill C-113, on staggered hours, was tabled and went only to first reading. In 1988 Bill C-79, to establish the prohibition of election results before polls are closed, was tabled and did not make second reading.

Complete staggered hours across the country would not solve the problem. What we have to achieve is to have all of the results from B.C. to Quebec, including the territories north of those provinces, announced at the same time, that is, after 10 p.m. Only the maritimes and Newfoundland would be allowed to announce results earlier, after the closing of polls in those provinces.

In 1989 the Lortie commission recommended changes to the voting hours. In 1991 the report of the special committee on electoral reform recommended that we vote for 10 hours and that those hours be staggered. This solution would not solve western Canadians' sense of alienation and lack of participation. I do not think that people who reside in the central and eastern provinces and in the territories are aware of the difficulty western Canada faces at every election.

[*Translation*]

It must also be realized that British Columbia is experiencing the fastest growth in the country and that its population accounts for 13 per cent of Canada's overall population. The only poll on the issue was held in 1990. Seventy per cent of those who took part in it said voting hours were a problem, including 41 per cent who considered the problem to be a serious one that had to be corrected. As well, 50 per cent of the participants were in favour of making changes to the system, with 29 per cent strongly supporting such changes.

Yesterday, delegates at the Liberal convention voted unanimously in favour of such changes. As you can see, there is a general consensus. We realize that Canadians care for their country's well-being and for each other. I spoke to a lot of people regarding this issue, and the vast majority of them support the idea. Even newspapers and media people are in favour of this change, and I am grateful to all those who reacted positively to the idea.

• (1110)

[*English*]

The Ottawa *Citizen* stated: "Think of how western voters will feel if for once they can go to the polls at dinnertime without knowing Ontario's vote has determined the winner. From time to time Parliament is faced with legislation which is inherently sensible".

Some people may think that 10 p.m. is too late, but remember that in British Columbia we will only be able to vote until 7 p.m.

instead of 8 p.m. That is the difficulty of administering a country that goes from the Pacific to the Atlantic to the Arctic. Remember that this difficulty presents itself only every four to five years and Canadians are able to adjust themselves to these kinds of changes.

I hope this bill will continue to be a lucky one and that we can give it royal assent before the next election. On election day I am sure people in the western provinces would celebrate and would feel a part of this big country of ours when at night in front of the TV they are informed of the election results at the same time as people in the rest of Canada. For the first time in the history of this country they would then feel that they count.

Madam Speaker, if you were to seek it I believe you would find unanimous consent to change the reference of Bill C-307 to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs instead of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Terrana:** Madam Speaker, I want to conclude by thanking all those who supported me, who encouraged me and who provided advice regarding this bill.

I also ask hon. members to give me their support to refer this bill to a committee at the earliest opportunity, for a more in-depth review of this important issue.

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Bill C-307, which the hon. member for Vancouver-East just moved for second reading.

But first, I want to point out that today is the first day that people everywhere in Canada and in Quebec are wearing, just like the members of this House, a lapel poppy to pay tribute to all those who served in the armed forces during the first and the second world wars, during the Korea War and even during the first wars of the Empire, including the Boer War at the end of the previous century.

Whatever their origins, these people were sent wherever they were needed to defend democracy. In my native parish of Sainte-Claire de Dorchester, there were people who had fought the Bosphorus and Dardanelles war and who vividly remembered that experience throughout their lives up until their deaths. I met and still meet with veterans who served during the second world war and in Korea and who are still very proud of the duties they carried out.

Those who never came back deserve, of course, all our admiration and those who fought and were lucky enough to come back know they did world peace a huge favour. Some mothers lost their

sons, some wives lost their husbands, some brothers and sisters lost their brothers and even their sisters.

So, of course, today, all the members of this House spare a thought for those in our families, in our communities, and in all of Canada, who fought to defend the values they believed in.

We have taken over, in a more peaceful fashion, but may the example they have set guide us in the debates we hold and the decisions we have to make.

• (1115)

Regarding Bill C-307, I had the privilege to hear the explanations given by the member for Vancouver-East. Obviously, when polling hours were set, we did not think that Canadians would be able to get the results over the radio immediately via another country. We did not think that a television network such as CNN could broadcast the results instantaneously throughout the world. We did not think that results would be available on Internet.

These technological developments mean that just a few minutes after polling stations close in St. Anthony or Maryston, Newfoundland, the results are available to Canadians via foreign countries, even though they cannot be announced in Canada under the Canada Elections Act. They are available in Langley, British Columbia, in Surrey, in North Vancouver, in Calgary or anywhere in Canada.

Instantaneous communications have rendered the provisions of the Canada Elections Act obsolete and they have to be revised. In this sense, the official opposition, concerned with what goes on from coast to coast, supports in principle the bill introduced by the member for Vancouver-East.

To make a comparison, everybody in this House certainly remembers the all important hockey games we used to have many years ago between Canada and Russia. We got the result on the news before we could watch the game on television. What was the use of watching a hockey game when you already knew the result? Even when the CBC, Radio-Canada and private broadcasters held back the results in response to public pressure, people took to their telephones and always managed to find out who had won a game in international competitions.

The magic of modern communications has made it easy to obtain results, even though the law technically prohibits it. It is therefore time to amend the provisions of the Canada Elections Act so that voters in different time zones voting to elect the same Parliament may cast their ballot on a footing that truly feels equal, not just one that is theoretically equal. Voters in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Winnipeg all have a right to feel that their participation in the Canadian democratic process carries the same weight as that of any other citizen.

The United States is having the same problem, as we are now seeing. There has been much talk in the western states about

### *Private Members' Business*

whether legislation should not be standardized so that results are not known ahead of time.

Political analysts who have looked at several presidential elections in the United States have shown that there was a snowball effect at play in presidential wins, particularly in the 1980 election. This was noted not only in the selection of the president, but also of congressmen, with eastern results coming in quickly and western voters apparently staying home in droves or voting with the tide, thus creating a snowball effect. This effect is not necessarily desirable.

The hon member for Vancouver East was saying earlier that, in Quebec and in Ontario, 10 p.m. was not particularly late in most municipalities, that in fact there was still quite a bit going on at that time of night. There will perhaps be a small problem in the Atlantic provinces, because there is still a one and a half hour difference with Newfoundland, but these are questions that are worth looking at in committee, and that must not used as excuses to block the bill at second reading.

Thus, in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, where we are now in the process of looking at Bill C-63, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act, which was referred to us after first reading I might note, we could probably wrap up our examination if Bill C-307 was referred to committee fairly rapidly.

With this in mind, and in order to make our contribution to the debate and show our understanding of the problem associated with the existing Canada Elections Act, we will be supporting the bill at second reading and following its progress in committee attentively.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** On debate, the hon. member for Vancouver North.

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, that is North Vancouver. My constituents get quite upset when they hear it come out the wrong way.

• (1120)

This bill does attempt to address the irritation felt by western voters when they learn from the Ontario and Quebec results which party will form the new government. In that respect I guess C-307 has a lot of appeal.

Of course, irritation when the election results come out is really only a small part of the overall irritation felt in the west in connection with what happens here in Ottawa, or what is run from Ottawa, symptomatic of terrible things to come starting with election night.

Election night is the night when Canadians gather together in front of the television in order to watch the results to see what party will be the next government. Frankly, it is extremely frustrating to be in front of the television, to have the end of the media

*Private Members' Business*

blackout and see the 7 p.m. results being announced from Ontario naming the next government barely before our polls even close.

In any case, political junkies, if we can call them that, all have friends in Ontario, Quebec and further east and by about five o'clock B.C. time they are busy calling their friends to find out the first results. Quite often in B.C., if we are honest about it, we really do know what is happening before the media blackout comes off.

Whether or not this spreading of the message by word of mouth has an effect on the voting patterns is impossible to tell. Obviously we cannot rerun an election to test it under different conditions. Therefore it is impossible to tell whether changing voting hours or some leakage of results have any impact whatsoever.

The remedies proposed in Bill C-307 do go some way forward in dealing with the problem of western voter frustration of the release of election results. However, like all of the other proposals suggested over the last few years, Bill C-307 is not really the perfect answer. For example, although some eastern Canadian results will still be available prior to the closing of the polls in B.C. the rest will be delayed. This leads me to the conclusion that one form of frustration presently felt in the west will simply be transformed into a different form of frustration for eastern voters who will now have to wait up until quite late to begin seeing the meaningful results.

Perhaps it would be easier to critique this bill indirectly by referring to the various solutions that have been suggested over the years by past commissions and study groups. These are not in any particular order but I will number them just for reference. The first suggestion is that all of the polls across Canada open at the same local time of, say, 8 a.m. and close at the same local time of 7 p.m., with the counting of the votes deferred until all the polls are closed.

The problems identified with that sort of solution are that the scrutineers, the returning officers and their staff would probably have to remain in a lock-up for several hours, particularly in eastern Canada, in order to wait for the polls to close everywhere before they could begin counting and releasing the votes. It could possibly be in the wee small hours of the next morning in eastern Canada before that could happen. The average voters in those areas would probably start to complain that they could not wait up so late and would not find out who the government was until they got up in the morning. That would be a legitimate complaint with that suggestion.

The second suggestion uses the same opening and closing hours as the first, but with all of the vote counting deferred until the beginning of the next day in the west. Counting would then take place and the results would be released simultaneously all across the country.

The problem with that is that one has to ask whether the scrutineers and other staff would have to be retained in a lock-up

overnight. Would the ballot boxes have to be removed to somewhere secure in order to make sure there was no ballot tampering before the next day? Either way, this method would probably cause major disruption to commerce throughout the country for the next day because all the those people who are trying to watch the results or who are working within the system to count votes or deal with the other aspects of the election would not be at work. Frankly, it would appear to be a major disruption.

The third suggestion proposes staggered hours across the country so that the polls open and close simultaneously. That is similar to what was proposed in Bill C-307. Frankly, we do not know whether the convenience factor of the polls being opened at certain hours encourages or discourages people from voting. We are well aware that there is legislation requiring employers to give employees time to go and vote but in practice we all know that a lot of people wait until after work. For example, in B.C. they do not go to the polls until 5.30 p.m., 6 p.m. or 7 p.m.

In addition, on the problems mentioned earlier regarding that it would probably then be the wee small hours before eastern Canadians would know the results, it would just transfer the frustration from the west coast to the east coast and so it is not really a solution.

• (1125)

The 1991 royal commission on electoral reform and the 1993 special committee on electoral reform both recommended staggered opening and closing hours at the polls as the best way to address the issue. I am sure they spent a bundle of money coming to their conclusions.

It is almost a shame we are not discussing royal commissions and special committees today because we could probably get in some good shots about the amount of taxpayer money wasted on some of these projects. More often they appear to be simply a way of postponing decisions rather than actually finding sensible solutions.

In addition to the taxpayer funded political commissions that have worked on this in the past, the Chief Electoral Officer has also proposed a solution. That solution would involve the bridging of time zone differences by combining modified staggered polling hours, which sounds complicated but is not too complicated, with special provisions for the counting and deferral of the release of results after closing of the polls. I sense from the speech made by the member for Vancouver East that these solutions could be amendments to this bill.

Under this system, the results from eastern Canada would still be available prior to the close of the polls in B.C. but only by about half an hour. It would involve about 36 seats and would not have a

major impact on the results, and so it is probably not a bad compromise.

There would be a significant alleviation of the time zone effect, with the results in eastern Canada still being available right before 11 p.m.

I support this bill's going to committee following today's debate. It appears to be a non-partisan issue. We are all prepared to talk about it to see if we can find meaningful ways to make this legislation work, which I certainly support.

However, I would like to bring one point forward. It is a very large unanswered question which we did not have to deal with in the past. I will illustrate with an example. On October 12 an election was held in New Zealand. The official results were released poll by poll on the Internet. Anybody could dial up from anywhere in the world to see them, as I did.

I discovered that along with the official results, some unofficial results were being posted presumably by the various riding associations. This will become a major problem—if we call it a problem—in the future. All the media blackouts in the world will not mean a thing if various riding associations, unofficial or not, can just put results on the Internet. There is the potential for hoax results to be put on the Internet in an attempt to affect election results.

That is an issue we will have to deal with eventually. It may well be that the only way we can deal with that is to simply not release any results until a set time. I am not presupposing what the answer would be but I suggest the issue should be looked at in committee.

One way of reducing the effects of counting delays, which would allow for closing of polls more closely together, would be to encourage the use of electronic voting methods. I will be introducing a private member's bill to the House on Wednesday regarding initiative and referendum. There is a provision in that bill to permit electronic voting methods to be used.

For example, touch tone technology is well researched now and has been proven to work. One way we could reduce the counting time is with instant tallies done electronically. I hope the government side will recognize the inevitability of having to move with technology by moving toward those solutions in the long run.

In the long run new technology may actually come to the rescue. It may help us to overcome this problem. Just as one portion of technology is interfering with our ability to block results, another set of technology may help us to overcome the problems.

Although many different proposals have been put forward over the years, like those identified in Bill C-307, none of them has been perfect and none of them has been adopted. Bill C-307 also suffers from the problem of not being perfect but we could hardly expect it

to be perfect considering all the problems involved in getting it to work.

On balance, it is probably the best opportunity we will have during this Parliament to at least go part way in addressing the existing concerns. For that reason I am supportive and I would urge other members to support this bill's going to committee before second reading.

The issue crosses partisan lines. There is every reason to believe we can work together to put it into an enactable form. I urge members to support the bill.

• (1130)

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I rise very briefly to address Bill C-307. I consider this an important proposal, an important piece of legislation that apparently has the support of the government and all parties. In light of this unanimity, as a private member I thought it was more important than ever to put on the record my reservations about this bill.

This bill is to address, as I understand it from the member who proposed it, two problems. One problem is people finding out in western Canada the results of elections in eastern Canada before the polls have closed. In other words, knowing what the election results are, which could influence the vote. The second is addressing the problem of western alienation. On the first count, there are some valid concerns. That is the reason the House is looking at this legislation.

For example, in the last election it would be pretty easy to guess that had more westerners known the results from Quebec, it might well have influenced their vote in terms of the choosing of the official opposition. No doubt, with modern computer technology, these results will become more and more known before the polls are closed in western Canada. That is a valid concern.

However, I want to express my own objections and, more than objections, it is an insult to suggest that this is a serious attempt to address western alienation. Westerners often find out that Parliament has already been elected before the polls close in their riding. Our system is structured such that governments can be elected without the support of anybody in western Canada, and can rule this country without any input from westerners no matter what order the votes are counted in.

The cry of government members who are in trouble in the west is that the whole problem is the counting of votes. Let me use a specific reference. In the 1980 federal election, shortly after I relocated to western Canada, the federal Liberal Party got itself elected in eastern Canada by running on a platform of expropriation of western resources. That is how it got elected.

It got elected by getting a majority of the seats in Ontario and Quebec with virtually no representation whatsoever in western Canada. It then proceeded to govern the country, making massive changes to western industry and the resource base without any

*Points of Order*

input whatsoever from western Canada. It did that on the basis of how our system of government operates. If the votes had been counted first in the west and later in the east, or at the same time, it would have made no difference whatsoever to that.

It is absolutely ridiculous to suggest that the counting of the ballots was the problem in that instance. It was a problem of the system of government and the actual policies pursued by the federal government vis-à-vis western Canada.

My colleague from North Vancouver has outlined in great detail and very confidently the deficiencies of this proposal as well as the deficiencies of alternatives. I congratulate him for that.

I want to add, however, one additional concern I have once again as a westerner about this proposal. The staggered hours as modified by the chief electoral officer means that the voting polls would close very early in the evening in western Canada.

Those of us who have worked in many elections know that the evening hours are the heaviest voting hours anywhere in the country. What this proposal does which worries me the most is restrict the access of westerners to the polls far more than it does other Canadians because it impacts the hours when they are most likely to vote. This is a serious concern. I hope the committee will look at the reservations of the member for North Vancouver and consider some of the options available.

That is all I want to say. I want to make it very clear in this atmosphere of unanimity that there are serious reservations about this bill. I want them on the record.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

[English]

**Mrs. Terrana:** Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the House for co-operating and for letting this bill go to committee. I thank all of my colleagues for their interventions and assure them we will work together to make this bill as workable as possible.

**Ms. Catterall:** Madam Speaker, since the House has dealt with its business this morning so efficiently, I think you might find there is unanimous consent to suspend the House until noon.

[Translation]

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Is there unanimous consent to suspend the business of the House until noon?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Sitting suspended at 11.36 a.m.)

[English]

## SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12.01 p.m.

**The Speaker:** The House is now in session. I am going to hear a point of order from the hon. whip of the Reform Party.

\* \* \*

## POINTS OF ORDER

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, October 22 the member for Wild Rose brought to your attention a matter that occurred at the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. It was a serious matter regarding a breach of Standing Order 114. It was suggested that because it appeared to be an inadvertent act, the issue could be resolved at committee.

I brought the issue back to the committee because, as whip of the party, I was the one who applied Standing Order 114. When I applied the standing order on behalf of my caucus I had certain expectations.

I am aware that committees are masters of their own proceedings. I have experienced and have been frustrated by some internal majority supported rules in the past. What is comforting is that the rules of the House take precedence over the rules of the committees. This lends some predictability and some protection, particularly for those of us in opposition.

The problem arose on Monday, October 21. The member for Wild Rose was substituting on the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and attempted to table a motion at that committee meeting. He was told that he could not do that. The reason given by the chair was the fact that he was only a substitute. The chair based her reasoning on an internal rule where 48 hours' notice is required to move a motion.



*Points of Order*

I refer you to Beauchesne's sixth edition, citation No. 766(1). It describes the status of a non-member. It states that they can participate, but "they may not vote, move motions nor be a part of any quorum". Voting, moving motions and being a part of a quorum is a privilege enjoyed by a permanent member.

However, it is the nature of the work of members of Parliament to be out of Ottawa on occasion, or to have commitments in the House while their committee is meeting. A procedure has always existed to allow for other members to substitute for permanent members. In our present standing orders this procedure is covered under Standing Order 114. The relevant section of the standing order that I applied reads as follows:

At any time—the Chief Whip of any recognized party may effect substitutions by filing notice thereof with the clerk of the committee, having selected the substitutes from among all the Members of his or her party—and such substitutions shall be effective immediately they are received by the clerk of the committee.

• (1205)

This procedure is effective because the substitute is given the full status of a permanent member while the substitution is in force. That full status means the authority to vote, move motions and be part of quorum.

The chair of the committee argued that the member is only a substitute for the day and therefore could not table the motion. Mr. Speaker, if you cannot table a motion at this committee you cannot move a motion. If you cannot move a motion then you are breaching the authority granted the substitute under Standing Order 114. In other words, the committee has redefined the status of a substitute.

Not only is a standing order diminished but a longstanding practice is being ignored. Unlike the House where unanimous consent is required by a private member to table a document, at committee a member can table anything he or she wants. A member can table a document, a letter or a motion. Considering that a substitute has the status of a member while signed in, that substitute can then table a document, letter or motion.

There was concern about whether or not the member for Wild Rose would be signed in for a subsequent meeting to move his motion, provided he was allowed to table the motion. It is not a matter for the chair of that committee to decide or even speculate on that. It is up to the party whips with the authority granted to them under Standing Order 114 to determine the status of their members who attend. It is the House that determines the membership and outlines of procedure and authority for the substitutes, not the chair or the committee majority. That is up to the House in its rules. Such a decision by the chair or by that committee to say that they pre-empt the standing orders of this House borderlines on contempt.

The chair of the justice committee also argued that because another member could table and move a motion on behalf of the substitute that no harm was done.

Mr. Speaker, you were once a chairman of a committee and you know full well it is not uncommon for a small opposition party not to have a permanent member present at a meeting. There are often substitutes representing a party at committee. That is commonly done. Sometimes this is due to the business a committee is dealing with and the wide variety of interests within a particular caucus. Sometimes, as I pointed out to the chair of the committee, someone will be substituted in a committee week after week in order to fulfil the role that the party has asked the member to fill and to reflect his or her interest in the subject matter.

Under these circumstances my party would be unable to table a motion and therefore be unable to move a motion. The committee is telling the House and every party whip of the House that no longer can they just send substitutes to a committee in order to be functional, they now have to ensure that a permanent member is present.

Before this internal rule we could send whomever we determined appropriate in order to fulfil the requirements of our party and our caucus. We did so under the authority of the House. What has happened to that authority? The justice committee has dictated a new criteria for party whips. Standing Order 114 does not mean what it once meant and the tail is wagging the dog.

On June 16, 1994 there was a similar case regarding Standing Order 114. The chairman of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs allowed a member who was not legally signed in to move motions, vote and be part of quorum. Although he was aware of the irregularity, he continued to allow the member to participate as a substitute.

The matter was brought to the House the next day by the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley. The member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley questioned the chair's primary responsibility to ensure that the committee operated under the rules established by the House of Commons. Although, Mr. Speaker, you rarely rule on proceedings of a committee, this case was a clear breach of Standing Order 114.

In your ruling, Mr. Speaker, you said:

In the matter now before us, I must conclude that this is serious enough to require the intervention of the Chair because it concerns a fundamental right which belongs to the House and not to the committee, namely the right to establish the membership of a committee.

You went further, Mr. Speaker, and stated that:

While it is a tradition of this House that committees are masters of their own proceedings, they cannot establish procedures which go beyond the powers conferred upon them by the House.

*Government Orders*

• (1210)

We are in the same situation today. This time a member was legally substituted in, but was denied the privileges of that status under Standing Order 114.

Mr. Speaker, when I brought this matter to the committee, as you asked me to do, the chair upheld the rules of the committee over the rules of the House. Your last ruling regarding Standing Order 114 is clear. The committee has no business interfering with the right of the House to establish the membership of a committee. It has no right to diminish the status of a substitute member and it has no right dictating to the party whips membership requirements in excess of what is already in our standing orders.

Standing Order 114 gives a substitute the authority to table, vote, move motions and be part of quorum. The committee, in the case I have cited, has gone beyond the power conferred on it by the House by denying a substitute the right to table and move a motion.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to make a ruling on this to clarify the matter. I have gone to the committee as you have requested but I have not received satisfaction there. I think it is obviously a clear contravention of your previous ruling and the rules of the House.

Could I please ask you to rule on this so that our members and all party whips will know where they stand on this. It is a serious matter which I believe you will take in the seriousness in which it is offered.

**Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I want to apprise the House that this is the first instance that this matter has come to my attention. I fully understand that my hon. colleague, the Reform Party whip, to the best of his ability and with the facts as he knows them, is defending the interests of his colleague, the member for Wild Rose. I think his intention is to defend the best interests of committees in general.

However, I submit as a point of verification that in the justice committee the member in question in that most recent incident referred to by my colleague from Fraser Valley East, the member for Wild Rose, is an associate member.

I would also like to inform the Chair that the two members of the Reform Party, who for lack of a better expression I will refer to as full members of the committee, were present at the committee at that time. Under those circumstances and possibly there were others, I certainly understand the Reform Party whip raising this matter at this time.

I only wish I had known about the matter previously. I would have been in a better position to give a better argument to sustain what I believe to be the standing rule of the House, which to a great extent, of course, is the principle that committees are masters of their own destiny.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize, as do all members, if that should be infringed on, I certainly would respect any decision you would make in that area in the best interests of the House and our committee structure. I will leave that matter in your most capable hands at this time.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. whip of the Reform Party for bringing this to my attention once again, and the intervention of the government whip today.

I will take this matter under advisement and I will, first of all, inform myself of what transpired in the committee. I will inform myself of the precedents, notwithstanding that the whip of the Reform Party has outlined the case which seems to be very well researched. I take the point that there are other people who were at the committee who could have moved that motion.

I believe the crux of the matter, if I can put it in these words, is that we are asking ourselves, does the committee have the power, the right, to make a decision which would supersede a decision of the House?

• (1215)

That is the case which I believe the whip of the Reform Party is trying to make. Did that occur? I intend to inform myself and I will get back to the House with a decision on this matter. I am sure the House will give me a little bit of time so that I can satisfy myself that whatever decision I make will be for the betterment of the functioning not only of the committee but also of the House of Commons. I will get back to the House at an early time.

---

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### MANGANESE BASED FUEL ADDITIVES ACT

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation of commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate today on Bill C-29 outlining the government's actions on methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, commonly referred to as MMT.

We must be clear from the outset that the government's interest in this legislation is our commitment to the environmental, health and protection elements of the bill. We have made this commitment to Canadians and we intend to make good on our commitment.

*Government Orders*

When we looked around we asked ourselves how we can most effectively ensure that we protect our environment. We must come to one conclusion. The answer is we must do what we can to prevent pollution. As legislators Canadians expect us to ensure that their safety and the environment are maintained. I would suggest to my colleagues that this is accomplished in C-29.

All of us here in this place and Canadians all across the country are concerned about maintaining our environment. When we think of air pollution we think of automobiles as being a major contributor to air pollution. In fact, autos and all forms of transportation are the leading source of air pollution. It stands to reason that to impact on air pollution, if we are seriously taking action on this, we must focus on the automobile. Bill C-29 does that.

The auto industry, which represents 21 domestic and offshore manufacturers, is convinced that MMT has an adverse effect on the operation of vehicle pollution control components including the sophisticated onboard systems. The industry is adamant that the government must take quick and decisive action to ensure that MMT free fuels are available to Canadian consumers. The auto industry is so concerned and convinced of the detrimental effects of MMT that it is conducting a \$10 million test program in the United States in order to obtain definitive evidence in support of this position.

Bill C-29 represents a prudent approach to ensure that Canadian consumers and the environment are protected in the view of uncertainty of the long term impacts of MMT on the advanced emissions control technology such as onboard diagnostics that are being introduced in our cars and will be in widespread use in the very near future.

The automakers have indicated that if MMT remains in Canadian fuels, they would take action ranging from disconnecting onboard diagnostic sensors to the removal of sensors and decreased warranty provisions for our consumers. General Motors has already advised us that certain onboard diagnostic systems in the 1996 models have been disabled.

The onboard diagnostic systems in autos are designed to permit cars to operate more efficiently and in a more environmentally friendly manner. If the systems fail or are disarmed because of MMT in the fuel, there is an overall harmful impact on Canadians and our environment. The public must be confident that the government is doing all that it can in order to protect citizens and the environment.

• (1220)

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment task force on cleaner vehicles and fuels estimates that health benefits of up to \$31 billion over 23 years would result from introducing

cleaner fuels and more stringent emissions standards into the Canadian marketplace. We can readily see the need for decisive action, action that will reduce air pollutants and ensure efficient operation of vehicles. Bill C-29 has that as its goal.

The EPA in the United States has expressed concerns on the lack of data relating to the use of MMT in gasolines and therefore advocates a cautious approach to the use of these additives in fuels. Unless MMT is banned in Canada, our consumers will be inconvenienced by frequent and unnecessary visits for vehicle maintenance and will encounter warranty problems.

Over the years, Canadians have taken pride in setting an example for our international colleagues on a number of fronts. In the case of environmental issues we should not be overly influenced by unnecessary threats of our neighbour to the south. We have worked for and earned respect worldwide on issues on health and the environment.

I ask my colleagues in the House that we not shy away from taking a leadership role on this issue. The removal of MMT from fuels will provide an opportunity for the introduction of ethanol and other substitutes which could be an important element of a broader based national energy policy. Such a policy would be consistent with our commitments in the red book as well as an Agriculture Canada policy paper to eliminate MMT from gasoline.

Just two weeks ago I attended a ground breaking ceremony for a new ethanol facility in Chatham, Ontario. That event marked a win-win situation for all parties involved in the development of that initiative. The ethanol plant in Chatham will be a \$153 million facility producing 150 million litres of ethanol fuel each year. It will allow Canadian farmers, manufacturers and distributors to fulfil Canadian consumer demands and it will provide a safe, clean burning fuel additive to our markets. It will be a success story for our government, industry and consumers.

We must continue to pursue an alternate fuel policy. Our national biomass ethanol program does just that. Our actions to eliminate MMT from Canadian fuels will improve our environment, address health concerns and provide options for alternate fuel additives.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to participate again in the debate on Bill C-29, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese-based substances. Its purpose is to ban the use of manganese-base substances, including MMT.

This is a highly controversial bill, even among ministers and government Mps. The cabinet is not unanimously in favour of it. The majority of provinces are also opposed. As well, it involves a serious conflict between two major industrial sectors: the automo-

*Government Orders*

tive manufacturers and the oil industry. The former maintain that MMT is harmful to their products, and forces them to adopt mechanisms and practices which could result in purchasers having to pay more for their vehicles. The latter are opposed to the banning of manganese in unleaded gasoline, and contest the legitimacy of the arguments used by the other group.

I object to the way automotive manufacturers are blackmailing the government and the consumer, with their threat of a \$3,000 hike in price and restricted warranties if this bill is passed.

The petroleum industry claims MMT reduces nitrous oxide emissions by as much as 20 per cent. Moreover, a study commissioned by the Council of Ministers of Environment, Canada, estimates that the refineries would require \$115 million in capital and \$50 million yearly in additional operating costs to get rid of MMT in Canada. This would also mean a hike in gasoline prices. In addition, results of tests by the Ethyl Company in the USA contradict the arguments of the automobile manufacturers.

• (1225)

In my opinion, the proposal to ban MMT has no environmental, economic or legal justification.

This bill is not in line with Canada's obligations under trade agreements such as NAFTA and those relating to interprovincial trade. This past September, the U.S. Ethyl Corporation indicated its intention to lodge a complaint calling for \$200 million U.S. in damages from Canada under the appropriate sections of NAFTA for the damages sustained by its Canadian subsidiary. This multinational also claims that its reputation has been tarnished by the comments of the Minister of the Environment on MMT.

As for interprovincial trade, by prohibiting the marketing of manganese-based substances, this bill violates federal-provincial trade agreements. It also constitutes an unacceptable intrusion by the federal government in this area. In fact, almost all provinces are opposed to this bill. Last May, even the Quebec National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution, supported by the opposition, asking the government to postpone the passage of this bill.

So it is hard to understand why the government insists on sending this bill through the House, a bill that, by the way, was criticized by the Minister for International Trade. In a letter sent to the environment minister seven months ago, the Minister for International Trade maintained that banning the importation of MMT would be contrary to Canada's obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization and NAFTA. There was no justification for health or environmental reasons, considering the scientific evidence available. He went on to say, and rightly so, that he was afraid this would lead to another trade dispute with the United States.

Premier Romanow of Saskatchewan sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada on September 16, in which he said that the legislation was in no way justified at this time. He added that, according to the scientific data available on MMT, there was no indication that environmental benefits would accrue as result of this legislation, and they found it difficult to let the refineries or consumers foot the bill.

At the present time, there is very little justification for banning the addition of MMT to unleaded gas. I may remind the House that from the economic point of view, this bill is a costly one, especially in terms of jobs lost, if we consider the threat to the viability of many refineries, including some refineries in Quebec.

This is in addition to the economic problems arising from the resulting violations of trade agreements with North America and the Canadian provinces. This bill contains a number of legal shortcomings, which may have major consequences for Canada's reputation and economy. How can we expect American businesses to be interested in penetrating the Canadian market, when the Government of Canada interferes with the way they do business or fails to observe its trade agreements by passing bills like C-29?

As far as the environment is concerned, the evidence has shown that removing MMT does not increase air pollution, nor is this substance harmful to public health.

• (1230)

A research program funded by the Quebec Department of National Resources, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute has made it clear that the contribution of manganese from MMT sources is negligible, compared with other industrial and natural sources; highway traffic only has an indirect effect on the percentage of manganese in the atmosphere by recirculating dust particles near roads and streets.

In conclusion, there is every reason to object vehemently to Bill C-29, which creates problems from the economic, environmental, social, commercial and legal points of view. For all of these reasons, I am very much opposed to Bill C-29.

[English]

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some confusion about exactly what we are debating here today. The title of Bill C-29 is to regulate the interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances.

This is not about protecting the environment. It is not about members of Parliament making technical decisions beyond their

competency and it is not about this House acting as referee between two extremely powerful lobby groups.

This bill is related strictly to international and interprovincial trade, what can be traded and what cannot. Why, therefore, is this bill being brought forward by the Minister of the Environment? This makes no sense at all.

The Liberals have been opposed to the North American Free Trade Agreement in the past but now they are its strongest supporters. If Bill C-29 is passed, there is going to be trouble with our trade partners in the NAFTA agreement. There will be a dispute. This government could save itself embarrassment. It could save the country embarrassment by dropping this whole bill completely.

The Minister for International Trade agrees with what I have said. He is very concerned about the possible passage of this bill. He fears for the reputation of Canada in the international trading community.

I wish to read for the record a letter that the Minister for International Trade wrote to the Minister of the Environment on February 23, 1996:

Dear Sergio:

I understand that you are considering the reintroduction of Bill C-94 in the upcoming session. My department continues to have certain reservations concerning this measure, which I wish to draw to your attention.

One of the original arguments favouring the ban on MMT was that the United States already prohibited its use as a petroleum additive. Recently the U.S. Court of Appeal overturned the U.S. ban. This has effectively removed harmonization arguments in support of Bill C-94. Indeed, since adding MMT to petroleum products is now permissible in the U.S., harmonization would now be promoted by introducing no new Canadian regulations.

An import prohibition on MMT would be inconsistent with Canada's obligations under the WTO and NAFTA: (1) it would constitute an impermissible prohibition on imports, particularly if domestic production, sale and use is not similarly prohibited, and (2) it could not be justified on health or environmental grounds given current scientific evidence.

The United States trade representative—is monitoring the situation closely. There is the possibility that the United States could mount a challenge, either on USTR's own initiative or pursuant to a Section 301 petition; Ethyl Corp., the American producer of MMT, has indicated that it most certainly intends to file such a petition. Also, Ethyl Corp. may try to advance an argument that such a ban would be a measure tantamount to expropriation of Ethyl's investment in Canada. Thus, Canada may also be susceptible to an investor-state challenge under Chapter 11 of the NAFTA.

There has been heated debate surrounding the exact effects of banning MMT. The claims of the automotive and petroleum industries conflict markedly, with little common ground between them. Testing is only now starting in the United States, with unambiguous results some years away.

In view of the Presidential and Congressional elections this year, American politicians are particularly sensitive to any foreign initiative which might injure their domestic industries.

### *Government Orders*

In conclusion, let me stress my department's belief that Bill C-94 should not be re-introduced as it could have many adverse implications for Canadian trade, without compensating environmental benefits.

● (1235)

It is signed by the Minister for International Trade.

I am sure the House is aware that Bill C-94, to which this letter refers, is the precise equivalent of Bill C-29 which we are debating here today.

In view of this, I move:

That all the words after the word "that" be deleted, and the following substituted therefor:

This House declines to give third reading to Bill C-29. An act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese based substances, since the bill fails to address the impact of the import prohibition on certain manganese based substances on international trade.

**The Speaker:** The amendment is acceptable. The debate is now on the amendment.

I inadvertently skipped over a speaker. I am going to try to catch up as we go along. I am going to recognize the hon. member for Durham and then, depending on who stands, we will go from there.

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not mind being looked over but I do not want to be overlooked.

It gives me great pleasure to speak today on Bill C-29, the MMT legislation and the amendment thereto. Also, I would like to congratulate the Minister of the Environment for having the intestinal fortitude to reintroduce the bill before this legislature.

In Durham on a clear day, as the song goes, we can see forever. On a clear day in the summer sometimes we can see the CN Tower. This summer we saw less and less of the CN Tower as Toronto became smogged in.

● (1240)

People want to take responsibility for the environment and they want to do it in a number of different ways. Our automobile industry is addressing the real concerns people have about how the can take responsibility for the vehicles they drive and indeed in a lot of other industries as well. We have seen this in various areas, the packaging of products and so forth.

The automobile industry has been very responsive to the desire of people to have a clean and safe environment by a number of initiatives. It is moving toward alternative sources of fuel. We had

*Government Orders*

discussions in this House about the use of ethanol in our gasoline and there are other environmentally sensitive fuels available. In my riding General Motors is a major manufacturer employer and has been a leader in developing these kinds of technologies for its vehicles.

Recently I was surprised to learn that onboard diagnostic systems, which are state of the art, allow people to understand how their vehicles are performing relative to the pollutants.

Many years ago when catalytic converters were first introduced people said "how do we get them off our cars because they are affecting our fuel consumption?" People's attitudes have completely changed. Today that is not the attitude of a common person. People want to find out how they can be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The automobile companies have wisely in their marketing systems realized this and that is why these onboard diagnostic systems exist. They give them the ability to know that their vehicles are performing as best they can and are not polluting the environment as much as possible with our current technology.

General Motors is disabling certain aspects of its onboard diagnostic systems for one very important reason. Manganese based fuel additives cause an 80 per cent residual within engines. As a consequence it creates a situation where the onboard diagnostic system does not work. Here we have a company which is recognizing the desire of people to have a safer and cleaner environment and producing technology to do that but which is unable to basically maintain that because of some of the fuel additives allowed in our gasoline.

There is an ongoing debate about manganese additives but it is the residual build-up within the engine that then turns around and basically makes the onboard diagnostic system not work. Part of that process is that if a catalytic converter is not working properly it should be replaced. People want to know that and those people want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

This legislation addresses that very real concern the average person has. I am surprised at the opposition to this from both opposition parties. I heard one of the Bloc members talk about bringing investment to this country. Some of the biggest investors in this country are the car manufacturing companies. In Ontario one out of six people can trace their jobs directly to automobile production. I am surprised that the Bloc has taken the position it has because similarly we have a significant plant in Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec that is also very interested in dealing with the desires of people to control the environment.

I was pleased to see Maureen Kempston-Darkes, president of the Canadian division of General Motors, announcing that her company and other car makers will introduce leading edge pollution control technologies to further reduce smog-causing emissions from automobiles.

• (1245 )

They are not going to continue with that kind of research and development, they are not going to continue with those kinds of solutions to pollution if they do not get the assistance through people like us who will ban the use of MMT as a fuel additive. Clearly those vehicles are not going to perform up to their expectations as long as they have these components within the gasoline they produce.

In conclusion, I am very supportive of the MMT legislation, the banning of MMT. I believe the people of Durham desire to see alternate fuels and other technologies that companies like General Motors will develop to reduce fuel emissions and to create a cleaner air environment not only for us but for generations to come after us.

I look forward to the passage of this bill in all due haste.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this House to reiterate that the Bloc Québécois is opposed to Bill C-29.

In fact, after listening to our government colleagues' speeches this morning and the previous speeches at second reading, we are more convinced than ever that every one of us should at this time—I repeat, at this time—vote against Bill C-29.

This bill is aimed at prohibiting the importation into Canada of and the interprovincial trade in MMT, without any serious evidence that it is harmful to health or the environment. It is also in flagrant violation of NAFTA, and we should be particularly careful with this.

The Bloc Québécois is therefore opposed to this bill at third reading. We stress that we will always oppose Bill C-29 as it now stands, because it is unacceptable for a Minister of the Environment to try to legislate on international trade. We will not support the roundabout way in which the Minister of the Environment is using legislation to ban the importation of and interprovincial trade in a product under the pretext that this product is harmful to health and the environment.

If the Minister of the Environment is really convinced that MMT is dangerous, he should also ban the manufacturing and use of this product. This bill prohibits the importation of this product, but not its use and manufacturing. Yet, according to their fine rhetoric, MMT is harmful to people's health. In that case, why are we still allowed to use and produce it?

Frankly, Bill C-29 is not aimed in the right direction. On the contrary, it still allows the use and production of MMT, but only within a province's borders.

Some Liberal members have accused us of not being concerned with the environment and Canadians' health. You know this is not

*Government Orders*

true. Like all the members of this House, the members of the Bloc Québécois are very concerned with the well-being of Quebecers and Canadians alike. That is why we have asked that the government give us clear and irrefutable proof that MMT is harmful.

Without doubting their word, we would like them to prove their point, which they have not been done. I will explain it to some extent in my remarks. When a serious study is available, we will be able to make an informed decision. But so far, the Minister of the Environment and his colleagues have not provided any real reason or hard facts in support of their claim.

At this stage of the debate on Bill C-29, the government has yet to demonstrate the need for such legislation or its merits, which suggests to us that the real reasons for wanting this bill passed are of a purely commercial and electoral nature.

Like his predecessor, the Minister of the Environment is favouring corn producers in western Canada and especially those in Ontario. By banning MMT, whose sole producer is Ethyl, the minister is ensuring that the only alternative to MMT will be ethanol, since fuel without additives is not foreseeable in the short and medium term.

• (1250)

For the Minister of the Environment like for Machiavelli's main character in *The Prince*, the end justifies the means. It has been clear to us for quite a while already that the minister really cares much less than he says about the environment and the health of Canadians and cares much more about pleasing western and Ontario corn producers, who he hopes will vote Liberal in the next election.

Ignoring every recommendation made by his colleagues in this House, not only Bloc Québécois and Reform Party members, but also the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of the Environment continues crusading against MMT, but we must recognize that he has a very small army behind him.

To achieve his end, he is prepared to sacrifice millions of dollars in financial compensation to Ethyl, an American company, which filed notice, on September 10, to claim \$276 million Canadian in damages from the Canadian government for presumably breaching the provisions of NAFTA. While his government boasts about making job creation its number one priority—they said it over and over during the weekend—the minister is prepared to sacrifice jobs in the oil industry.

He would even go as far as to subject Canadians to yet another hike in the price of gas. Of course, nothing is too costly when one wants to please a lobby.

Despite all opposition, the environment minister and the Liberal government will probably get Bill C-29 passed. However, the

government's modus operandi regarding this issue confirms once again the lack of judgment of some of its members.

When will the Liberal government finally act in a responsible and serious manner, as we have been asking, since, once again, the government's action does not make sense.

We tried to put three short questions to the government. Why prohibit a product which, in the opinion of Health Canada, does not pose any risk to the health of Canadians? Unless I am mistaken, Health Canada is a Canadian organization. As I said about Statistics Canada in another speech, if the government is not pleased, it simply removes the chairperson and replaces him or her.

Why prohibit the importation and interprovincial trade of such a product, rather than its production and use? If it is so harmful to one's health, then we should prohibit its production and use.

Why violate a trade agreement which we duly signed and run the risk of having to pay a compensation of \$276 million Canadian, if not more? These are the same Liberals that used to be passionate about free trade agreements. Historically, Liberals have been free traders and they should know free trade agreements very well, or at least respect them.

These are the three short questions the environment minister and his colleagues should have answered in earlier speeches. But they did not do so, first because there is no rational answer to these questions, but also because, once again, they simply do as they please. The Liberal government does not care at all about the opinion of Canadians, who protested in large numbers against Bill C-29. As with many other issues, the government turns a deaf ear.

This is a shame. In its present form, Bill C-29 is inappropriate and we have a duty, as members representing Quebecers and Canadians, to oppose this legislation. A number of stakeholders from various areas, including six provincial governments, vigorously oppose Bill C-29. I join my voice to theirs to invite all members of Parliament, including Liberals, to vote against this legislation.

The government must do its homework and table a proper and rigorous bill.

In conclusion, I want to table an amendment to the amendment of the Reform Party to Bill C-29. I propose, seconded by the hon. member for Laurentides:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following:

"and particularly, the impact of the said Bill on trade between Canada and the United States".

• (1255)

**The Speaker:** My dear colleagues, the amendment to the amendment is in order. We will therefore continue debate.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to say a few words today about the amendment to Bill C-29 which was recently put forward by my colleague from Saskatchewan.

The intent of the amendment is to delay the passage of the bill. In other words, that it not be read a third time until the government adequately addresses the pending import prohibition on certain manganese based substances and the impact of that on our free trade agreements which currently exist. The Reform Party clearly sees a problem with that.

I would like to begin my comments by referring to some key facts about MMT. I noticed there have been a lot of suppositions put forward from both sides of the House during this debate and a lot of innuendo flowing in this place about this subject.

MMT is a gasoline fuel additive which boosts octane in gasoline and increases the efficiency of gasoline production. MMT has been used in almost all Canadian unleaded gasolines since 1977. Canadian motorists have travelled more than an estimated trillion kilometres using gasoline treated with MMT. MMT is the only available gasoline additive in Canada that is capable of reducing nitrogen oxide emissions, NOx, by as much as 20 per cent.

Removing MMT from gasoline will increase nitrogen oxide emissions. Nitrogen oxide emissions cause urban smog. A ban on MMT would have the equivalent effect of adding 1 million cars to Canadian roads by the year 2000.

Two recent studies have concluded that the removal of MMT would increase Canadian nitrogen oxide emissions by 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes annually. This would violate Canada's international treaty agreement signed in Montreal in 1988 promising to freeze nitrogen oxide emissions at the 1987 level.

Test results from the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States, the largest approved fuel additives testing program in history, demonstrate clearly that contrary to claims by the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, MMT in Canadian gasoline is fully compatible with new on board diagnostic systems.

Automakers have experienced significant difficulties with the certification of on board diagnostic systems in the United States and the U.S. EPA has stated in the federal register that automobile manufacturers have expressed and demonstrated difficulty in complying with every aspect of the OBD requirements and that such difficulty appears likely to continue into 1996 and 1997 model years.

● (1300)

The United States EPA and the California Air Resources Board have recently changed their regulations to allow for certification of vehicles that do not comply with OBD-II requirements.

Often in this debate the talk is about automobile emissions but no one on the other side of the House talks about the emissions from the refineries during the production of gasoline. MMT allows Canadian refiners to use less intensive refining thereby decreasing refinery emissions of carbon dioxide as well as nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide. It also enables refiners to reduce the aromatic content of gasoline which reduces emissions of benzene. I just add that for clarification to the viewing public.

A lot of facts have been presented to parliamentarians from all parties on this subject. Sometimes it seems that the debate, as was referred to by my hon. colleague when he presented his amendment, often strays quite a bit from the intent of the bill or what the bill actually does. What the bill does is it places a ban on the interprovincial transport or the international importation of the product MMT. That is all it does.

It is said that if we do not do this that possibly it will be harmful or that it will be potentially harmful, or that it will potentially gum up the onboard diagnostic systems of new automobiles. In their speeches hon. members across the way have used words such as "maybe" and "might". If we are going to base the requirement of legislation on the hypothetical, which is what we are doing with this piece of legislation, then I will pose a hypothetical question myself.

If we in this place are going to ban products in Canada, which is what is going to be accomplished with this ban on the transportation of MMT, every time we think there is a potential for harm, how many lawsuits will the Government of Canada have to face? Ultimately how many millions of dollars will the taxpayers of Canada have to pay just because we feel there is some potential for a problem down the road? That is the thrust of what I wish to add to the debate today.

Everyone in the riding I represent is well aware that I have spoken a number of times on this subject over the last year and a half as have many colleagues on both sides of the House. The point was made recently that members from both sides are reaching the point of exhaustion on this subject. I do not know how much more can be said about it.

That is why we are continually concerned that no matter how many points are made on the side opposing this piece of legislation, we see that C-94, which was put forward in the previous session of Parliament, has been brought back to the House as Bill C-29 which we are debating today. We find that no amendments were made, despite all of the debate in this place and all of the points raised on



*Government Orders*

the part of opposition members of Parliament who tried to bring to the attention of the government the very real concerns out there and the economic impact this is going to have on industry and jobs.

The government says it is concerned about jobs and the continuing high number of unemployed and underemployed in this country of ours. Yet this government has brought in this piece of legislation unamended from the previous session. It is in virtually the same state as it was when Parliament prorogued in January of this year.

• (1305)

I have to question what we are doing in this place. We bring forward points which are then ignored with no reference and legislation is continually forced through this House of Commons because one party enjoys a majority. It really brings into question the whole issue of how Canada is governed and what effect and impact debate in this Chamber ultimately has upon legislation.

With that, I will close. Of course, as the seconder of the amendment I am in total support of it. This government must properly address the concern which, as my hon. colleague noted, was raised in a letter from the hon. Minister for International Trade to his counterpart, the Minister of the Environment some time ago, about what impact this legislation will have on our trading partners and how they view our commitment to the free trade agreement. Until that is properly done and until the study is completed, this bill should be set aside.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Before continuing, I would just like to remind members that the debate is now on the subamendment of the official opposition.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in this House and speak to Bill C-29, which seeks to prohibit the use of manganese based products in leaded gasoline in Canada. It goes about it very indirectly, by prohibiting interprovincial trade and importation from the United States, where the product is manufactured by Ethyl Corporation.

The purpose of this bill is therefore to prohibit the use of manganese based products in leaded gasoline. We in the Bloc Québécois are opposed to this bill, in its present form anyway, for a number of reasons.

First of all, it is interesting to note the emphasis of government officials on the risk to the environment of products such as MMT. You may have noticed that the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Agriculture spent almost eight minutes of his ten minute speech speaking about the risks and dangers of this additive

in leaded gasoline, when this is simply not true. Nowhere in North America has it been shown that the use of manganese based substances in leaded gasoline is dangerous to the environment. There is not a shred of evidence.

Furthermore, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has already argued to have this product banned in gasoline, saying that it was a risk to the environment, when this is not the case. Agency spokespersons have not been able to prove it. And not only is it not dangerous for the environment, but, if this product is now prohibited in leaded gasoline, then there really is a risk of creating a problem for the environment. According to studies, this manganese based product reduces emissions of nitrogen oxide that creates the greenhouse effect. This is a dangerous gas that is harmful to the environment. It creates a greenhouse effect, with disastrous consequences that, in some cases, are even world wide in scope.

• (1310)

By banning the use of manganese-based products in leaded gas, we run the risk of increasing the greenhouse effect. Emissions of nitrogen oxide may increase by as much as 20 per cent. The government or its representatives cannot truthfully say they want to ban the use of products like MMT because they are harmful to the environment. The evidence proves the exact opposite is true.

For instance, we are told that MMT may cause problems for car owners because it may lead to deterioration of the exhaust system, which is also clearly unfounded. There is no real reason, no sensible reason for reaching that conclusion.

This product does not create a specific hazard for cars, but in addition, if MMT is removed from leaded gas, this may actually increase the price of cars and the price of gas and also have a rather negative impact on the oil companies, especially in Quebec, because they will have to change their equipment as a result of the ban on MMT. This bill, which aims to ban the use of manganese-based products in leaded gas, has a whole series of negative effects.

Why should the government want to pass a bill, and ulterior motives are a factor, by banning not the product itself, because it is not in itself harmful, but the interprovincial trade in or importation from the United States of the product? Why does the Liberal government insist on doing so, although there is every indication that not only would this be harmful to the environment but it would also have a negative impact on the entire oil industry and the automotive industry in Canada, in addition to the loss of jobs?

Banning interprovincial trade in this product constitutes an intrusion in provincial jurisdictions. That is why six provinces are opposed to this bill. I repeat, this constitutes a federal intrusion in a provincial jurisdiction. Banning the importation of this product from the United States may put Canada in a very uncomfortable position with the U.S., because that would violate NAFTA. If this

*Government Orders*

bill is passed, Canada will be sued for damages to the tune of \$200 or \$300 million. Considering the current deficit, this is no time for the government to open the door to legal action.

So why is the government so stubborn, despite all the negative effects this bill may have on the environment and the automotive and petroleum industries, despite the predicted loss of jobs and possible legal action by the United States and the provinces? I will tell you why. The reason is they have decided to create an ethanol industry in Ontario, to create jobs in Ontario at the expense of the other provinces, at the expense of Quebec and at the expense of the entire country.

Sure, the government has the power, and so it can go ahead and develop an industry that is not harmful as such, and I certainly agree there is something to say for the production of ethanol and the use of this product as an additive to unleaded gas. It could be a bonus for farmers.

• (1315)

But doing it in such a roundabout way reminds me, as a Quebecker, of the Borden line, of how the federal government in 1963 managed to move most of the oil refineries into Ontario through a similarly roundabout approach. Montreal lost four out of six, no wonder Montreal is badly off. In those same years, in 1965, the government managed to concentrate the entire automotive industry in Ontario. You will not that Quebec has virtually no automobile industry. It is all in Ontario.

These unfortunate examples demonstrate how, once again, this Liberal government is attempting to concentrate its efforts on Ontario, despite the fact that there are a number of reasons not to do so, as in the case for Bill C-29.

It is patently obvious that removal of this product as an additive to unleaded gasoline will have a strong negative impact on the environment, on the automotive industry, on the petroleum industry. It can mean job losses, and a lot of hassle for the government in the form of lawsuits from the U.S. and the other provinces. This is, in my opinion, bad politics, and is the reason why we in the Bloc are opposed to Bill C-29, at least as it stands at present.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise today at third reading of Bill C-29, an act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese-based substances.

This bill has been debated in this House for quite some time, having been introduced as Bill C-94 during the previous session. Although it survived a challenge to the Liberal government's work when the House was prorogued last winter, this bill is the perfect

example of the absurdity and lack of logic guiding cabinet, and especially its leader's lack of rigour.

As I pointed out, the government allowed dozens of bills to die on the Order Paper when the House was prorogued. Yet, Bill C-94 survived to become Bill C-29. This is totally absurd. Enough pressure was exerted during the first session for the government to abandon this bill, which, in fact, does not in any way respond to the concerns of the industry, the public, or the various interest groups.

This bill is highly controversial in form as well as content. As far as form is concerned, the government may be using the noble precepts of public health and environmental protection to pass a bill that will benefit only the ethanol industry. I will get back to this outrageous aspect of the bill a little later at the end of my speech.

First, I would like to go back to the substance of Bill C-29, whose main purpose is to ban the addition of MMT to unleaded gasoline. I find it unacceptable for the party in power to be shamelessly spending taxpayers' money in order to pass a bill that not only does not respond to public concerns, but also knowingly creates a conflict situation in which Canada could be sued for close to \$300 million under NAFTA.

• (1320)

The situation is quite simple. The government and the automotive industry want MMT banned as a fuel additive because MMT may impair the operation of emission control devices. It does nothing of the kind, at least not according to American, Canadian and European scientific studies published to date. There is no legislation attesting to the harmfulness of MMT as a fuel additive.

This goes to show that there must be more obscure and possibly more partisan reasons pushing the government to have this bill passed, even though the Prime Minister boasts about not having been involved in any scandal.

Let me explain briefly the basis for my remarks. This move to ban the importation of MMT, and especially its trade, has more to do with protectionism than with the public interest, unless it is merely motivated by financial consideration or else support for and contributions to the Liberal Party's election fund. Personally, I have no problem endorsing this view, given the very real motivation the former Minister of the Environment may have, benefits the current incumbent may also be entitled to, incidentally.

They are using scare tactics in saying that adding manganese to fuel is harmful to our health and to the environment. In this respect, the U.S. Court of Appeal has ruled against banning MMT, because it was not established that MMT presented a public health risk.

Incidentally, our American neighbours are much more cautious than us when dealing with environmental issues. Therefore, if the U.S. court of appeal ruled, as regards EPA's challenge concerning

MMT, that the use of this product cannot not be prohibited in the United States, I fail to see why we should prohibit it here in Canada.

Even the EPA, which is well-known in my riding of Frontenac because of the asbestos dispute, made no attempt to challenge this ruling, since the evidence to support such a move is so weak and disorganized. This suggests that such a restrictive measure under NAFTA can be supported by the industry providing the substitute, namely ethanol. The automotive industry is also involved in this attempt to prohibit MMT, even though it does not lead the group lobbying the Liberal caucus.

One wonders about the principles and especially the integrity of some cabinet members, given that the former environment minister is from a region that produces ethanol, while the current minister is also from Ontario. Indeed, one wonders about the real motives of the environment minister. Obviously, an industry as rich as the ethanol industry can be very generous during an election campaign. We are all aware of current economic conditions.

• (1325)

But there is more. We are at third reading of Bill C-29, whose impact is so major that it is now a source of dissension within the Liberal caucus. Bill C-29 directly contravenes several NAFTA provisions. Worse still, Canada faces a potential lawsuit that could reach close to \$300 million. In fact, the Minister for International Trade has already told his colleague, the environment minister, about the peculiarity of this situation. Yet, nothing seems to detract the minister and his acolytes from their objective.

Since my time is running out, I will conclude by stressing the danger, for Canadian Parliament, to pass Bill C-29. The official opposition will strongly oppose this legislation, so that, if it is not defeated it can at least be amended so as not to be implemented throughout the country.

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, following on my colleague, I will speak today to Bill C-29, which the government attempts to sell with three main reasons.

First of all, it comes right out and tells us that manganese represents a serious danger to public health. The second reason it gives is that it could result in extensive damage to antipollution systems in vehicles. The third reason it gives is that this bill provides an opportunity to harmonize our policies with those of the United States. These are the three reasons given for the bill.

In my opinion, the government has only one real reason for introducing this bill. It is a question of protectionism. We know that the product that will replace manganese is ethanol. This bill is an attempt to protect ethanol producers in Ontario and western

### *Government Orders*

Canada. This, in my view, is the real reason why the government has introduced this bill.

We must not forget that in 1994 the then environment minister and the then health minister positioned themselves with respect to this bill. These two ministers put forward a development program designed to protect ethanol.

Once you have a program, you are talking about money invested. This program has a 70 million dollar budget. There is no turning back; significant funds have been committed. Naturally, the major factories are going to be in Ontario and western Canada.

However, the government is also forgetting that there are important social costs associated with this bill.

• (1330)

Considering the present economic situation, it would be irresponsible to ignore the additional costs that would result if this bill were passed. The petroleum industry mentioned that it would cost \$7 million in Quebec alone to bring about the necessary changes. Imagine the millions of dollars it would take across Canada. And someone will have to pay for all this. In the end, it will be the gasoline consumer.

The petroleum industry tells us that automatically, people will be laid off. Today, with the level of unemployment we have in Canada, we cannot afford to let any industry proceed with lay-offs. The order of the day should as follows: put people back to work and let them feel proud of themselves once again. We cannot afford lay-offs in this industry.

And what about damages of \$275 million being sought by Ethyl Corporation, an American company that produces manganese? This company alleges that NAFTA has been violated. Do we have so much money in this country that we can afford to take this lightly? Has the Minister of the Environment consulted his legal advisors? At a time when the government is making cuts in social programs and health care, this is a very serious matter. If the government is in such a hurry to spend its money, I suggest it consider how many jobs it could create with that money.

The House will agree that if this bill is passed, it will be a very expensive proposition. So it is rather irresponsible to go ahead with this bill. Furthermore, the government should take the advice of the provinces and act on that advice. Of course we all know the federal government has no respect for the provinces. This has been a long standing rendition.

And in this bill, the government is true to form. We all know that six provinces out of ten vehemently oppose this bill. They are calling for nothing less than its rejection. Interprovincial trade is

*Government Orders*

threatened, so the provinces have some say in the matter. However, as we all know, the government's attitude is centralist.

In committee and on second reading, we in the Bloc Québécois tried to have this bill postponed. We urged the government to wait until various studies had been concluded before making a decision, and to consult those who had something to say about the bill and to listen to these people. That is how important the matter is.

• (1335)

We do not need the kind of consultations we had with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans a few months ago, who did not take the process seriously.

I think that the impact on health and the environment is too serious for us to accept this bill. The minister should go back to the drawing board, let more people have their say and also wait until all the studies are in before coming back with a new bill. That is why the Bloc Québécois will vote against this bill on third reading.

**Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Madam Speaker, had the Government members accepted the wise amendment proposed by my colleague for Laurentides a while ago, we would no longer be involved in this debate, or at least not for a while.

In the light of the scientific data available in this sector, it seemed obvious that we were lacking certain fundamental information before going ahead with adoption of this bill. Despite the fact that the government has not called for such scientific studies, it is determined to move ahead, thus placing the opposition parties in the position of having to vote against it, despite the fact that the initial positions, at least as far as the Bloc is concerned, were not so black and white. We were saying that we were not categorically against the use of MMT, but did believe that scientific proof was lacking, and it seemed only logical to demand such proof before going any further. That, unfortunately, proved impossible.

It must be understood that the MMT being referred to is, quite simply, an additive in the production of gasoline for cars. The refineries use additives to raise the octane level. Lead is an additive and, in its case, there was proof some time ago that it was a health hazard. The refineries therefore replaced lead with another additive: manganese or MMT.

It is hard to understand the government position, since there are studies underway at this time, preliminary ones at least. The first outcomes of these are not as alarmist as the government would have it. The government is not basing its alarmism on any scientific study whatsoever.

In the first part of this debate, the government side was often heard saying: "If we continue to use MMT, Canada will be a minority of one, for Europe is not using it." Why is it not in use in Europe? Simply because they are still making lead-based gasoline. Two additives are not necessary, only one, and since Europe has not

yet got rid of lead in its gasoline, naturally it is not using MMT. The day that it does get rid of lead, however, European companies may be forced to start using MMT, unless some other product is discovered.

• (1340)

The oil companies are not dead set against MMT. They are simply asking for proof that it is harmful to people's health and the environment. Bill C-29 is really anachronistic because not only is it not founded on demonstrable data, but it is also out of sync with the times.

What does Bill C-29 do? It does not ban the use of MMT, but its importation. Let us keep in mind that, not too long ago, the Canadian government and the U.S. administration signed a free trade agreement specifically aimed at eliminating trade barriers between the two countries. Mexico joined the treaty a little later. So banning the importation of MMT goes against the spirit, at least, of the free trade agreement with the U.S.

But Bill C-29 is also anachronistic for another reason. When we signed the free trade deal with the U.S. a few years ago, the Canadian government stated that, once the problem of liberalizing trade between Canada and the U.S. was settled, interprovincial trade barriers should come down. So what does Bill C-29 do? It bans interprovincial trade in MMT. Second anachronistic element: it recreates a barrier after such vigorous condemnation of interprovincial trade barriers.

Finally, since this bill seems somewhat strange and violates the international and interprovincial rules we gave ourselves, why does the government insist on going ahead? It gave us two reasons. It claims that MMT is harmful to people's health. If that were true, it could have—with or without this bill—added MMT to the list of toxic products, and that would have been the end of it. But that is not what it did.

It also claims that it is harmful to the environment based on a ruling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which did ban the use of MMT at one point. However, this ruling was appealed, and the agency lost its case. In some American states, the use of MMT has become acceptable again.

Not only have the health and environmental reasons not been clearly demonstrated, but according to Ethyl Corporation, which produces MMT, eliminating this product would increase nitrous oxide emissions by close to 20 per cent, which, of course, would have a disastrous impact on the environment and therefore on Canadians' health.

If not for health or environmental reasons, why would the government insist on going ahead? We think that the government was pressured by two lobby groups. First, the auto industry, which claims, without ever having proven it, that the use of MMT would adversely affect antipollution devices.

*Government Orders*

• (1345)

But it has never been demonstrated that it was. Instead of substantiating its claim, it took the much easier route of simply asking the government to prohibit the interprovincial trade in and importation of the product, making it a non-issue.

The second lobby that probably got involved is that of an emerging industry, namely the ethanol industry. I am not saying that there is something wrong with using ethanol. What I am saying at this time is that, with the science available, we are probably not in a position to safely assume that replacing MMT with another additive like ethanol will not create other problems. We would, of course, have to see what goes into producing ethanol. If it is derived from grains, then we can argue that pesticides and chemical fertilizers may have been used, for instance. If it is made out of wood chips, there would be another problem.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Québécois will remain opposed to Bill C-29.

**Mrs. Maud Debie (Laval East, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-29 the this government is set to pass exemplifies its ad hoc approach to environmental management. Indeed, Bill C-29 has been introduced at a time when nothing has been clearly established, when the so-called scientific opinion is divided.

As we know, the scientific approach is based on rigour, critical thinking, analysis, precision and objectivity. The least we can say in this case is that Bill C-29 is based on considerations of interest instead of reason.

What is this bill all about? Bill C-29 prohibits the commercial use of MMT, which is, as we know, a manganese-based substance added to unleaded gasoline to increase its octane level, thereby making car engines more efficient. The bill also regulates the interprovincial trade in and importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese-based substances.

At this stage of the debate, we must recognize that there is water in the gas line. Opinions are in fact mixed on the relevance of prohibiting or allowing the use of MMT. Some, like the Minister of the Environment and his predecessor, are for banning manganese-based products because they suspect MMT of being a health risk and impairing the operation emission control systems on cars.

At the time of this bill's tabling, they also wanted this bill passed to harmonize Canadian legislation with that of other countries, the U.S. in particular. As for Ethyl Corporation, the only company producing and exporting MMT to Canada, it believes that, on the contrary, the use of MMT results in a decrease of up to 20 per cent of emissions of nitrogen oxides harmful to the environment. These emissions are responsible for urban smog.

As for auto makers, they claim manganese adversely affects the smooth functioning of new antipollution devices in cars. To this, those who support the use of MMT reply that the findings of scientific studies on this issue are contradictory and that the problems are due primarily to other factors.

Oil companies now support the use of additives. According to them, manganese reduces the consumption of crude oil, increases the octane levels in gasoline, improves engine performance and reduces polluting emissions. We also know that ethanol could become a substitute for manganese. The ethanol industry is located in western Canada and in Ontario, primarily in the region represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, which would therefore benefit from another market.

• (1350)

This is where the problem lies. Remember the announcement made last year by the former environment minister and Deputy Prime Minister about a \$70 million investment program to develop ethanol. We are going full speed with nothing to guide us, except the interests of some. Beyond the diverging opinions and studies, some facts remain.

In 1994, the health department conducted a review of these issues. The conclusions reached by Health Canada stress that exposure to manganese does not pose a threat to the health of Canadians and Quebecers. In fact, had the results been different and had MMT been proven to be toxic, Health Canada would have prohibited its use. And, given the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, we would not be here debating Bill C-29. Everything would have been just fine.

Second, everyone, including those who oppose the use of MMT, agree that this product helps reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides, even though results of studies may vary. Some talk about a 20 per cent reduction, while others say it is 5 per cent. According to others still, prohibiting the use of MMT could trigger an increase in emissions of nitrogen oxides equivalent to having one million additional cars on the road by the year 2000. Who is right? Which of these estimates is correct? We still do not know.

Third, this bill will generate costs of several million dollars. It will, among others, result in enormous costs to the oil industry, which will have to start making gasoline free of MMT. Once again, consumers and taxpayers will be footing most of the bill.

Finally, there is another factor of no small importance concerning the development of the situation in the United States. A November 1995 ruling by the District of Columbia Court of Appeal recognized that MMT was not harmful to health or to antipollution systems in vehicles. Because of this ruling, MMT can be reintroduced in the United States.

*S. O. 31*

The Minister of the Environment and his predecessor have thus been deprived of one of their main arguments, harmonization with U.S. policy. Now that MMT has been authorized in the United States, Bill C-29, prohibiting its importation, will constitute a unjustified protectionist measure, contrary to the free circulation of goods, the cornerstone of NAFTA. For it is indeed the importation of and interprovincial trade in MMT that is the focus of Bill C-29.

Thus, Bill C-29 will allow national production of MMT and its sale and use within a province. If this product is as harmful as the government claims, why authorize it? The policy is obviously inconsistent.

By prohibiting international and domestic trade, the government is contravening NAFTA and once again trampling on provincial jurisdiction. Despite the Minister for International Trade's warning to the Minister of the Environment last February, the latter is pushing ahead with Bill C-29. The result is that, last September 10, Ethyl Corporation in the United States issued a notice of its intention to file a complaint under the Free Trade Agreement and to seek compensation from the Canadian government of, get ready, almost \$300 million, money that may be thrown out the window because of the pigheadedness we are seeing.

While the Liberal government is slashing budgets as never before, it is knowingly gambling with the public purse. This is not right. At the very least, government members should think about what they are doing and put a bit of manganese or ethanol into their arguments, in order to boost their credibility rating.

• (1355)

I would also like to comment on another aspect of this bill. Unintentionally, I imagine, the member for York—Simcoe, in a speech in November 1995, gave the Bloc Québécois another reason to be critical of the inflexibility of Canadian federalism.

Commenting on an American court ruling in favour of MMT, the member for York—Simcoe said, and I quote: "30 per cent of the United States will continue with the ban on the use of MMT in fuel".

In Canada, the federal government alone decides what additives will be allowed in gasoline. Despite strong opposition by six provinces to Bill C-29, the Minister of the Environment has his mind made up and is refusing to listen to his provincial counterparts. In a country that claims to be the most decentralized in the world and in light of the supposedly new flexible federalism—Plan C, you never know—this attitude is astonishing.

The reasons given by the environment minister for banning the importation of MMT no longer stand up. Whether for reasons of health, damage to antipollution systems, environmental issues, or harmonization of Canadian and U.S. policies, Bill C-29 fails on all counts.

The current debate proves that there are a number of questions outstanding. But the federal government is charging full steam ahead, preferring expediency to any serious logic. There is no doubt that this government is running on empty.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I would permit questions except we are running a little short. What I propose to do is take that very first question from the government whip right after question period. He will be the first one I go to. I could not afford to not go there.

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### COLOURING BOISSEVAIN

**Mr. Glen McKinnon (Brandon—Souris, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the town of Boissevain, Manitoba, strategically located along the junction of Highway 10 and Highway 3, and serving as the gateway to the world famous International Peace Garden, has embarked on a most creative project, namely to preserve its history and culture in the form of larger than life murals on buildings in the community.

The community, originally called Cherry Creek, was named Boissevain in recognition of the efforts of a Dutch financial railway official named Adolph Boissevain who was instrumental in founding that community.

Pictorial perspectives of wild life and agricultural resources, the arrival of the railroad, adventures of the early pioneers, the role and rich traditions of the Metis, the organization and the arrival of Northwest Mounted Police along the Boundary Trail are just some of the themes captured in the 20 murals now visible in the community.

I encourage all colleagues to consider visiting Boissevain and sharing a part of our colourful history.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### GÉRALD LAROSE

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste named CSN president Gérald Larose patriot of the year. Mr. Larose earned this title by fighting to build a more humane society in which all citizens, whatever their economic and social backgrounds, have the same rights and opportunities.

A staunch sovereignist, he has used all of his skills to serve the Quebec cause to which he is committed. He has always shown absolute confidence in the people of Quebec.

Mr. Larose deserves this tribute for his great generosity and his exceptional contribution to Quebec's democratic life. Mr. Larose's social commitment shows the link between the fight for Quebec sovereignty and the struggle for a more just society.

On behalf of all my colleagues, congratulations, Gérald Larose.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### NISHG'A AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I recently made a submission to a B.C. standing committee with regard to the Nishg'a Agreement in Principle. It is holding public hearings throughout British Columbia.

Contrary to public expectations, these hearings are configured in such a way that no substantive change to the AIP can be achieved.

Last spring the federal government behaved as if it could be changed. Now it is clear that governments are acting as if it is a binding agreement. There is a sense of public disgust because they see no tolerance from governments to vary from their predetermined agenda. The only mandate of this committee is to determine what elements of the AIP are transferable to other B.C. treaty agreements.

• (1400)

All we have heard recently is a deafening silence from the federal minister as the province carries out this sham. It is time for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to honour his earlier commitment for meaningful public input and analysis into the Nisga'a deal.

\* \* \*

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October 1996 marks the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' national public awareness campaign on menopause.

Supported in this important initiative by partners such as the Osteoporosis Society of Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association and the North American Menopause Society, the SOGC has launched a four-week campaign called "Menopause: Let's Talk About It!"

Thanks to the co-operation of Canadian cable industry members like Shaw Cable, a cross-country series of public dialogues will be televised to ensure maximum community awareness.

#### S. O. 31

Founded in 1944, the SOGC, a voluntary, scientific, non-profit corporation, remains committed to education initiatives for both the public and health care professionals.

Once a taboo subject, menopause has become a topic of great interest. Women are bombarded with information from lay sources, the media and the medical community. To help sort fact from fiction the SOGC's national awareness campaign is designed to inform women of choices available to them during menopause, to provide greater access to information to allow informed decision making and to raise public awareness of menopause and its impact on women's lives.

While the national campaign is—

**The Speaker:** We are having some minor difficulties with the lights. When I call your name, however, I believe we get transmission. We are working on it to get it cleared up in the next few minutes.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### THE DEATH OF ARTHUR TREMBLAY

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, former Senator Arthur Tremblay died yesterday morning in Quebec City at the age of 79.

He participated in the campaign against Duplessis, worked as a senior government official, became the first Deputy Minister of Education in Quebec history, and was the driving force behind the educational reform of the 1960s. After serving as Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, he was appointed to the Senate in 1979.

As a great servant of the state, he always put Quebec's interests first. He was an architect of the quiet revolution, but his political reflections led him to oppose the unilateral patriation of the Constitution. Bitterly disappointed when the Meech Lake accord failed as a result of Newfoundland and Manitoba's opposition, he joined the sovereigntist ranks. As former minister Marc-André Bédard reminded us, Senator Tremblay was a perfectionist, and not the kind of man to take position without careful consideration.

Senator Tremblay will remain a great Quebecker to us all. To his family, I wish to express our sincerest condolences.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### SOCIAL PROGRAMS

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the equality of opportunity that our social programs in health, education and welfare have provided to all Canadians. We must be vigilant to ensure that equality of opportunity continues to prevail.

*S. O. 31*

In Toronto, Ontario's teachers were being vigilant when they marched to warn parents about the erosion of Ontario's education system. In Ottawa, Liberal Party delegates were being vigilant when they addressed the phenomenon of child poverty in the country. They are recommending a national child benefit to lift children out of poverty and to restore equality of opportunity as a hallmark of Canadian citizenship.

As parliamentarians we too must be vigilant so that during our watch we strengthen equality of opportunity for Canadian children. By doing so, we will ensure the future of our nation.

\* \* \*

**LIBERAL PARTY**

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, after the weekend Liberal policy convention we now know how the government develops its policies. It consults empty chairs and empty rooms which pose no difficult questions, resulting in perfect harmony. For the real tough questions Liberals look to the Prime Minister's wife for answers.

A big problem with the Liberal government is that it has placed the wrong ministers in their respective portfolios. For example, the justice minister should be switched to agriculture. Then farmers would be out of prison farming and the real criminals might be behind bars. The heritage minister and the finance minister should reverse their roles so that the CBC could survive the cuts and report to the nation the moment the Liberal government has spent us into bankruptcy. When this happens, they will just look for the minister with the credit cards.

• (1405)

The Liberals swing to the left, they swing to the right and sooner or later they will swing out of sight.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE**

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, anyone who is well informed and honest cannot help but admire French President Jacques Chirac's courage. He acted with conviction and firmness to support the Palestinians' legitimate aspirations.

It is unusual for a head of state to come and take a personal look at a situation like that of the Palestinians. He is convinced that the peace process can succeed if the parties comply with the terms of the Oslo agreement providing for Palestinian self-government on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

He is asking the Palestinians primarily to resist the temptation of violence, despite the stalling of the peace process and the frustrations and humiliations they must face every day.

\* \* \*

[English]

**MIDDLE EAST**

**Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Middle East peace process is much like a long journey, waiting for that small first step in order to begin. Yet such as step is there for the taking.

This week marks the fifth anniversary of Israeli airman Ron Arad's joining the ranks of soldiers missing in action. He is not alone. There are a host of other MIAs who have been awaiting release since 1982. Their families have been calling for their liberation but to little avail.

It is time that their captors heeded the expressions of concern on their behalf forwarded by the global community and, in particular, by Canada. On a humanitarian basis, their release is long overdue. Moreover, such action would contribute substantially to peace initiatives since the release of MIAs would represent a powerful confidence building measure.

From a social and political perspective the return of MIAs makes sense. Canada should generate a chorus of like minded countries to urge Iran, Syria and others capable of affecting the repatriation of MIAs to act without delay.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**LIBERAL PARTY**

**Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the delegates at the national Liberal convention held in Ottawa this past weekend have achieved a consensus on a number of important issues.

It should be noted that our government's deficit reduction strategy has received overwhelming endorsement from convention delegates. Diversion tactics such as tax reductions, as attractive as they may be in the short term, would jeopardize the government's fiscal health.

Liberals from all over the country have chosen to support a strategy that will lead to the complete elimination of the deficit by the turn of this century. That is how we will ensure job creation, sustainable social programs and real economic recovery.



[English]

### LIBERAL PARTY

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend Liberal delegates from across Canada assembled in Ottawa for the 1996 biennial convention. Convention delegates were united in their support and encouraged the government to stay the course for continued success in deficit reduction.

The government is on track to meet or better its deficit target of \$24.3 billion or 3 per cent of GDP this current year; \$17 billion in 1997-98 and in 1998-99 the deficit target is \$9 billion or approximately 1 per cent of GDP. This means it will no longer need to go to the financial markets for new borrowing requirements.

Interest rates are as low as they have been in 30 years. Inflation is under control and the government's number one priority of job creation is working as business and industry create thousands of new jobs across Canada.

We will be faced with new challenges that we will accept and overcome as we have to date while building a better tomorrow for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

### LIBERAL PARTY

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, here are the ten most often heard phrases at the Liberal Party convention this weekend.

• (1410)

10. Policy? What policy? We're here to party.
9. I can't speak to that resolution. I forgot the Liberal Party script back in my hotel room.
8. Hello, are you a regular party delegate, or are you a lobbyist?
7. Let's not offer Quebecers a better Canada. Let's just try to buy their support.
6. How do you get that boot polish off your tongue?
5. I know that gagging sound will go away, just keep forcing that distinct society down their throats.
4. The minister of youth didn't actually do anything wrong. She just made a mistake when she bought a fur coat on her government credit card.
3. Will that be Chablis or Chardonnay?
2. Liberals believe that Canadians don't need or deserve tax relief.

*S. O. 31*

And the number one most heard phrase at the Liberal Party convention this weekend was the Minister of Finance repeating: "I want to be Prime Minister. I want to be Prime Minister. Pleease let me be Prime Minister".

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### LIBERAL PARTY

**Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal delegates from across the country met over the weekend to discuss their party's platform in the next election campaign.

They passed resolutions on job creation, youth, child poverty, health, social security, pensions, the environment, safety, aboriginal people, citizenship and immigration, to name but a few.

The federal Liberals have reaffirmed their deep commitment to the values of social solidarity, sharing and tolerance.

As the Prime Minister told the delegates in his speech at the convention, the Liberal Party is a party of the center. The Liberal vision of Canada is one of justice, equality and responsibility. And it is this positive and dynamic vision that we will be proposing to the voters in the next election.

\* \* \*

### LIBERAL PARTY

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in their typically arrogant way, last weekend, the Liberals wrote their own report card on their so-called brilliant performance since the Grits' return to Ottawa.

The Liberals gave themselves a score of 78 per cent, after getting elected on a platform of jobs, jobs, jobs and doing nothing since; after promising in 1993 to abolish the GST and finding nothing better to do than have the Deputy Prime Minister temporarily resign and then apologize for having failed to fulfil their commitment; and after promising to put the government's fiscal house in order but merely cutting funding to the most disadvantaged members of our society and shovelling the deficit in the provinces' backyards.

One year to the day after the Quebec referendum, there is no reason to applaud this government's achievements in this respect. At their convention over the weekend, the Liberals swept aside the embarrassing issue of the constitutional debate, no doubt to make sure they got a passing grade.

In fact, the only 78 per cent score the Liberals deserve today is for the act they put on at their convention.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**POVERTY**

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the days prior to the Liberals meeting and convention in Ottawa, the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops released a report on poverty.

That report is a listing of the dismay felt by Canadians about the level of poverty in this country. Certainly the Liberals should have been dealing with that issue during their convention. Seven hundred thousand people have joined the ranks of the poor since this government took office.

The Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops talked about jobs as being one of the key elements in ensuring we can eliminate poverty. Creating jobs deals with problems within aboriginal communities. Creating jobs deals with matters in our urban environment. Creating jobs helps to ensure a better economy for rural Canadians.

The Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops has sounded an alarm of which the Liberals have to stand and take note. I urge them to pay attention to that. I urge all Canadians to ask for the creation of jobs.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH CARE**

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our health care system is one of Canada's proudest achievements. Based on the belief that every Canadian has the right to receive the care he or she needs, our health care system is an affirmation of Canada's commitment to human dignity, compassion and collective well-being.

Over the past few months, it has become clear that the Liberal Party is the only party willing to protect this very important component of Canadian society.

The Reform Party has no qualms about supporting user fees and creating a two-tiered health care system, putting the burden of being sick squarely on the shoulders of those most in need.

The Tories want all Canadians to pay up to \$2,000 a year for private health insurance in case you suffer the misfortune of becoming ill.

• (1415)

Meanwhile at the 1996 Liberal Party biennial convention this past weekend resolution after resolution was passed upholding the five principles of the Canada Health Act to ensure access to quality health care for all.

When it comes to health care, Canadians know who they can trust.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[Translation]

**THE CONSTITUTION**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will not comment. The Liberal convention was pretty rough this weekend. I will not go further than that, in order to stay within the rules.

The Prime Minister has spent the past few days applauding his own performance as Prime Minister. He even said that he had done enough for Quebec, as far as his referendum promises were concerned.

My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. How can he explain the Prime Minister's statement about having done enough as far as his referendum commitments are concerned, when the majority of Quebecers are dissatisfied with his job, a majority which includes the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party, the leader of the Conservative Party, and some of those who backed the Prime Minister in his referendum promises and now admit he has not delivered the goods?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has, through a resolution of this House, recognized the distinct character of Quebec. It has adopted legislation conferring regional vetoes. Since the throne speech, it has launched a vast program of reform, affecting areas as diverse as mines, forests, social housing, manpower, and social and economic union.

This is a very significant reform, and we are still open to all truly concrete suggestions the opposition or any other political party in Canada might make to us with a view to pursuing our efforts to improve Canadian federation, which is already one of the best there is in the world.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before the minister starts calling for suggestions from anyone, I have one to make to him: let him just meet the commitments the Prime Minister has made to people. If the government met its commitments, this would already represent huge progress, in everybody's eyes. That is my suggestion to the minister.

The Prime Minister has said that, now the referendum is a thing of the past, it is no longer necessary to always be on the same wavelength, with the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party in particular. How, then, can the minister explain to us what he means in this statement, other than that, now that the promises have had their desired effect—winning—it is no longer important to follow up on them?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, following up is what is important. That is what

*Oral Questions*

Quebecers and other Canadians have done together since this federation was created, one of the best known countries in the world, not only for its quality of life, but also for its values of tolerance and openmindedness.

What absolutely must not be followed up on, is the destructive project represented by the opposition. This is a project which would bring deep divisions, not just between Quebec and Canada, but between Quebecers themselves. Quebecers understand this, and the numbers turning away from this project represented by the opposition are increasing by leaps and bounds.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that the circus is over now. He is no longer in the Liberal three-ring circus, but back in front of the House of Commons. People want answers, not dissertations on the meaning of the federation and of Canada and of continuation of the opposition's project. For heaven's sake. Let us have an answer then.

The Prime Minister has once again tried to get the rest of Canada to swallow the idea that the Quebec question can be solved with a spoonful of sugar. Does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs realize that the Prime Minister's commitments of this weekend on the question of the distinct society within the Constitution are merely an illusion, an illusion which serves to mask the emptiness of their constitutional position?

• (1420)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, what is the emptiness are we talking about, when we enjoy the finest quality of life in the world, one envied, by not just millions but billions of people who would dearly love to share our emptiness with us, that emptiness which Quebecers and other Canadians have worked together to build? Will they turn their backs on that to launch into a project fraught with uncertainty, a project that is ill-defined, a project that is aimed at division and not at the open-mindedness which Quebecers and other Canadians have within them and wish to preserve for themselves and their children?

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, here is the Prime Minister's new strategy: he has his party adopt a resolution on a vague concept of distinct society which he will trot out across the country, saying it means nothing to English Canada and means a lot to Quebec, and all this for the sole purpose of fostering illusions among the electorate. This is so vague, it is just playing for time by lulling people to sleep. It is just a way to save the ship once again until the next election.

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs admit that this resolution on distinct society is just another way to gain time and get through the next election without having to explain that they have done nothing and once again run an election campaign on the basis of so-called promises of change?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our federation is changing, it is changing for the better and in such a way that it will be able to provide Canadians with a better quality of life. It is changing because we now have the lowest interest rates ever, a low inflation rate, and we are creating jobs.

It is changing in that it is clarifying the roles of various levels of government, to have a federal government that is strong in its particular jurisdictions and provincial governments that are strong in theirs, and a strong partnership between these two levels of government.

This federation is also changing in that it recognizes the place of Quebec in the federation, through a resolution adopted in this House or as expressed in a resolution by the Liberal Party of Canada adopted on the weekend, whose purpose is to convince Canadians that recognition of Quebec in the Constitution would be one of the fundamental values of Canada, something Canadians could do in full confidence.

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in that case, what explanation does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs have for his comments on the weekend, when he said that a distinct society involves no concrete or specific powers for Quebec?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that was never mentioned. Does the hon. member know what Meech Lake said about this? "Nothing in this section derogates from the powers, rights or privileges of Parliament or the Government of Canada, or of the legislatures or governments of the provinces, including any powers, rights or privileges relating to language".

Canadians in the other provinces would not be sending more power, money or privileges to Quebec but a joyous signal, a positive signal to show how much they want Quebecers to remain in Canada and, by their distinctness, be part of this great Canadian diversity.

\* \* \*

[English]

## EMPLOYMENT

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that Liberals will have to fight arrogance, overspending, overconfidence and complacency.

It is a losing battle. The unemployment rate is hovering around 10 per cent and yet the Liberals claim that they have kept their promise of jobs, jobs, jobs. Just in case we had any doubts, the Liberals now have sent out 1.4 million flyers entitled "Integrity in

*Oral Questions*

Action” in an attempt to gloss over their dismal record on jobs. This is arrogance in action, certainly not integrity.

My question is for the Prime Minister. However, I am not sure who to ask over there today. Wasn't that a party? How can the Prime Minister even imagine that he has kept his promise on jobs, jobs, jobs?

• (1425)

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

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the applause and the welcome. I hope I will get equal applause after my answer.

The facts speak for themselves: since this government took office, more than 600,000 new jobs have been created; the unemployment rate has gone down by some 2 per cent. There is a lot more to do but we are going to do it because we are keeping and will continue to keep our commitment to help create jobs for Canadians.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, when they talk about 600,000 jobs gained, they never seem to say how many hundred thousand jobs have been lost since this government's inaction.

While we are on the topic of Liberal arrogance, let us take a look at the government's record on health care funding. Surely that answer will not be quite as easy.

At the Liberal love-in over the weekend, the Prime Minister tried to downplay his government's cuts to medicare by saying that it was simply a squeeze. I do not know how he could call that a squeeze. It seems it was a choke hold with a body slam thrown in. The Canadian Medical Association—

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

**The Speaker:** I do not think I heard a question, but I know it is coming.

**Miss Grey:** Mr. Speaker, you will hear it now. Will they admit that \$3 billion of cuts in health care is hardly the Liberal way? Will they admit they have gone too far with their slashing? Will this government commit to putting more federal money back into health care, as it promised in the sixties?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is one for the record books. The party that wanted to wipe out medicare and privatize it is today calling for the preservation of medicare. I am glad its members realize the importance of it and have come around to supporting this key Liberal commitment.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, each hospital in this country that has empty beds should have a banner over it saying: “This brought to you by the Liberal Government of Canada”. That is shameful.

I am surprised the Prime Minister will not make any firm funding commitments because in his keynote speech on the weekend he seemed all too eager to get back to his free spending, big government Liberal roots.

The real reason why the Prime Minister rejects any talk of tax relief is that he would rather spend taxes than cut taxes. The best way to create jobs in this country is to balance the budget and lower taxes through smaller government.

Why will they not give Canadians some tax relief, not tax increases?. Why is it that Liberals always think a dollar in the hands of a bureaucrat or a politician does more good than a dollar in the hands of the Canadian taxpayer where it belongs?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can ask my hon. friend why the Reform Party always thinks that Canadians doing things together through government is worse than not working together to have a better country. Surely having a better country through a sound fiscal framework as well as government doing things for all Canadians is better than the Reform approach of slash, burn and destroy.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FEDERAL INVESTMENTS**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, since the Liberals took office in Ottawa, federal investments in Quebec have constantly been decreasing, going down from 19.7 per cent of total Canadian investments in 1993 to 15.4 per cent this year. Normally, Quebec should have been entitled to one quarter of federal investments.

How can the Prime Minister, who bragged this past weekend about what he had in store for Quebec, explain this decrease in federal investments in Quebec since he took office?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is making a somewhat selective use of data. The fact is we just announced a number of federal investment initiatives in Quebec, and particularly in Montreal.

• (1430)

These include an investment announced last week in the aeronautical industry; an investment in the Mitel plant, located in Bromont; an investment in the biotechnology institute, at the

national research centre, and the maintaining of the space agency, among others.

Given that almost 41 per cent of tax credits for research and development are claimed in Quebec, these sectors are well supported by the federal government.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister did not get the meaning of my question. Since the Liberals took office, public investments in Quebec have decreased, in relation to the rest of the country. Federal investments have decreased in Quebec in the last three years. This is what we are saying.

The Prime Minister tells us this is related to the bidding process. Maybe once or twice, but after 15 years one begins to wonder. This is systematic discrimination.

This is what my supplementary is about. Does the Prime Minister or the Minister of Industry find it normal that, for the past 15 years, again according to this recent study by Statistics Canada, federal investments in Quebec have accounted for only 16.4 per cent of federal spending, instead of 25 per cent, thus resulting in a shortfall of close to \$4 billion for Quebec? This is a lot of money and a lot of jobs that the Liberal government, and its Conservative predecessor, deliberately refused to create in Quebec.

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am always disturbed by the representations made by regional parties in the House. They seem to believe that each investment should be equally divided among all the provinces.

Does the hon. member think it would be better if the investment announced last Monday regarding Canadair were divided equally between all Canadians?

**Mr. Young:** Maybe he could explain that at the economic summit.

**Mr. Manley:** Does he think all tax credits for research and development should be divided? Should all the networks of centres of excellence be divided fairly among the provinces?

**Mr. Young:** It would be interesting to discuss this at the economic summit. For one thing, they like to get federal money.

**Mr. Manley:** To say that this idea was really not based on economic and industrial development is simply false.

**Mr. Young:** It is blackmail.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Sometimes we have a couple of microphones open and inadvertently other voices come over the intercom.

### Oral Questions

### EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister and his Liberal cronies sipped wine over the weekend and said no to lower taxes, ordinary Canadians were trying to figure out how they were going to pay for next week's groceries.

Here is the story. Disposable income is down \$3,000 per family, 1.4 million Canadians are out of work, another 1 million have stopped looking for work, 2 million are underemployed and one in four workers is worried about losing their job.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his unwillingness to shrink and focus his government and leave more money in the pockets of taxpayers and job creators is the real reason he and his government are failing to fulfil their promise to create jobs, jobs, jobs?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the House leader has already stated we have created 700,000 jobs in the private sector.

Let me read a commentary on the Reform Party's policy from Dr. Ruth Getter, chief economist of the Toronto Dominion Bank: "What the government has done with its restraint that it has put in place is really quite remarkable and we have got this kind of environment in the economy that is ready to take off. If at this point you say cut even more so you can cut taxes, it is not clear to me that you could accomplish anything by that".

• (1435)

That is what the Reform Party is saying, that it wants to accomplish nothing.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would go to the 1.4 million unemployed people out there and ask for a mark from them on their record of creating jobs, jobs, jobs.

Despite recognition earlier this year that infrastructure and other make work programs failed to create real jobs, the Prime Minister stood up in front of his Liberal cronies this weekend and promised to return to this boondoggle form of governance.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians why now he is talking about spending any future budget surplus on bloating the size of government rather than giving consumers and job creators the tax relief they need to create the real jobs that people are demanding?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am really interested to hear the Reform Party talking about jobs and social programs. Believing that the Reform Party has a social conscience is like believing that Count Dracula was a blood donor.

*Oral Questions*

What would the Reform Party's policies do? The Reform Party's policies would tax the poor to pay the rich. It would eliminate the high income surtax. That means \$100 lower taxes for the \$30,000 a year person and \$1,200 lower taxes for the \$100,000 a year person.

That is not in the cards in our program. Let the Reform Party sell that one to the public.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ZAIRE**

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The rapidly escalating conflict in eastern Zaire between Tutsi rebels and the Zairian army is on the point of culminating in a human catastrophe far worse than that in Rwanda in 1994. More than one million Rwandan refugees have been cut off, and 500,000 of them are fleeing the country.

With aid workers forced to leave the area and the planned airlift to rescue refugees in danger of being called off, can the minister give an update on the situation and indicate what his government intends to do to help avoid a repetition of the 1994 tragedy?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns expressed by the hon. member. As she says, it is a very serious problem. At this time, we are supporting the report by the U.N. Secretary General calling for diplomatic mediation efforts.

The secretary of state for Latin America and Africa, Mrs. Stewart, is in Africa to attend a meeting of the coalition of African countries. She is representing Canada's position in favour of a peaceful solution.

We are also ready to respond to requests for assistance from international organizations. There have been no requests to date, but we are ready to respond should any arise.

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the American government recently tried to persuade African countries to set up a permanent force to come to the assistance of African civilians in the event of war. Although this suggestion has, for the time being, been given a chilly reception by African countries, does the minister intend to try to argue for the creation of such a force, which would be one way of helping to resolve the present crisis?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been some very good examples in the past few

years of regional groupings of African countries coming together to organize peace forces.

The proposal by Secretary Christopher is one that we have discussed directly with officials in the United States and with African countries.

Again, we have indicated that we are prepared to assist if the African countries themselves agree to some kind of standby force or representation in the central African region. We have a number of ways in which we can support, through training and through the work of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. At the present time we provide assistance to a number of institutes for conflict resolution and strategic studies in South Africa and Cairo. Others are engaged with the OAU.

• (1440)

I certainly agree with the hon. member, if we could work out some way in which the African states themselves could respond. They have an economic boycott which in part has been successful. Clearly the situation in Zaire has the potential for a major disaster. Unless the international community responds with a degree of resolve unlike what we showed in Rwanda, we could be facing a very grave problem.

Canada stands by ready to do what it can.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH CARE**

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in a cynical attempt to get elected, the Liberals promised in the red book not to withdraw from the health care field. The Prime Minister finally admitted this weekend that he had had to squeeze medicare.

How does a squeeze of \$3 billion a year to federal transfers for medicare reconcile with that Liberal red book promise?

**Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member ignores the fact that the health ministers of the provinces and territories of Canada had asked for a commitment from this government, a commitment which it made and lived up to, to stabilize funding and to give funding that people could address on a secured basis. They asked for a cash floor which is over \$11 billion and with which they are extremely happy. They have stable funding for the next five years at an average of \$26.1 billion, gradually to go higher by 1998.

I think that is what the provinces and the territories were looking for in order to stabilize health care expenditures and health care systems. We delivered on that promise.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talks about stable funding but it is something from a stable that we got instead.

Reform however has a fresh start on medicare. When the budget is balanced in 1999, we promise to increase the funding for health

*Oral Questions*

care and education by \$4 billion. That is not stable funding for medicare; that is increased funding for medicare.

Simply put, will the Liberals take another page from the Reform Party platform and restore the funding for medicare?

**Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we would take the member a little more seriously if he was not so interested in making light of the affair. If he had looked at what we have done in the last two budgets, he would already have seen that there is a provision for increasing spending by 1998. I wonder which page is taken out of whose book.

I do not know how we are going to go on from the point that the member opposite is suggesting that first we slash the system so it cannot function and then we give it an injection of cash. We prefer a more responsible approach, the one we have outlined in budgets past and in the current budget. That is the right way and we are going to continue with that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**POLYGRAM**

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

Recently, the Minister had a meeting with Philips Electronic in the Netherlands to discuss investments this company might make in Canada. Meanwhile, Investment Canada and Polygram, a subsidiary of Philips, were negotiating the terms of Polygram's entry into the Canadian film distribution market. However, according to Canada's policy on the film industry, Polygram does not have the right to enter the Canadian market.

In this context would the Minister of Industry not agree that he is sending a message to foreign investors that Canadian cultural policies are negotiable?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is an odd question. Does the hon. member think that the people of Quebec or the National Capital Region, or Edmonton, Vancouver or other parts of the country, if they could get about a billion dollars invested in the semi-conductor sector, would not want the Minister of Industry to approach companies that would be able to make that kind of investment? It is very important for us to attract investment.

As for Polygram, I did not discuss the matter with Philips, and it was not on the agenda at our meeting.

• (1445)

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, obviously we would never object to the billions of dollars of investments to which the minister refers, unless they are intended for his riding. We might have some questions in that case, but if they go anywhere else, they will be most welcome.

However, one wonders why not the minister but Investment Canada is negotiating Polygram's entry on the Canadian film market, although it does not meet any of the requirements in this respect?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an application has been filed with Investment Canada. No decision has been made as yet, and I do not want to discuss the matter because the decision is still up to the minister.

I may add, as I said in Bromont a few days ago, that there are probably five or six locations here in Canada where we have the industrial base for a semi-conductor industry. One was in Quebec, in Bromont.

I want to ask the hon. member this: Is she not interested in the fact, on behalf of her party here in the House of Commons, the Canadian government is doing everything it can to try and find a base to create a genuine semi-conductor industry here in Canada? That is the real issue. They have no industrial policy other than asking for subsidies, as the hon. member did earlier. To us, it is more important to look for international investment.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food regarding Bill C-38, the farm debt mediation act.

This government is committed to program delivery to be more cost efficient and effective. How will this new act be an improvement on the 10-year old act of the Farm Debt Review Board?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the new farm debt mediation act will maintain the essential features of the old legislation including a stay of proceedings and a review and mediation process. At the same time it will avoid a good deal of overlap and duplication. It will streamline the administration of the whole program. It will provide a new appeal mechanism which was not provided for in the old law. It will provide farmers with flexibility to engage their own financial advisers rather than just taking those advisers that may

*Oral Questions*

otherwise be imposed upon them. It will create a new proactive financial counselling service.

I am very pleased to say that the proposed legislation enjoys the very strong support of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT EXPENSES**

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the youth minister went on seaside holidays, bought a fur coat and charged it all on a government credit card. Then she signed an expense form claiming that these expenses were "incurred on official business". The Prime Minister said this was only a small mistake and shrugged it off saying: "She paid it back in weeks or days".

My question is about the guidelines on this issue. In the part where the guidelines give ministers permission to use government charge cards for personal use, how long do they have to pay it back? Is it interest free? Do they have to pay it back even if no one ever finds out?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I already answered that question last Thursday, and the answer remains the same: government travel cards should be used only for official government business. Whenever they are used for other purposes, all personal expenditures must be fully reimbursed. This is the case here, and I must point out that all but one payments was made even before the access to information request.

The ethics counsellor has been consulted, and conversations have taken place with the member involved. As a result, all personal expenditures have been reimbursed. The hon. member has agreed not to use government credit cards in future for anything except government business.

• (1450)

[English]

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of course did not answer my question at all. He just reiterated the garbage we got on Thursday. We already knew this.

My question was on the guidelines. Are the guidelines on personal use of government credit cards clear? How long do ministers have to pay back personal expenses? Is it interest free? Do they have to always pay it back or only if somebody finds out about it? Those were my questions before and I still want answers.

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my view the guidelines are clear. I indicated clearly and slowly

what they were. In this case the guidelines were followed and the personal expenses were reimbursed. That is the end of it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Last week, the Minister of National Defence made an excellent suggestion, when he said that General Boyle should not be singled out. We agree that his case should be the basis for a new policy of transparency, like the one adopted in Quebec, and that the minister should therefore release the amount of the generous separation payments made to General Boyle with taxpayers' money.

Since he refuses to disclose the total amount awarded General Boyle in separation pay, will the minister at least tell us how much General Boyle has received in discretionary benefits from the government?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the benefits and other amounts paid to individuals by the Government of Canada in such transactions represent personal, privileged information covered under the Privacy Act. This act clearly states that personal information must not be disclosed without the consent of the individual concerned.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will remind the minister that this does not apply to discretionary benefits.

I would also like to remind the minister that the government is using taxpayers' money to make these separation payments. What the people want and have the right to know is how much was paid to General Boyle.

Why is the minister hiding from the public the total amount of the separation package paid to General Boyle?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is quite simply: we do what the law requires.

\* \* \*

[English]

**DANGEROUS OFFENDERS**

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Harvey Milne, who was declared a dangerous offender in 1980 for sex crimes against young boys, was paroled in 1993 because officials deemed him to be rehabilitated. Milne now faces five new charges for sexual offences, apparently again committed against young boys.



It is clear that Milne was and continues to be a sexual predator. He should never have been released. Will the minister hold the parole board accountable for its mistakes?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the individual in question is still before the courts. This is certainly a matter that was taken very seriously. If I am not mistaken, this decision was made some years ago before the current provisions with respect to the parole board were in place. I know this matter is being investigated and certainly any necessary action will be taken to try to prevent a repetition of whatever the problem is found to be.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking again about the accountability of the parole board, the bungling of its decisions. Harvey Milne was deemed to be a dangerous offender but this minister's handpicked parole board set him loose so he could again prey on young children.

Canadians need a guarantee that this man will never again make victims of our children. Will the solicitor general move immediately so that repeat violent offenders are locked up for life with no parole?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the parole board is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal. At the same time, I point out that as far as I am aware, the decision on paroling Mr. Milne was made in 1991 before this government took office.

• (1455)

There is proposed legislation before this House to tighten up the provisions with regard to dangerous offenders. The debate on this measure, which I hope the hon. member will support, will provide further occasion for this issue to be considered.

\* \* \*

#### CANADIAN SECURITIES COMMISSION

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the secretary of state for financial institutions.

The numerous provincial securities commissions in Canada mitigate against efficiency of investment, mitigate against wealth and job creation. This situation forces many emerging Canadian companies to go to U.S. markets for financing.

Will the minister tell us what he is doing to establish a national securities commission?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the hon. member that to promote a strong securities industry in Canada, we do need a Canadian securities commission. Based on initial

#### Oral Questions

requests from the provinces, we have continued to discuss with them the issues of developing a Canadian securities commission.

The hon. member is quite right to note that we need to ensure that Canadian companies and Canadian investors are not disadvantaged. A Canadian securities commission is not about federal intrusion, but it is about reducing overlap and duplication.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Last Thursday, rail workers in Montreal again raised the alarm and demanded a moratorium on the dismantling of the rail network in Quebec. During the year that is coming to an end, more than 2,000 jobs have disappeared in Montreal, bringing to over 10,000 the number of jobs lost in the past 10 years.

What will the minister do to stop this hemorrhage resulting from the federal government's iniquity?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is true that jobs are being cut in the rail sector in Quebec and elsewhere, but I must say to the hon. member that these cuts were not as bad in Quebec as they were in the rest of the country.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### BOMBARDIER INC.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of this land said two weeks ago that he was not going to buy votes. The very next day, he gave an \$87 million interest free loan to a corporation with assets of \$6 billion, cash in the bank of \$290 million, and profits of \$107 million for the previous year. And he said he was not going to buy votes.

Because this is other people's money, taxpayers' money, I would like to know which minister approved this loan. What criteria were used to make this loan?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to receive that question. I approved the loan. I recommended it to my colleagues.

It is an \$87 million investment in research and development repayable on a royalty basis as aircraft are sold. We will make money on that loan.

*Oral Questions*

Not only that, I am surprised to hear such a question from the Reform Party days after its fresh start. Reformers put their document out saying that a Reform government will recognize the crucial place of research and development in our economy by what? By increasing current levels of funding for research and development for industry. I agree with that.

\* \* \*

**DISABLED PERSONS**

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Today the task force on disability issues released its report. Of the 52 recommendations, many were similar to those of the subcommittee on human rights and status of disabled persons which this government had previously rejected.

• (1500)

One of the key recommendations is that a Canadians with disabilities act be brought forward and enacted. It would ensure that persons with disabilities would have broad interpretation of citizenship in areas affected by the federal government.

What steps will the government take to respond to those persons with disabilities and provide an act like that and enact it before the next election?

**Mr. Robert D. Nault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for an important question to all Canadians.

First, this is a very important issue to the Government of Canada and to society as a whole. We think that people with disabilities should be active members in our society.

We just received the report that was made public this morning. We intend to make the recommendations a major part of our discussions with the provinces. I want to take the opportunity to thank the member who was responsible for the report, the member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury, for his fine work.

At the same time, I would say to members opposite that is about time in this House that we got a question that really meant something to Canadians besides the nonsense across the way.

\* \* \*

**TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

It seems the Trent-Severn waterway's plan to raise \$200,000 from water lot licences may leave marina operators open to an

additional million dollars in municipal taxes. Surely it is not the government's intention to be a tax collector for municipalities.

What is the minister doing to help the Trent-Severn operators in this matter?

**Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last March the minister committed that both the Trent-Severn waterway and the Rideau canal would undertake a comprehensive consultation with the stakeholders in regard to commercial water lot fees over the summer months.

The input from these consultations has resulted in a significant change in the original fee proposal and the results of these consultations will be made public very shortly.

The minister shares the member's concern for the marina operators and the minister has asked for clarification from the Ontario government with regard to the appraisal services branch.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the Parliament of Finland. It is led by my sister Speaker, Riita Uosukainen.

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

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Peter Milliken, member for the electoral district of Kingston and the Islands, be appointed Deputy Chairman of committees of the whole House.

• (1505)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the motion moved by the government House leader is out of order because he has not given the House 48 hours' notice.

I understand that on the opening day of Parliament or on the opening day of a new session this motion can be moved without notice because on those occasions no notice can be given since the House is not yet in session. In addition, since the opening day is known and is publicized in advance, technically there has been notice given that event will occur.

This is not an opening day of Parliament or a new session. I believe that notice should be required for this motion.

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** A point has been raised by the hon. whip of the Reform Party. It is the practice of the House that such a motion in the past has not needed 48 hours' notice. I would refer the hon. member to the annotated standing orders on page 18 for a fuller explanation. I am going to allow the motion to stand.

This motion is debatable.

**Mr. Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to debate this motion. I have sent a letter to the Prime Minister, I have sent a copy to the government whip and I have talked to the nominee for the position of Acting Speaker.

I made the Reform Party's position very clear on this. We are looking for an opportunity for the government to live up to its promises. I have nothing against the hon. member whose name has been put forward. We all know he knows the rules of the House as good as anyone. We all know in committee his reputation is to be fair and even-handed. We appreciate that.

During the election campaign the Liberal Party campaigned on a red book promise. The nominee for the position of deputy speaker co-authored a paper that was quoted in the red book as the way things should be run here in the House of Commons. In that red book it says that two deputy speakers should be appointed from the opposition parties.

• (1510)

The hon. member will remember that report because it came on the heels of the 81st report of the Standing Committee on House Management, which was presented in the 34th Parliament in 1993. That report dealt with presiding officers. It also recommended that two deputy speakers be appointed from the opposition benches.

During the last couple of days we have been subjected to the Prime Minister's tally of how many promises he actually kept. He says that he has kept 78 per cent of the promises. That is the same number which described the scratchy old records that the House leader may at one time have listened to.

In the 1993 election 198 specific promises were made by the government. Government members say 197. Maybe this is the one they want to forget. They promised to reform the institution of Parliament. One of the reforms was that two of the deputy speakers would be appointed from the opposition benches.

I do not have the years of experience which the hon. House leader has. He has been here for more than 30 years. The Prime Minister has been here for more than 30 years. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, who has been nominated, has been here forever. He thinks he has been here forever, but he has been here for a good long time. The former whip of the party, now a minister of the crown, has been here for a long time. They all signed their names to the document which said that two of the

deputy speakers should be appointed from the opposition side of the House.

We had the 81st report of the Standing Committee on House Management which was presented in the 34th Parliament. They were a part of that report. They took part in that debate. The suggestions were theirs. In that report they suggested that this is the way it should be done.

During the weekend the Prime Minister said there were several promises which he has not yet been able to keep, but they are promises in progress. They will be completed at the earliest possible date.

**Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River):** Squeezed.

**Mr. Strahl:** He will squeeze the truth out of them.

This is not an "if, and or but" question. This is not a question of: I wonder what the Liberal Party meant? It is absolutely crystal clear that two deputy speakers should be appointed from the opposition benches.

The member for Kingston and the Islands co-authored the report which suggested that should be the case. The Prime Minister signed the red book promise which said that will be the case. The Prime Minister said that he would honour the red book commitments which have not yet been completed as soon as possible. That was on the weekend. I was at the convention to hear that.

The first opportunity to complete one of those promises is today. Today the government can say: "We are about to complete more of our promises. Today is the day that we put our money where our mouth is". What is it he said? We do not just talk the talk, we walk the walk. To use another analogy, this is where the rubber meets the road.

Suddenly a position is open in the House of Commons. It is a very important position. Mr. Speaker, you had the best of health before they took your best of health away, in a sense. Your good right hand man is now the government whip. We appreciated his work in the Chair. We always supported his work, but he is no longer here. Now there is a vacancy.

The symbolism of this comes down to the integrity of the Prime Minister, the promises made during the election and the promises made by the proposed deputy speaker. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has a decision to make in the next few minutes or in the next few days. What is his response to a specific proposal that he himself proposed, that he himself endorsed, that he himself submitted as the red book position, the Liberal Party position on how deputy speakers should be appointed?

• (1515)

What the member for Kingston and the Islands said, and I know him to be an honourable man, was that the position should not go to

*Oral Questions*

a government member. Those are his words. It should not go to a government member. It should go to somebody on this side of the House.

The conundrum facing the member for Kingston and the Islands now is a serious one. All of a sudden, talking the talk and walking the walk and doing what is right not only in Canadians' minds but following through on the promises made by the governing party, suddenly 24 hours after the Liberal convention is shut down we find out that promises are like the Prime Minister's imaginary friend, they do not really mean anything and they do not really exist.

Mr. Speaker, the motion we are debating at this time is symbolic of the non-partisanship that you have shown toward this House. The position of deputy chairman is an extension of yourself. It is an opportunity, as the member for Kingston and the Islands recognized in his report, to show that your position, Mr. Speaker, is not partisan but is open to all members of the House. Not only that, it has been promised as kind of a balancing act to show that very thing.

At the convention that I sat through on the weekend there were a lot of shoulder strains. A lot of Liberals were patting themselves on the back and tore ligaments in their shoulder. At a convention, that is their right to do that. They can pat themselves on the back all they like.

The Prime Minister says "we will not demand your vote, we will not buy your vote", although Bombardier would perhaps question that, "but will earn your vote because you will watch us and you will see us fulfil the promises that I have made".

What is one of those promises? The very first thing that the Prime Minister can fulfil, acknowledged as an unfulfilled promise, is the appointment of the deputy speaker. It will be the test.

I do not want to politicize your position in the chair of course, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to politicize the deputy chair, or compromise his or her position. The Chair absolutely has our respect. I should not say it has nothing to do with you, as I do not want to cut you out of the picture, but the argument here has nothing to do with your position which, of course, is without disrepute. It is held in the highest esteem.

However, the promises of the Liberal Party of Canada and the promises of the Prime Minister are at stake. Think of that. When someone does not fulfil a promise and fills a role in the deputy chair's position, a very important role, and that person gets to that position in spite of a promise by the Prime Minister to the contrary, what message does that send? It sends the message that the promises of the red book are hollow, the promises of the red book are only expedient, the promises of the red book whether they are 30 per cent, 40 per cent or 50 per cent are more of an accident of birth than they are of a grand design.

• (1520)

If the Prime Minister pushes ahead with this appointment, the member for Kingston and the Islands will have to take a serious second look at his acceptance of his position. He needs to do some soul searching on this issue.

I spoke with the hon. member at the Liberal convention, and he knows this. I told him this was going to come up if his name came forward. I told him exactly where this was going: "Your name has been talked about here in the hallways and it may or may not come up in the debate. But if it does, this is what I am going to say". I told him because he has been so outspoken on this issue.

It is not enough just to speak about it. He put together a report. He argued persuasively on a position, basically saying this role should not go to a Liberal, it should go to the opposition. It was so persuasive that I have quoted it back to him on several occasions.

I said that the hon. member, the hon. House leader and the Prime Minister have the experience and they have collectively endorsed the 81st report of the Standing Committee on House Management and have appended their own report to the Liberal red book saying: "This is what we will do when we form government. We will give the deputy chairman of the committee of the whole to the opposition parties. You can count on it. You can rely on us. You can trust us. You can know that we will not deviate from our red book promises". It is now bunk, bunk, bunk coming from the government side.

It is not "if the GDP exceeds 3.3 per cent we will consider this option". It is not one of those promises. It is not a promise that we will somehow have a rolling target on deputy speakers. None of that. As far as I know we are not going roll all four positions together and call it the Canada health transfer subsidy. We are not going to do anything like that. This is just a cut and dried promise, succinctly put in the red book, appended, which says "when we form government we will make sure that the opposition party is represented in the chair with not one but two deputy speaker positions".

If I had put together a report in a learned study as the member for Kingston and the Islands had done and said that it was my opinion, so take it for what it is worth, I think the government would say it was an interesting thought, that it will look it over and maybe refer it to a procedure and House affairs committee and maybe study it, as opposed to precedents of other Parliaments of the world". Who knows? Study it until time ran out.

I did not submit the idea. It is not my idea. It did not come from the official opposition. It did not come from the Reform Party. It did not come from the independents. Where did it come from? From the member for Kingston and the Islands, the very member

*Oral Questions*

who is being nominated today in contravention of everything he has written about that position.

**An hon. member:** I would not want to use the word hypocrisy.

**Mr. Strahl:** I do not want to get into mud slinging or name calling in any way.

• (1525)

However, the principle that is involved here is one that will cast aspersions where they should not be, on the most neutral position in the House of Commons.

I am not sure whether the member for Kingston and the Islands shaved this morning, but if he had looked in the mirror today he would have seen someone who said “what is happening here today is wrong”. That is what he said—not me and not the official opposition. The House leader knows it. He signed that paper too. The Prime Minister knows it. He says he is going to walk the walk, talk the talk and do what is right. This is not right.

It is unfortunate that the government has chosen to do this. There have been no consultations, no words, not a second and not a minute of consultations with the opposition parties. It has not even asked the opposition parties whether they are comfortable with this neutral position.

Mr. Speaker, you know you earned your position in a sense because all members of this House voted for your position. You have the support of the entire House.

However, on this issue not only has the government broken a promise, but there has been no consultation and no discussion. It has not been referred to any committee. There has not been a slate of names put forward. There has not in any way been an attempt to keep the promises the Prime Minister made during the election campaign.

Whether it was 60 per cent or 78 per cent of the promises made, it is dropping, dropping, dropping. It is now 68 per cent, 58 per cent, wherever. When the government intentionally breaks the spirit and the letter of its own book, its own law, then it has in essence broken its trust with the Canadian people.

I move:

That the motion be amended by striking out “Peter Milliken” and substituting “Daphne Jennings”.

**The Speaker:** We have an amendment on the floor by the hon. member for Fraser Valley East and seconded by the hon. member for Lethbridge. Procedurally the amendment is acceptable.

The debate will continue and it is on the amendment. I am going to go to the parliamentary secretary to the House leader.

• (1530)

**Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I

listened with great interest to my colleague’s comments regarding our friend from Kingston and the Islands.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has had a lifelong interest in this place.

**Miss Grey:** You weren’t even here.

**Mr. Zed:** If the hon. member wishes to participate in the debate, perhaps she could wait until a courteous time and let me finish my comments.

As I said, the member for Kingston and the Islands has had a lifelong interest in Parliament. He knows the rules. He is fair minded. He is experienced.

I find it somewhat amusing in the presumption the chief whip for the leader of the third party has made in his comments in that there has been some reference to the red book. Perhaps the hon. member is not familiar with the fact that there are 24 months left in this government’s mandate.

The decision to move the motion which the government House leader moved was given in view of what was in the best interests of this House. I listened with great interest to the fact that the member felt we should not want to politicize this. He said that we do not want to cast aspersions upon the character of the member for Kingston and the Islands. He said that we need experienced members.

When one reads the resume and sees the background of the member for Kingston and the Islands, it will be seen that he is one of very few members who would adequately best serve the interests of the House. Perhaps we could familiarize our colleagues in the House, including members of the third party and indeed all Canadians with what our friend from Kingston and the Islands has done.

It is important to know that this individual was educated at Queen’s University, Oxford University and Dalhousie University. When most young Canadians were involved with different activities, he was involved with parliamentary procedure. He has taken it as a lifelong interest, an interest that many Canadians have looked at with great admiration.

As a new member of the House, I came to this place with an appreciation for the importance and integrity of the Chair. What strikes me as being very important, Mr. Speaker, is that members look to the team that needs to support you in your activities. It becomes very important for us to look to experience, to integrity, to leadership—

**Mr. Scott (Skeena):** To look at the Liberal Party.

**Mr. Zed:** —to look at the Liberal Party. Thank you very much for that.

The member for Kingston and the Islands is fair minded.

*Oral Questions*

When Canadians view the fact that we mean what we say when we put forward commitments from the red book and the appendices to the red book, we have already stood the test of public opinion.

• (1535)

I find it a little sad that the members from the third party came to this place telling Canadians and all members that they wanted to do things a little differently. Frankly, their interventions today demonstrate that they are doing things a little differently. They are coming forward and attacking the integrity of the process which they do not like because it does not serve their interests, it is not self-serving.

The former parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, has served this House well. He has served as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. He has served as the chairman of the procedure and House affairs committee. He has served in many capacities, in many committees, and has served the interests of this House, which is the member's first love as many members of the Reform Party have acknowledged.

I encourage members of the third party to view this appointment, this nomination and this motion with the spirit in which it was given. If they have a complaint about certain aspects of the red book, I encourage them to stay tuned. There are 24 months left in the mandate of this government. There are many months left for the remaining 22 per cent of the promises that will continue to be met as they relate to the red book.

I urge members not to use up government time or House time for this matter. Canadians have other issues they want debated. There are bills that need to be passed. I strongly urge that members reconsider their amendment and that they consider supporting the motion.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I hate to say that the hon. member who just spoke has missed the point, but he has missed the point.

There is absolutely no doubt about the qualifications of the member for Kingston and the Islands. I mentioned that repeatedly in my speech. I realize he is a student of the parliamentary system. I understand his interest in it. I understand his qualifications. But the number one qualification he has is that he is a Liberal and the Liberal Party promised that the number one qualification should be that the position should go to an opposition party member.

On a point of clarification, I would like the member to admit up front that I have not, nor has anyone in our party said anything about the member for Kingston and the Islands to suggest that he is not technically qualified for the job. What we have said is that it does break a promise in a book appended to the red book which

said that the position should go to somebody from an opposition party. That in essence is the argument.

We want to straighten out the matter. First, we have not been picking on the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. That is not the issue. Second, the promise was explicit. I could read the promise to him but he has no doubt read it himself since it was a promise. That of course is the nub of the debate today and the argument comes down to that. Does the member believe that that promise should be fulfilled?

• (1540)

**Mr. Zed:** Mr. Speaker, before I give a direct and succinct answer to the question, it is important to go back to something my hon. colleague just said. He said that the number one qualification of the member for Kingston and the Islands is that he is a Liberal. That is not true. The member for Kingston and the Islands has been proposed because of his experience, because of his interest in this place, because of his knowledge.

The other point is that the hon. member said there was a promise broken. As I said in my speech, there are 24 months left in this government's mandate and there are 24 months left in which to complete the balance of 22 per cent of the promises that have not yet been addressed or that are still in progress.

I believe the hon. member for Fraser Valley East is somebody who is fair minded. I believe he should be intellectually honest enough to recognize the reality of what in fact has happened.

In answering the hon. member's question, the number one qualification for the member for Kingston and the Islands is his integrity, experience, fair mindedness, his appreciation for the House and his lifelong interest in this place.

**Miss Grey:** And he is a Liberal.

**Mr. Zed:** If because he is a member of the Liberal team disqualifies him, then there are a lot of Canadians who would be disqualified because there are a number of Canadians who support the Liberal Party.

I do not believe we should be conducting the way we do business in this House based on popularity. We should do it based on tough decisions that are being made, important decisions and decisions that are right. The right decision is being based on the experience and fair mindedness of a member in this place who can serve the interests of the House. That member is the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there are two issues I would like to touch on.

First, I would like to reiterate what my colleague for Fraser Valley East mentioned. Not once in his speech did he say anything derogatory about the member for Kingston and the Islands. The member for Fundy—Royal should be aware of that and he should acknowledge that we are not casting aspersions on the member. I

worked with the member on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. He was chair of that committee and I did find him to be fair. Should he become deputy chair, I would not have any problems with that.

Second, for all the glowing comments the hon. member for Fundy—Royal made, he should clear up this issue that we are not picking on the individual's character and integrity. It is impeccable and he would be a fine deputy chair. There is no question.

However with all those glowing compliments, with all those glowing remarks and all the experience that the member has—and those are the grounds upon which the Liberal government wishes to put his name forward—why does the member not go one step further and accept the advice of the member for Kingston and the Islands, to accept the high degree of intelligence, accept the high degree of thought and effort that he put into this idea as to who should be deputy chair? Should it or should it not be a member from the opposition parties? Should it not be a member from the official opposition? Should there not be a second deputy chair from the third party?

• (1545)

That is what the member for Kingston and the Islands put forward. With all his years of experience, with all his knowledge and integrity and honesty, he said that was what the government should do. It is signed with the signatures of the Prime Minister, of the House leader and of the former whip. All of these people have recommended that the two deputy chairs be appointed from the opposition benches.

Why does the member from New Brunswick not recognize that comment? Why does the member from New Brunswick not acknowledge that it is a promise which was made? It is a promise that should be kept. He knows it is a cop out to say that we still have 24 months left. Why does he not just admit it?

**Mr. Zed:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Centre has asked a question. The question that I hear him asking is: Were there certain issues that were raised in the red book which relate to the Chair? That is how I understand the question. The answer is that there was an appendix to the red book which contemplated changing the way this place does business.

We have lived up to a lot of those promises. There were issues regarding greater participation by members of Parliament, changing the way the committee system works, referring bills to the standing committees after first reading in order for members to have greater involvement in legislation.

In replying directly to the member for Calgary Centre, it is important to reiterate the fact that there are 24 months left on this mandate. I hear them saying they do not believe this promise will be kept. All I can say to them is stay tuned.

### *Oral Questions*

Seventy-eight per cent of our promises have been kept. The other 22 per cent is in progress. I look forward to the day when we campaign in the next general election, when we put our stock on the table and let Canadians decide whether they feel our promises have been kept.

I know that the integrity of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is not questioned by any member of the House. What members are questioning is the process. I know that all members of the House share my interest in supporting the motion for the member for Kingston and the Islands.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government House leader is a very experienced man, so I am sure he is not surprised to see his motion give rise to what I would call very interesting discussions.

Unfortunately, the official opposition will vote against the amendment of our friends in the third party for a very simple reason: If this House did break with tradition and decide to appoint a Deputy Chair who is not a government member, it is clear to me that this Deputy Chair should come from the official opposition. I am convinced that our colleagues from the third party can only agree with our arguments.

We, however, feel sorry to have to do this. The government party is just emerging from a convention where everything was hunky-dory.

• (1550)

I imagine that during the convention there was no discussion as to whether or not the government should keep its promise to fulfil an important responsibility and appoint an opposition member to assist the Chair in carrying out one of its most basic, if not its most basic duty: the orderly conduct of House business and, ultimately, good governance.

Of course, there was no question about this, but it would have been a good idea to appoint an opposition member as the new Deputy Chair.

We will also vote against the motion. Yet, we will do so with regret. We will do so as a matter of principle because everyone of us recognizes that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has but one flaw: he is not a member of the official opposition. He has excellent judgment. He is well mannered. Every time he had to assume committee management responsibilities, he met the expectations of both government and opposition members.

I can assure the man who will likely be the next Deputy Chair that he will, of course, have our co-operation because we are confident he will be do a very good job of moving House business along.

*Oral Questions*

I therefore move an amendment to the amendment. I move:

That François Langlois be appointed Deputy Chairman of Committees of the Whole.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, we have an amendment to an amendment by the hon. member for Laval-Centre, seconded by the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. In my opinion it is not in order because it is not an amendment to an amendment but an alternative amendment. There is a difference. For these reasons, this amendment is not admissible at this time.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment because this is an issue that has come up before. There is no question that the House is not dealing with the credentials of the nominee.

The issue has to do with the status of an appendix that was included in the red book, a report which was authored in part by the nominee. The report included a recommendation. I had an opportunity to speak with the member earlier about the wording. It was suggested that the positions may be filled by opposition parties. I asked why it was parties and he explained to me that if there was a small official opposition it might be appropriate to look to a third party.

• (1555)

The results of the last election came as a surprise to many Canadians and certainly were unknown to members of the House at the time this report was written. The fact that a party reflecting a position that Canada should separate became the official opposition put the context of that report in a much different light than the member's report may have indicated.

I am assured that the Reform Party would be the first to object if the government were to nominate a member of the Bloc to fill this position.

I have a question for the hon. whip of the Bloc. Although it is true there are 24 months in the mandate, does the member understand that it would probably be inappropriate, given the view of Canadians at this time, to appoint a member of the official opposition as a speaker of this House?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Dalfond-Guiral:** Mr. Speaker, I believe there is an elementary rule in this House that the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the assistant deputy speakers are people who must remain neutral, and I think it is really too bad that the hon. member opposite should question our ability to be logical and consistent as a servant of this House, referring of course to our position on the Constitution.

I find it rather difficult to understand this attitude, and I would like to give the hon. member the assurance that as parliamentarians, members of the official opposition have exercised their duties with a great deal of professionalism, and I am convinced that one of our members will be perfectly able to take on the role of deputy speaker of the House, although this person is as firm a sovereignist as I am.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, when we listen to the arguments put forward by the Liberal Party in the debate on this motion, we find that the arrogance sometimes comes out which we should not have in the House. I refer to the comments by the member for Fundy—Royal who said that we should not be attacking the process of appointing this particular person. Surely when motions are made in the House we are entitled to debate them. For them to even insinuate that we should not be debating a motion I find rather offensive to the democratic process.

He went on to say that we should not be using up House time. Again, I find it rather offensive that he would be opposed to using House time to debate a motion.

I would like to quote from the annotated Standing Orders of the House of Commons, page 19, regarding precedents for this: "The members appointed to the position of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Assistant Deputy Chairman have almost always come from the government side of the House. The only exceptions came in the 13th, 29th and 31st Parliaments when in each case an opposition member was appointed as Chairman".

It does not say a member of the official opposition. It just says an opposition member was appointed as chairman. There is real precedence for the point we are trying to make.

I would also like to quote from the Liberal red book that has been waved in our faces so often over the last three years. Let me quote from *Reviving Parliamentary Democracy; the Liberal Plan for House of Commons and Electoral Reform*.

• (1600)

It states:

Mounting criticism of the House of Commons and its proceedings reflects the frustration of citizens and parliamentarians alike with the continuing failure of Parliament to address effectively the problems that face us.

Canadians, including those who are elected to serve in Parliament, expect the House of Commons not merely to discuss openly the problems of the nation, but also to advance solutions. They expect the Commons to explore Canada's problems rationally and to establish policies for resolving them. These expectations are not being met.

The House of Commons must take immediate steps both to enable itself to do what it is supposed to do and to be seen to be doing it.



For the member for Fundy Royal to say that in three years they have fulfilled 78 per cent so give them two more makes a mockery of the red book where it states that the House must take immediate steps.

Let us again talk about the red book's statement concerning familiarity with Parliament. Let me quote the Liberal red book:

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

I would again like to point out that in that quote there was nothing about official opposition, just opposition. If I may go on to quote again:

One of the most significant results of the McGrath round of procedural reforms was the decision that the Speaker should be elected by secret ballot by all members. This has gone a long way toward assuring members of the independence of the presiding officer.

The three deputy Speakers, however, remain in effect government appointees. As a consequence, when one of the junior officers is in the Chair, his or her independence and authority is less well established. Their authority would be greatly enhanced and the non-partisan nature of the Chair greatly augmented if the British practice of alternating the Chair positions between government and opposition were adopted. Thus, if the Speaker were from the government party, the Deputy Speaker would be from the opposition, the next officer from the government and so forth.

The red book talks about electing the Speaker. You, Mr. Speaker, have done a marvellous job in the independence and integrity that you have upheld so well in this House. We would like to see that your colleagues in the Chair would enjoy the same independence and integrity without being tainted by being appointed by the government shall we say.

It was for that very point the Liberal red book promise was to alternate Speakers by secret ballot, next from the opposition, then back to government and so forth, simple, and it said it should be done immediately. Here we are three years later and the opportunity has presented itself today.

By the looks of it we are going to have division on this appointment which is unfortunate because the process that is being proposed is flawed and the process that is being used flies in direct opposition with what the Liberals proposed at election time. I would suggest to the member for Kingston and the Islands that should the amendment lose and we vote on this particular position that he seriously consider whether he does enjoy the confidence of the House.

This is unfortunate because he does have the qualifications and as an individual member of this House he enjoys an excellent reputation. However, if there is division in putting him in the Chair, then we have concerns about the perception of integrity, impartial-

### Oral Questions

ity and independence if this is forced upon us. The perception is important if we are to ensure the integrity of this House. That is why I would think that the member for Kingston and the Islands would seriously consider whether he does enjoy the confidence of the House in the chair's position if he were voted in.

• (1605)

That is why the Liberal government should acknowledge the policy it wanted to introduce immediately and should support a nominee from this side of the House, which is the motion before us right now. It would ensure that its promise is upheld.

The person we have nominated, the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam, has integrity, has a long experience of public service, perhaps not all of it in this House. She is a person of competence. While she may not have had years of experience here, I am quite sure there have been others who have had the privilege of sitting in the Chair as having been appointed to that position who have not had years of experience in this House and they have performed quite adequately. Therefore I have no fear whatsoever in saying that the member for Mission—Coquitlam would perform admirably in the Chair as well.

I suggest that the government seriously consider now that there is opposition to its nominee, that its proposal which was supposed to be implemented immediately can be implemented now. I am quite sure there would be no problems with the appointment of the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's intervention and he certainly put his points across in a very clear manner. My comments deal with some comments that were made during this debate.

Earlier the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore was heckling our hon. whip when he was trying to speak. She was asking which page of the red book we were referring to. Obviously for someone who ran on that red book and the promises contained therein, I would have expected that she would have known that we were actually referring to an appendix to the red book, a report that was appended to the red book.

**Ms. Augustine:** You always have to find someone to attack.

**Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River):** My hon. colleague referred to the actual committee report.

The hon. member is insistent on heckling still. We are going to try to figure out at some point if she actually does know what is contained in the red book which she ran on but perhaps that will have to be on another day.

*Oral Questions*

At this point it is very clear from the intervention made by my hon. colleague what we were referring to. It actually is a promise, much to the consternation of Liberal members, another broken promise.

I also refer to a comment made by the hon. member for Mississauga South. The only defence he could come up with for this appointment was that somehow the Liberal members who put forward the report that suggested the two deputy speaker positions should be from the opposition, that somehow that was done before the election. There were such astounding results in the election with the election of Bloc Quebecois members as well as Reform Party of Canada members that somehow it negates the commitment made in the red book to have the two deputy speaker positions actually filled from the opposition. He was looking for some little avenue that he could use to get out of the commitment made in the red book.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would like to comment on that. The only excuse the government can use is so pathetically weak: that we simply cannot allow a separatist member to be a deputy speaker. It is pretty pathetic to have to use that as an excuse for breaking a promise.

• (1610)

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the comment by my hon. colleague.

The Liberal government in the red book did not give any qualification regarding their point number 10, the independence of the Chair. There was no qualification in the fact that it said: "The House of Commons must take immediate steps both to enable itself to do what it is supposed to do and to be seen to be doing it".

That was before the election. That was the policy that those people ran on. The Canadian people elected them on this and their other policy of jobs, jobs, jobs which was trashed along the way as well.

Regardless of the fact that we ended up with an official opposition who are separatists and of course we felt there was no way that the separatists should have been the official opposition. Again, this government had the right to choose after the election. It could quite easily have chosen a party that was represented in five provinces, that had 2.5 million votes and ran candidates in practically every province in the country versus a provincial party that only was represented in one province and that wants to break up this country. However, the government appointed that party as the official opposition.

That aside, there was no qualification. There was nothing said in the election that the government would break a promise under certain conditions. The government was quite emphatic that this red book is the plan. This past weekend the Prime Minister was waving the results of the plan and talking of 78 per cent accomplishment.

This is one promise that the Liberals said they were going to implement right away after the election. They had an opportunity to implement it right away after the election when the Speaker and the deputies were initially appointed. If I may be so bold, the government had an opportunity to fulfil their election promise when you, Madam Speaker, received the appointment to the Chair.

Now we have the same debate once again and once again the government is going to break the promise that it said it would introduce immediately. That is why my colleague is upset. That is why the people in this House are upset. That is why unfortunately we have got partisanship on this motion. It is quite unfortunate.

The independence of the Chair is fundamental to the governance of this House. That is why, if the subamendment is defeated and the member for Mission—Coquitlam does not take the position and the main motion is then debated and voted upon, I would hope that the member for Kingston and the Islands would withdraw his nomination.

We do want to ensure the integrity of the Chair, which you occupy, Madam Speaker. To quote from pages 18 and 19 of the Annotated Standing Orders:

The names put forward have met with opposition only on rare occasions. In 1911, the choice of Mr. Blondin, a Quebec nationalist, as chairman, was hotly debated—

It was suggested again today that a member from the Bloc would be hotly debated too. It goes on further:

—while in 1918, one member objected to the appointment of Mr. Boivin, a Quebec member who had opposed conscription. On only one occasion however, in 1962, was a motion to appoint a chairman ever brought to a recorded vote. In fact, in most cases the appointment passed with only a few laudatory comments about the nominee's special capacities for the post.

We have had laudatory comments about the member for Kingston and the Islands which I would support as well.

The point is partisanship, because the government has abused the process which has entered into the debate. The principle has not been upheld. Democracy has not been upheld. The policies on which they were elected have not been upheld. That is why we should have new nominees or we should elect the member for Mission—Coquitlam.

• (1615)

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, would the hon. member for St. Albert comment on a comment made by the hon. member for Fundy—Royal who said we are wasting the time of the House by debating this very clear matter of principle.

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Speaker, the point is this House debates democracy. We are here to uphold democracy, to talk about principle and to challenge the government's point of view. For the member to stand up and say we are wasting the House's time

talking about something this important is an affront to everyone who sits in this House.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. After consultation with the representatives of the other parties in this House, I have the unanimous consent of the House for the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans to table the official report by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Do we have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank members of the House for their unanimous consent.

As chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I have the honour to present the third report of this committee.

This report deals with the famous question of what was called family trusts, in which the committee examined Chapter I of the auditor general's report of May 1996. This report reflects the opinion of the Liberal majority within the committee, and includes dissenting opinions by the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party, as well as a supplementary opinion by the Liberal member for Brome—Missisquoi.

In closing, I would like to say that, in my capacity as a member of the Bloc Québécois, I subscribe to the dissident minority report by the members of the Bloc Québécois, particularly the following recommendation: that a special commission of inquiry independent of the government be struck, with the mandate of fully investigating all of the events surrounding the decision of December 23, 1991, and the subsequent use of this tax loophole by other rich Canadian families.

In closing, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee is asking the government to table a comprehensive response to the report.

[*English*]

### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if the House gives its consent I move that the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be modified as follows: Bob Kilger for Don Boudria.

## Oral Questions

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I see the humour in this situation in listening to members of the third party, listening to hot air coming once again into this Chamber.

We are talking about promises and I recall the leader of the third party rising in this House and calling this Parliament one without precedent. He called the make-up of this Parliament one without precedent. They told us they were going to do things differently. Canadians and members of this House know that they broke that pledge. It is reflected in the opinions of Canadians when they are asked what they think of members of the third party.

• (1620)

If there were intellectual honesty in the motion proposed by members of the third party they would support a member of the official opposition's filling the position. That is not what they proposed. They proposed that one of their members should fill the position of deputy chair.

I would like to respond to the hon. member for St. Albert. We had an election for the chair of the public accounts committee. That position has by tradition gone to a member of the official opposition. I recall how vigorously they opposed and filibustered to stop that appointment from taking place. Now they are standing in the House talking about what they would like to be done. They are not dealing with reality.

Let me repeat that if there were intellectual honesty in their position they would be talking about a member of the official opposition's filling the position.

There is no question that the member for Kingston and the Islands is an excellent choice. He will serve the House well. He will serve Canadians well. He will carry out his duties in a very judicial fashion.

Clearly there is no question that if members of the third party had any intellectual honesty they would not have been self-serving and would have suggested that the position be filled by a member of the official opposition.

Canadians know that those members have been lusting after the status of official opposition. They have had opportunities. They have campaigned across the country in byelections. They said to the electorate in different constituencies: "We are the Reform Party. Elect us to Parliament so we can become the official opposition". They have gone to the electorate across the country time and time again. The electorate has said no, and with good reason. It is because of the string of broken promises, promises they did not fulfill when they got to the House of Commons. I am

*Oral Questions*

disappointed, along with many other Canadians, that they have not fulfilled those promises.

I applaud the nomination of the member for Kingston and the Islands. He will serve the House and Canadians well.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, the member very eloquently talked about keeping promises. It is very interesting that when you are in the government you are able to fulfill your promises, if you will.

• (1625)

It would be wonderful if the member would listen to the question, as he is often not even in his seat as the commentary is unfolding. Would the member support the Reform Party motion if we called for a member of the official opposition to occupy the position of deputy chair?

**Mr. Telegdi:** Madam Chair, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for agreeing with me about the hypocrisy of their party's position in putting forth one of their own members and then making the kinds of arguments they have.

As I said before, the motion to appoint the member for Kingston and the Island is an excellent motion. I said that he would serve the House and Canadians well.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I noted that the hon. member for Waterloo declined to answer the question from my colleague from Macleod. He did not make any attempt to actually answer the question, which does not surprise me.

This member referred several times to remarks about intellectual honesty in referring to the Reform Party of Canada. Somehow he feels that because we put forward the name of one of our members to occupy the position it means that we are dishonest and that we should put forward a name of a member from the Bloc Quebecois.

If he had taken the opportunity to actually read the appendix to his own Liberal red book at some time over the last four years, he would have found that this proposal put forward by four members of the Liberal caucus, one of whom is the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, states: "In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the government party two of the junior chair officers should be from the opposition so that the four presiding officer positions are shared equally by government and opposition". That is the promise, the recommendation, the proposal.

We note that it does not say official opposition. It says opposition. The last time I checked we remain an opposition party, perhaps for another year. However, at the whim of the Prime Minister we will be the government.

The hon. member also said that he was appalled that the Reform Party said it was going to do things differently when it ran for Parliament. He obviously does not feel that opting out of the MP pension plan is different. I would ask the hon. member for Waterloo if he opted out of the pension plan. That is where he could have shown some leadership to his constituents of Waterloo on an important issue. However, he has declined to do so.

We could go on like this all evening. I would argue quite strongly that we have kept our commitment and we are doing things differently. One thing we are doing differently is standing on principle, which is something unknown to Liberal members of the House.

**Mr. Telegdi:** Madam Speaker, there were a number of questions asked. I will respond to four of them.

The member said I did not answer the question. I made an observation on intellectual dishonesty. I said that is what was coming from the Reform Party by way of what it proposes to accomplish. That was an observation and I make that same observation again.

I have already said that I support the nomination of the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Second, he made reference to the appendix of the red book.

• (1630)

Let me commend the hon. member for reading the indexes of the red book. I presume he must have read the main body of the red book also where we talk about not pitting region against region, not pitting Canadians against Canadians. We take a national perspective, recognizing that this country has diversity in its population, diversity in its culture, diversity in its make-up. The member should go back and re-read that part of the red book. Once he finishes that part of it, we will talk about its appendices.

The other issue that he talked about is opting out of MPs' pensions. A promise was made in the red book. That promise was we would set an age limit before members of Parliament could collect a pension. We went beyond that and lowered the payouts in the pension plan. We went beyond what we said in the red book. Those members from the third party should be applauding the government because we did what we said we would do. As a matter of fact we went beyond it.

Let me also say that, in terms of fourth issue he raised, the matter of principle, on this side of the House we do not need lessons in principle from members of the third party. They would pit regions against regions, Canadians against Canadians. They would do anything to become the official opposition. They stood in the House, aiding and abetting the Bloc during the referendum when, on this side of the House, we were trying to keep this country

together. We do not need lessons from members of the third party on the issue of principle.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, for the hon. member to suggest that the Reform Party is aiding and abetting the separatists in the House is absolutely ridiculous.

Surely to goodness after three years Canadians understand which party it is in this place that is assisting the separatists, the Bloc Québécois, to break up the country. It is certainly not the Reform Party of Canada. It is the Liberal Party of Canada.

Every time we turn around in the House, it is supporting the motions of the Bloc. It allows the Bloc to be not only the official opposition—it supports its cause that way—but on every single standing committee in this place, including the standing committee on national defence of Canada.

The Liberals support the separatists to be the alternate chair positions on committees. It is absolutely astounding that the member for Waterloo would stand up and accuse us of aiding and abetting the separatists. It is his party that continues to do this on an ongoing basis day after day.

**Mr. Telegdi:** Madam Speaker, I never cease to be amazed by the interpretations of the members of the Reform Party and also how twisted their arguments become. A minute ago, they asked me if I would support a member of the Bloc for the position of deputy speaker. I said in my statement that I support the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I told them that if they were intellectually honest and consistent in their position, they would have nominated a member of the official opposition. Then they ask me if they nominated a member of the official opposition, whether I would support it. I said: “No, I am consistent, I support the member for Kingston and the Islands”. The opposition members then turn around and accuse me of supporting positions in committees that tradition dictates they hold.

• (1635)

It is not good enough for members of the third party to be lusting for power and lusting to be the official opposition. There is a way to do that. They had the opportunity during the byelections. They have to win those byelections. They have to do that the old fashioned way, by earning it.

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, before I begin my comments on this issue, which I think the members on the government side are slowly starting to forget, the member for Waterloo talked about intellectual honesty. If he wanted to be intellectually honest he would have answered the question of my colleague from Macleod when he asked whether the member for

### *Oral Questions*

Waterloo would or would not support a member from the Bloc Québécois as a deputy chair. He refused to answer and squirmed around it.

When someone talks about intellectual honesty and expects it, why would that person not simply answer a question yes or no? That was not a question that required a five minute conversation off topic.

The essence of this motion moved by the House leader of the government is the independence of the Chair. The person whose name has been put forward is also a person who has impeccable qualifications, is extremely qualified to sit in the position of a chair and who has worked for years in understanding the standing orders which are the rules of this House that speakers in the chair must apply when rendering decisions.

A lot of times, because of a lot of issues and the partisan nature of politics in this country, there are divisive issues and ideas and people need to have rules. The standing orders are there for us to follow. When we step out of line the Chair must rule.

This individual is the member for Kingston and the Islands. It is his name that was put forward by the House leader of the government. However, the issue is linking the two, the individual himself and the independence of the Chair.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has said that he believes in secret ballots for the election of Speakers because in that way all the members of the House can then enhance the respect and any of the rulings by the Speaker of the House.

Furthermore, the member for Kingston and the Islands was on a committee when in opposition which wrote the Liberal plan for the House of Commons and electoral reform that was titled “Reviving Parliamentary Democracy”. The opposition members of that committee were the current Minister of Health, the Minister of Labour, the member for Kingston and the Islands whose name has been put forward to be the deputy chair, and the former party whip, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who is now also a cabinet minister of francophonie and intergovernmental affairs. These people have worked hard to earn their positions. They had ideas in opposition and even though politics is part of that sometimes we can find agreement.

In this case the Reform Party agrees with a lot of the democratic reforms that have been put forward by the Liberal members when they were in opposition. They now have an opportunity to do the things they fought for and believed in so hard in opposition.

While in opposition the Liberals said that this House was dysfunctional. They came forward with 18 recommendations, all the way from committees, taxation, new rules for question period so that it would have some meaning. They suggested things like limiting the questions and the answers, telling the government side to answer questions. The joke around here is that this is not answer

*Oral Questions*

period. It is question period, so they do not answer. There are a lot of good ideas in this document.

• (1640)

Reformers are not bringing this forward to put the member for Kingston and the Islands down. It is brought forward to compliment the member for Kingston and the Islands and to say that his ideas and his suggestions, especially this one, have a lot of merit.

He is pushing for the independence of the Chair. That is important. When the battle is heated we do not want any partiality to be a part of the decision of the Chair. Therefore it is very important. The fact that the McGrath round of procedural reforms decided that the Speaker should be elected by secret ballot has gone a long way toward assuring members of the independence of the presiding officer. Here is the important point. We are talking about deputy chairs.

“The three deputy speakers, however, remain in effect government appointees as a consequence. When one of the junior officers is in the Chair his or her independence and authority is less well established. Their authority would be greatly enhanced and the non-partisan nature of the Chair greatly augmented if the British practice of alternating Chair positions between government and opposition were adopted”. It does not say official opposition. It says opposition, as my colleague from Prince George—Peace River mentioned.

Thus if the Speaker were from the government party, the Deputy Speaker would be from the opposition, the next officer from the government and so forth, back and forth like that.

This is the principle we believe in. This is a concept that will further and help guarantee the independence of the Chair. The fact that the person who made this recommendation, who signed this proposal, is now the person being put forward it seems to me that we should have an election for that position. We should put his recommendation into practice. Rather than having the deputy chair we should have one member from an opposition party as deputy chair and not all of them from the government side.

This is the government's last opportunity to implement this recommendation, to keep one of its red book promises so that it becomes part of the glowing statistics about which the Prime Minister has been telling us. Now is the opportunity to do this. It is probably the best thing that a politician can do and accomplish in his or her career in politics. It is to bring about systemic change, to bring about changes in the system rather than just changing the faces.

How can people respect politicians and the functions of this House if nothing really changes but only the faces are changed? Here are the very people who are recommending something that we would support given the opportunity to actually make one of the

deputy chairs come from the opposition parties and the government does not do it.

I would like to recommend to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands that he now has the opportunity, as my colleague from St. Albert put forward, to say to his government because he authored this, because he is a man of conviction, because he has integrity, this is an opportunity. I know he would like to be in the Chair. I know he would like to have the experience. I know that it would be a great sacrifice on his part. The suggestion is why does he not withdraw his name. Why does he not give a speech on this issue? He has not spoken yet. Why does he not address this issue and say that he believes in that report. To help the Prime Minister keep one more promise why does he not recommend that a name from the opposition be put forward? That is the way to decide this issue.

That would be a way to help the government keep a promise. It would be a way to help restore integrity and honesty to the system of politics. It would be a way for this member to bow out of a very embarrassing situation.

The excuse from the current deputy House leader is that the government has 24 months left to keep its promises. Does that not fly in the face of credibility when everybody knows that there is going to be an election as early as possible in the spring or by June or as late as October of next year? That is not 24 months.

Talk about intellectual honesty which the member for Waterloo so proudly defends. There are a lot of discredited comments coming from the government side.

• (1645)

This is what is wrong with what is happening here. Once again we are continuing the form of patronage which does not take into consideration commitments and principles that the government believed in when in opposition.

The opportunity to change the system which is before the government is also before this individual. There is nothing worse than to see the government side hide behind excuses, to see the government side flip-flop on issues. The list of broken promises is pathetic on its part but a benefit to us.

We are happy and proud of the fact that the government stole a lot of our ideas which are part of our platform. We are proud and happy with the fact that when in opposition the Liberals were against NAFTA and free trade. We told them, we argued and we even had to vote holding our noses for another Conservative government just to get free trade for Canada because their former leader, John Turner, was against it. Now they sing and praise the virtues of it. The very last vote the government had when in opposition was on NAFTA and all the front benches voted against it. All of them voted against it; not one voted for it and now all they do is praise the virtues of it.

*Oral Questions*

**An hon. member:** Hypocrisy.

**Mr. Silye:** That is hypocrisy.

We know about that infamous promise on the GST. The Deputy Prime Minister even quit saying that she had failed to keep her promise. She ran again and got re-elected. It is an admission that the government failed on that promise. But the Prime Minister will not admit that. The Liberals have not got rid of the GST or scrapped the GST.

I do not want to go on talking about broken promises because I could debate that for another two hours. I will spend a little more time on this motion.

The preface of Beauchesne's sixth edition states:

The election of the Speaker—has given the Members their own Speaker in a process that was designed to take the choice of Speaker away from the Prime Minister and give it to the entire House.

What is good for the goose is good for the gander. The member for Kingston and the Islands as the gander-to-be would not have a problem with this notion. He is a parliamentarian, as I said earlier, and one of the authors of the Liberal report for reviving parliamentary democracy where they promised to elect two of the chair positions from the opposition benches, two of the junior member positions.

This nomination was moved by a cabinet minister, the deputy House leader. A chair officer is not the puppet of the government but an officer of this House. The person sitting in that chair, regardless of party and regardless of stripe, is not working for the government side. The position is to be neutral. The position involves the application to the best of his or her ability the rules of the House which are found in the standing orders, and they are no longer a Liberal member or a Reform member or a Bloc member.

However, we do not have the opportunity to have a Bloc member or a Reform member in the Chair. It is all from that side, which is what we are trying to debate today. We should endorse the recommendations of the Liberals when they were in opposition.

How does it look to have this nomination coming from the government side, from the Prime Minister's office, just like a patronage appointment to some government board, just like a patronage appointment to the Senate where we have had 18 Liberals appointed?

How obvious is it when the Prime Minister appoints someone to the Senate and says: "I will select and I will appoint a person who defends our party". Is the purpose of the Senate, to defend the Liberal government? He admitted that, he said that. That is a paraphrased quote but it is pretty close to what he said.

We want competent people on all the 3,000 boards and quasi-judicial boards. And yes, a lot of those people will be Liberals. There is no question about it. But do they all have to be Liberals? Are there no former Conservatives or Conservative supporters who

could serve on one of those 3,000 boards? Are there no people who voted for Reform who could serve on one of those boards?

I agree with the principle of putting those people into positions on boards who have an identification or who have a rapport or who understand the government's intent. I do not have a problem with that. When the Prime Minister says that a lot of people voted for Liberals, so therefore there should be a lot of people on those boards who are Liberal, I agree.

• (1650)

However, at the very same time when he says that, the logic inherent in that is what about those people who did not vote for Liberals who are also competent and who also have the right to run? Therefore the composition should not be 99.9 per cent Liberal and .1 per cent other parties.

They mentioned names like the current president of the CBC and a former Prime Minister who is living in a \$3 million mansion in Beverley Hills protecting Canadians down there. They take two or three appointments to lift it to a level of integrity and to say "see, we do pick members from other parties".

This government and this Prime Minister are guilty of duplicity and hypocrisy. I would hate to have to add the member for Kingston and the Islands to that list because he will have to sit with cabinet ministers and make recommendations for democratic reform.

They are in power. They have the right and the opportunity. There are no ifs, ands or buts. Nobody is going to complain. In fact, they have the encouragement and the endorsement of members to do this. There would be unanimous consent to have an opposition member as one of the junior speakers. That would be supported. Will the government do that? I do not think so. Will it keep that promise? I do not think so.

Now that I see my favourite cabinet minister opposite shaking his head, the new minister of defence, saying "you are right, Jim, we are not going to change", I know it will not happen. This man is a man of his word. He is one person who has kept his promises. He is one person who has done what he said he would do. I know that he can hold his head up high as a cabinet minister. I have so much respect for him that if he ever ran for leader, rather than the current finance minister, I might support him.

There is a solution to this problem. I cannot do it in the form of a motion, an amendment or an amendment to an amendment to a motion. I do not want to waste the time of the House in doing that. However, I would like to recommend for the government's consideration after this subamendment is voted on and defeated, after the amendment is voted on and defeated, and before we vote on the motion, that the member for Kingston and the Islands actually request that the government to do this. This is his moment in history. This is his chance to bring about systemic change on principles which I know the Liberals believe in. I do not understand

*Oral Questions*

why they will not follow through with it. It is not something major. It will not shake the earth. It is a step forward.

The recommendation I have is this. Prior to the vote on the final motion, why not allow the two opposition parties to each put forward a name and have an election? We can have an election on the two names put forward by the two opposition parties, one from the Bloc and one from Reform. The House could vote for the junior deputy chair position. It is, after all, a junior position. It is, after all, following the principles of democracy. We want to retain the independence of the Chair.

If we follow the model we used to elect the current Speaker of the House, we are helping to endorse that independence. We are helping to encourage and foster systemic reform and systemic change which is of benefit to everybody. It is an opportunity for the current Minister of Labour, the current Minister of Health, the current Minister for International Co-operation and the Minister responsible for Francophonie, and the member for Kingston and the Islands to hold their heads up high, to boast, to brag and to tell their constituents that they actually brought about a change in the House of Commons which shows that it is independent, that it is fair, that the form of debate we have is healthy and that the Chair is not prejudiced, even though all the appointments after the election of the Speaker are made by the government side.

It is very important for the government to think about what it is doing. This is an opportunity for it to do something correct. It would restore honesty and integrity. It would allow us to help the government keep a promise and to show that it is not always partisan and that sometimes we can work together to bring about positive and constructive change for the good of everybody.

• (1655)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester—trade.

[English]

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I found my hon. colleague's comments very enlightening; suggestions for the Liberal government that make a lot of sense.

The Minister of National Defence is agreeing with me that his comments made a lot of good sense. I am sure he is referring specifically to the comments made about himself. I wonder if he would comment further on the intervention that was made earlier today on this very important subject. The debate we are having, as

impromptu as it is, cuts to the very essence of why we are in this place.

If we cannot have an independent Chair in this place it begs the question why are we here. What is the purpose if we cannot assure that it is a fair and honest debate and we have Chairs with integrity? Certainly that has been the case in the past, we expect that in the future and we do not question that with regard to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

The hon. member for Calgary Centre put forward a very strong case that perhaps the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands should review his decision to let his name stand for this position in light of being a co-signer and co-author of this report.

As a citizen of this country I have seen too often in the past MPs of the old traditional parties in this country, the Liberal Party of Canada, the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats, try as hard as they can to bring about systemic, substantive change to the system of government in Canada. We are all aware of them. What we see time and time again is that at some point when their party becomes government those reforms fall by the wayside. They become mere voices in the wilderness crying out for change. Time and time again substantive change simply does not happen.

Contrary to what the hon. member for Fundy—Royal said earlier when he chastised our whip for wasting the time of the House, for wasting taxpayer money, if the government would have elected to consult with opposition members prior to springing this motion on us we would not be in this debate today. It is the government that decided to foist this on us rather than consulting the opposition members. This runs contrary to red book promises of more consultation between all parties in the House of Commons.

Would the hon. member for Calgary Centre take a moment to give us his opinion on whether this is truly a waste of money to be debating this issue in the House today? I feel so strongly about this as a matter of principle. I do not see that we are wasting time. If we cannot debate this type of issue in this place, then anything else we debate is really pointless.

**Mr. Silye:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the member for Prince George—Peace River, for the question. The answer to his question is that this is not a waste of time. This is very important. It is an issue that tackles the very essence of government and of politicians.

• (1700)

We are talking about integrity. We are talking about trust. We are talking about believability. When you knock on doors and ask people to vote for you, you stand for something. You have pride, you have principles, you have goals and you have objectives. You tell people that you stand for these things. You tell them that you



would do these things if you were government. What frustrates me is that once they get elected, once they get here, they do not deliver on what they promised. They will not do what they said they are going to do.

This is what frustrates the Canadian voter. This is what frustrated me when I just voted and did not participate in the system. Government is really controlled by a very few people. Very few people participate in our political system, therefore there is a lot of opportunity and chances for people to get here without much effort. When they do get here, the system lends itself toward a democratic dictatorship. We freely elect a dictator every four to five years.

We need some protection and control against that. This House is the place where that is done. This House is where the government is held accountable and responsible. Members are questioned on their competence and integrity. Therefore, accountability, integrity and competence are things for which we look and make sure they are adhering to them.

The Prime Minister makes all these patronage appointments. We call it patronage because there are 3,000-plus positions to which the Prime Minister can appoint people without review. Yes, we can object to them when the names are put forward. It appears that every leader who is the head of a government appoints those people who either have made the biggest contributions or who have worked the hardest on somebody's campaign or who have had long term, outstanding commitments to that party or who was a candidate and did not get elected.

What is hypocritical about the current Prime Minister is this. If that is the system and that is the way the game is played, fine. Incompetence will surface and that person will eventually be fired.

When you are in opposition and you are the leader of the opposition like he was for so many years, when he says on this side of the House that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney is making patronage appointments, that he is only appointing his hacks, his supporters, his contributors. Stop. When you get to that side, you should not be doing the same thing. He did not change it. This is part of politics as well. It is an opportunity for the member for Kingston and the Islands and this government to have one member from the opposition side as a deputy chair. We could have another election on it. This shows that Reform is committed to systemic change.

The member for Waterloo brought up the question of intellectual honesty. The standing orders say that we are supposed to be given 48 hours' notice for a motion to be presented. We were not. They say that we are wasting taxpayers' dollars. They are dictating to us who goes where, what happens and when. Therefore the who,

### *Oral Questions*

what, why, where and when should not just be at the whim of the government. It should be subjected to opposition commentary.

That is why there are rules in the standing orders that we should get notice of what is going on. This government has invoked closure more times than the previous government that it criticized for doing it five times. This government has done it 19 times already. We still have a year to go. According to the member for Fundy—Royal, there are two more years to go before we have another election. They have all that time to keep all these promises. I am practising the finance minister's style. I need that pen.

He goes: "Another thing, Madam Chair, I want to tell you about this government. I want to tell you about the policies I made. I didn't raise taxes. I know the tax base has gone up. I know I have reduced exemptions. I know I raised excise taxes. They are up. I have not raised taxes. We have done this through sound government. We have done this through good government. The members on that side don't know what they are talking about". Then they all clap and cheer.

The issue is about patronage. The issue is about partisan politics. This is an opportunity to take partisan politics outside of it. We have to be partisan. We have to fight for those goals and ideas that we each believe in, even if we disagree.

That chair, the position that you are sitting in, Madam Speaker, is a very important one. We have not questioned anybody who has been in that chair so far. They have applied the standing rules to the best of their ability. What we are saying is that here is a chance to improve the system a little more.

I know the member for Kingston and the Islands would make a good chairperson. I saw him work in the committee on procedure and House affairs. That is not the issue. The issue is this. He said that he believes that the junior chair should be held by a member from the opposition. Therefore, here is his opportunity to help us implement his plan and guarantee the independence of the Chair, not only talk the talk but walk the walk or do the thing that they should do which is right for Canadians.

• (1705 )

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I want to make my comments reflective of my party. I did hear from a member opposite that Reformers are intellectually inconsistent.

I remember when this position was open to you, Madam Chair. This exact debate went on at that time. We discussed the independence of the Chair. We discussed whether or not the commitment which was made in the red book should be kept. That commitment is extremely important.

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Clancy:** Oh, yea. How come you never agreed to do it, Grant or Jay or whatever your name is.

• (1710)

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** There seems to be a fair amount of chatter in the House, Madam Speaker. I wonder if you might instruct the loudmouth from Halifax to quiet down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** That is definitely unparliamentary language and is not acceptable. Would you please excuse yourself.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Madam Speaker, back to the independence of the Chair—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** Would the hon. member for Macleod please withdraw his words toward the hon. member for Halifax?

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Madam Speaker, I would be happy to withdraw.

**Ms. Clancy:** Well done.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Madam Speaker, back to the independence of the Chair. As you will recall, this debate took place. We asked for and continue to ask for a member of the opposition parties to sit as deputies in the Speaker's chair. I suppose it will take another government to come in from the opposition that really intends to keep its promises for that to take place.

If the independence of the Chair was important in opposition, why is it not important now? I speak to a lot to the youth in high schools. Those kids have become cynical about the whole political process when they hear promises made in opposition which are not kept in government. How many promises have not been kept? We could give a litany of those promises which have not been kept. But this one for sure has not been kept.

How would Reformers be different? What could I say to a youthful high school student in Cobourg, where I was last week, about how could they be certain Reformers would keep their promises? We have made a host of promises in our new platform launch. For instance, we have promised that once the budget is balanced \$4 billion will be returned to health care and education.

A high school kid would ask: "Why should I trust you? Why in heaven's name would I listen to you? You are just saying that to get elected and once you are elected, you would break your promises". Reformers have a guarantee on our promise which is very specific. We believe and will institute a promise which is so important to the kids across the country that I am going to say it as plainly as I can. Reformers would submit to the Canadian public the right to be able to fire a liar. That is as plain and as clear as I can state it. A promise made in the fresh start campaign which is unkept will enable the Canadian public to fire the liar.

The example I use in my high school class is one that relates directly to them. I say to them, during the election campaign I, the member for Macleod, decide that there needs to be a restoration facility for old Camaros in a building that is currently unoccupied. I found money from Japan. The Japanese love our old cars. They are going to come over here and provide the money for this facility. This facility, motor work, upholstery work, painted body work, will all provide jobs for the high school students in this school. There will be advertising and some tourism. We have calculated very accurately that the total numbers of jobs will amount to 217. There is also enough money in this promise to build a small hotel near the abandoned and unoccupied old airport. That hotel would provide for the purchasers of that Camaro a place to stay. They want to come over and view their very own cars that go through the restoration process before they take delivery of it. This involves another 30 or 40 jobs.

There will be a spinoff from that. There will be bus tours that will go from this facility and travel around the country. I promise all these things if I am elected: Camaro restoration facility. We will be there for sure.

Oh boy, they scrub their hands and say: "Finally somebody thinks about the kids". They elect me and five minutes after election I say: "Ah, sorry kids, the money ran out. The Japanese investors walked away. This is the hardest thing I ever had to say to you as my electors, but I cannot keep my promise".

I ask the students: What should happen to that politician? It does not take them 15 micro seconds to answer: "Fire the liar. Recall. Turf him out. Boot him". They look right at me and say: "You had better not make that kind of promise".

Here we have that kind of a promise. "In order to enhance the independence of the Chair and in an effort to reduce the level of partisanship, when the Speaker is from the government party two of the junior Chair officers should be from the opposition". I will state publicly that I would vote for a member of the official opposition as a matter of principle on this issue. This is not a matter of partisanship.

I was very pleased to first come into Parliament and have the Speaker of the House elected. I considered that to be a significant step forward in the democratic process. I was reasonably pleased to see this commitment of the Liberals in opposition to take these steps when in government.

One of the most significant results of the McGrath round of procedural reforms was the decision that the Speaker should be elected by secret ballot by all members. This has gone a long way toward assuring members of the independence of the presiding officer.

The three deputy Speakers, however, remain, in effect, government appointees. As a consequence, when one of the junior officers is in the Chair, his or her independence

and authority is less well established. Their authority would be greatly enhanced and the non-partisan nature—

—evidence if we had individuals from the opposition as deputy chairpersons.

How long will it take to have promises kept? I suppose it will take only as long as the Canadian public will put up with the sort of unkept promises that we have had. How much spin can the government put on the red book when its members say that 78 per cent of the promises have been kept? I have gone over the major promises in the red book. Let me list a few of them. The jobs, jobs, jobs one I think is difficult to pin down. There have been some jobs from the infrastructure program, temporary jobs though they were.

• (1715)

Let us talk about a few of the other things: stable funding to the CBC, not kept; day care spaces for Canadians, not kept; medicare protection, \$3 billion per year in provincial transfers dropped, not kept; on and on they go, major promises, not minor promises.

This one I suppose could be called a minor promise. It is so easy to keep. Simply accept a member of the opposition in the position of deputy chair. I repeat, for those individuals who say no politician will keep their promises, recall is the method to assure that happens. If a politician does not keep his or her promise we should be able to fire a liar.

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech. I heard him mention the sort of related topic of when the budget is balanced the promise that Reform had made to restore funding that the Liberal government has cut for medical programs, medicare. I know that is a major concern to Canadians. It is slightly related to what we are talking about today. I would really like to get a clarification on that from the member. It is something important that Canadians want to hear.

I know they are disappointed and upset with the long waiting lists in medical centres today. It is very difficult to get an operation. I have a friend who waited about 18 months for an operation. This all stems from a failure to keep a promise to protect an industry that is very important to Canadians, just as is the failure to keep this promise today regarding the junior chairs.

I ask the member if he could expand a little on this aspect of restoring faith in a system that has been destroyed by broken promises from the other side.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to explore that a little further. The reason I came to Parliament was that medicare as far as I was concerned was under some stress. I did pay attention very closely to the promise and watched the funding reductions for medicare.

### Oral Questions

Reformers have quite a different view of deficit reduction. We believe deficit reduction must have a purpose. That purpose is to support and promote the most important social programs that we have, medicare being number one, post-secondary education being number two. As we reduce those funds down to zero and get the interest payments settled down so that they are no longer an oppressive burden, cutting things like the MP pension plan and transfers to favourite businesses of the government, we can provide more money for medicare.

The promise is straightforward and a promise that Reformers will keep. When the budget is balanced we will put \$4 billion of the lost money back into medicare and post-secondary education.

I ask my colleagues across the way who have not kept their promise on medicare to adopt that. Put that money back into medicare. Take a page out of the Reform Party fresh start book. Medicare is more important than partisan considerations.

**Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to work with the member for Macleod in the health committee for a year and a half. We carried out a number of studies. As I recall at that time, to follow up on his comments that he just made about our health care system, how valued our medicare program is to all of us in Canada, how dear it is to the Liberal government and the Liberal members of this place, we will continue to protect that and those principles that go with it in every form, in every manner. We have exemplified that time and time again in this House.

• (1720)

However, I recall a few months ago when the hon. member for Macleod suggested that it was quite okay to have a two level system in this country in health care, that it was okay to have system in which those who had a fat wallet could get the best service and those with no money in their pocket could get no service at all.

It is gratifying this afternoon to hear the hon. member for Macleod now say that he agrees with our medicare system and wants to support it. That is a move in the right direction. That is the first move in the right direction for that party and for the member for Macleod. I am delighted to hear him say that.

I would ask him to comment on what has caused him to move to this great revelation where he has suddenly realized the tremendous benefit of the health care system and our medicare system regardless of how many dollars Canadians have in their pockets. Is the hon. member for Macleod aware of the agreement that was made a year ago in the budget where the provinces were guaranteed the amount of transfer for social programs and health care and where through 1998 those increases will start to go forward and where this is exactly what the provinces asked for and what they wanted? I ask the member to comment on that. I am delighted to see the

*Oral Questions*

revelation of this member and this party in this House on medicare in Canada.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Madam Speaker, it is nice to get some praise from my colleague across the way.

Let me go back to the original promise from the Reform Party on medicare. Our original promise was deficit reduction that would not take a penny from medicare. As the deficit got worse, in our taxpayers' budget we projected \$1.5 billion from the Canada health and social transfer, which the Liberals brought in as an obfuscation measure in my view, over three years, while my colleagues cut \$4.3 billion over two years.

As the deficit reaches the point where it gets to zero, as we are able to take those funds that are currently going into interest payments, as we shrink government down to a lean and mean government rather than a fat, bloated government, we will be able to preserve medicare. Reformers simply say to our colleagues let us see them trim down the government so that we can save this program.

They say their program will produce an increase of funds for medicare. How much? How many dollars? Reformers have found \$4 billion per year to put back into medicare and post-secondary education. Their promise is a paltry promise.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I know time is short for questions and comments but I have a question for the hon. member.

Earlier the hon. member for Waterloo accused Reformers of supporting the Bloc Quebecois and I endeavoured to point out that the Liberals have been supportive of the separatists over the past three years in this place. We can clearly show that on a number of fronts.

Could the member elaborate further on his comment that in the interests of non-partisanship he is prepared to support a member from the Bloc Quebecois over a Liberal to the position of deputy chair? The member for Calgary Centre suggested that there be a full election. He suggested that there be one name put forward by the Bloc, one name put forward by the Reform Party and that the House be allowed to decide who the new deputy chair would be.

• (1725)

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Madam Speaker, that is an excellent suggestion. It is one which I believe most members of the House would say is a step toward the democratic process.

Should there be a partisan consideration? There should not. The Chair should be independent, and a free, open and democratic election would be ideal.

**Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, what is wrong with the House of Commons is very well displayed by what is going on in the debate today.

When we came to this place in 1993 over 200 members of Parliament were new. At that time we did something which all of us remember well. We were all on the list for potential Speakers of the House. In order not to be on the list of eligible Speakers we had to indicate so and our name would be taken off the list. It was open to any member from any party with any tenure.

The reality is for the most part the members with tenure in this place, members who had been here in previous Parliaments, were the most logical candidates to run for the position of Speaker of the House. Therefore it was only logical when the voting took place that we were voting for Liberal members.

It was a rather exciting evening in this place because the ballot went to three votes. There was a tie ballot after the second vote. It was a very exciting time. We made a choice and we have all lived with that choice. The Speaker who was selected that evening is the Speaker we still have today. We have all been very comfortable with the choice we made that evening.

Now we are discussing the appointment of a deputy chair. Why should deputy chairs be arrived at in any different form than the Speaker? That is the core of the question. If deputy chairs are strictly government appointments, then we are demeaning this place.

I would like to endorse the comments of the member for Calgary Centre. An appropriate vehicle in the current circumstances would be to have a nomination from the Bloc and a nomination from Reform. There is one vacancy. We could have an election. That would be consistent with the recommendation that was made. It would enhance the non-partisan nature of the Chair.

The British practice has been mentioned, which alternates the Chair positions between government and opposition. Thus, if the Speaker were from the government party, such as is the case now, then the deputy speaker would be from the opposition, the next officer would be from the government, and so forth.

The government knows that this debate is going on in the House today. I hope there is someone who is empowered to make a decision other than the nominee who was announced. It was assumed, from all signs, that his appointment would be immediately adopted by this House.

• (1730)

Who is making an issue out of this? The Reform members are. Why are we making an issue out of this? I have explained some of the background. Time after time in this House of Commons the Reform caucus has done its job. Reform has done its homework

*Oral Questions*

and is representing the interests of Canadians. We are representing due process, or what we see due process should consist of.

We have heard time after time that we are the third party. Government members take great delight in calling us the third party. As an MP from British Columbia, I know what a struggle it is to represent all interests in this Parliament.

I believe in the last Parliament there were 43 or 44 members of the New Democratic Party in this House of Commons. I have talked to some of those members and I know what a difficult time they felt they had in this environment to get their message out. Under the circumstances Reform has done quite well in that regard. I make that point because an effective opposition in this place is very important.

There was a recommendation by an opposition member at the time in developing party policy which then became a government policy document. It was enlightened and would lead to one subtle movement toward creating a more non-partisan and better Parliament. We are seeing an attempt to cripple Reform and the opposition at every turn because the government feels threatened. This is quite inappropriate. There is a singular focus on Reform in this case because it is recognized as the only party that can replace the government.

Will the government accept the amendment the Reform Party has put forward today? I have a great concern that it will not. Why would I say that? Because the signs and symptoms are all there.

We have all had experiences at the committee level. I have been through elections and consistently I have seen that no Liberals have voted for adoption of a Reform vice-chair to any committee and all Liberals have supported vice-chairs from the Bloc.

In my last experience with an election in committee, at the time of the nomination of a Bloc vice-chair, I asked that the Bloc vice-chair explain his position on the northern Cree in Quebec should the PQ make a unilateral declaration of independence. That was a litmus test as to the suitability and appropriateness of whether or not that Bloc member should qualify as vice-chair. In response the Liberals said that it was irrelevant and voted against making it a debatable motion.

● (1735 )

The government has shown on many occasions that it does not want to share and it does not want to consult. I endorse the idea put forward by the member for Calgary Centre that we have elections from the opposition. We will see how that stacks up for this deputy chair position, a non-partisan election, a free vote.

Why is it whenever the Liberals are held to debate on an issue, that if they know they cannot win based on the logic of the debate,

they turn it into a procedural debate? That is what they did in committee when I brought forward a motion for debate about the northern Cree in Quebec. There was no attempt or any desire to upset the Bloc or to upset the Quebec agenda but rather than debate the issue, a procedural argument was brought in so that debate could be avoided.

If government members cannot turn it into a procedural debate, they turn it into a personality issue. We have seen that in the debate we are having today. Or they turn it into a partisan issue; we have seen that in the debate today; or fill in the blank. We just saw another fill in the blank which was to turn it into a medicare issue. I am puzzled as to how that relates to the election of a deputy speaker, but that is where we ended up in this debate.

Two-thirds of the members were new to this House in 1993. We have fallen a long way from that heady idealism of 1993. I would like to see us move forward. I would like to see this amended motion or some other compromise adopted, such as the one put forward by our member for Calgary Centre. We should not put ourselves in the position of entrenching that it will be done the way it was done before because that is the way it has always been done. That seems to be where the government is coming from at this moment.

If we look at western democracies, when Canada has a majority government it has every potential of having all the signs and symptoms of an elected dictatorship. We do not have the checks and balances of other western democracies. Looking to the south of us, the U.S. president is given a veto power. That is done for a reason. It is because they have a Congress and a Senate which act quite independently. They do not have the entrenched party discipline system we have seen from the old parties in Canada. It is a two-edged sword. In the United States, this has a tendency at times to handcuff the government but on the other hand, it makes the government more responsive.

What implication does it have for Canada? The major implication it has for Canada is that the party that forms the government has an even larger onus placed upon it to fulfil its election promises because we do not have all those other checks and balances. This was recognized very early by the Reform Party. It is why we set out such a detailed platform document prior to the last federal election.

● (1740 )

I believe it was that document which led to the development of the red book by the current government. The Liberals had to have a platform to respond to our platform. We are seeing that all over again in the lead up to the 1997 federal election. Reform now has its fresh start platform. We are setting the agenda and we are going to see the Liberal Party once again do the same thing.

*Oral Questions*

My point is, this is a singular contributing reason why it is so important that government—

**Mr. Speller:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I heard the hon. member say earlier that the debate was going off track. I am wondering how his comments relate in any way to the motion before the House.

**The Speaker:** My dear colleague, in these debates we give members as much latitude as we possibly can. I know that the hon. member is going to tie in all his remarks and make his debate very coherent.

**Mr. Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the reason this is all so important is that it is very important that the government meet its promises. It is an election promise which is still outstanding. We want the government to fulfil its promise.

In summary, I wish to endorse the idea put forward by the member for Calgary Centre that we have an election for the position of deputy speaker based on names put forward by the opposition generically.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for North Island—Powell River raised a very relevant point in his presentation in relating what is happening here today to what happens with regularity in committee. That is the collusion of this government with the official opposition to cause vice-chairs to be selected by appointment, and there is no other word for it other than appointment, rather than by election. We want the position under discussion today be an elected one. We also want all other important functions outside of the House, in committee, done by a fair election, preferably by secret ballot.

Does the hon. member for North Island—Powell River think that would be practical?

**Mr. Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things that could be done by committee. In the transition, I am sure some things which are now done by appointment would be laborious for a committee. However, once everyone recognized the ground rules, that all parties would have access to all information relating to those appointments, then I think it could be a very smooth process.

What could be better in terms of ensuring that blatant patronage is taken out of the appointment process than ensuring that all parties have a chance to blow the whistle on an individual if there is a problem? In the long run it would be in the interests of the government because it would lead to better appointments and it would also bring buy-in from all political persuasions in terms of who the appointed people were.

• (1745)

Therefore yes, I think democracy is hard work. We all know that. However, this is a major move forward in terms of responsive democracy if we could make the kind of changes that my colleague has suggested.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech by the member for North Island—Powell River and the point he raised regarding democracy. I compare that to the point raised by the member for Fundy—Royal earlier on this afternoon, complaining about using House time to debate this motion.

There seems to be a fairly stark contrast between the concept of democracy on this side of the House and the concept of democracy on that side of the House. I think we believe in the concept that we debate the issues, we come to a conclusion, we vote and we apply the best exercise of our judgment.

On that side of the House members seem to say: “Let us crack the whip, everybody toe the party line and that is how we arrive at decisions on votes in the House”.

My question for the member for North Island—Powell River is as a parliamentarian and not as a politician. I think this afternoon we are speaking as parliamentarians who are debating a motion regarding occupying the chair which you sit in, Mr. Speaker, during your absence. It is a very important role that the person would play. We as parliamentarians should be very much concerned about the decorum of this House and how we represent our constituents from one side of the country to the other.

How does the member for North Island—Powell River feel or think he would feel when he talks to the people in his constituency and tells them that this place where we protect democracy, this bastion of democracy and free speech, has been eroded by the process that has gone on here this afternoon where we have had to stand up and argue for a policy proposed by the Liberal government and on which it ran in the last election and said “if you elect us we will deliver this”?

All we are asking is that the Liberals fulfil their commitment. Yet we have had the complete and absolute refusal on their part to acknowledge this.

Also, how does the member feel, not as a politician but as a parliamentarian, back in his constituency when he is talking to his constituents and the people of Canada asking if this House is being debased or is this Liberal government really upholding the traditions of democracy in this land?

**Mr. Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, how do we separate ourselves in this Parliament from the democratic process and talk of ourselves in terms of the political process? I believe that my colleague’s opening comment is probably the most appropriate. I believe that the Reformers in the House have a very different view of democracy than the other members in the House. Perhaps it is one of the main planks in our platform.

I have been constantly amazed at how some of our fundamental tenets, things that underpin us philosophically and resonate back home, are still denied by the old parties in the House. There is still a complete misunderstanding among many members in the House

*Oral Questions*

as to what a free vote actually means to a Reform member of Parliament.

In terms of discipline, we heard my colleague talk about cracking the whip. We have a much different view of discipline as well. When it comes to the fundamental principles of democracy, I do think we are talking about what appears to be a small item here, when we are talking about deputy speakers. It is not a small item. I have talked and I am sure every one of my colleagues has talked about the behaviour of the Speaker or deputy speaker in various circumstances that have happened over the last three years in this House. Certainly not in your case, Mr. Speaker, but yes, there have been some concerns about individual decisions or postures or behaviours of various deputy speakers.

• (1750)

There are times in this House when there are not firm guidelines. There is free speech in this place and the deputy speaker does set the tone when the Speaker is not in the chair. It is of fundamental importance that the deputy speaker have all-party support in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am curious that with the comments my colleague just made I am sure that he concurs with me that there is the issue of settling disputes from time to time and the impartiality of the Speaker. In this case that is not the issue with respect to the member we are talking about.

What we are talking about here I believe is the issue, the most fundamental principle, that this government made a promise and it is not keeping the promise. That is what this debate is about. This is a pivotal point in this Parliament, that the government once again is not keeping its word.

The issue of the member for Kingston and the Islands, as my colleague has said, really is not the issue. The member himself is not the issue; the principle is.

**Mr. Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad one of my colleagues was listening so closely to the way in which something may have been interpreted by someone reading *Hansard*. Yes, indeed, I fully concur with my colleague's statements that we are not talking about the calibre or qualifications of the member from the Liberal Party who has been nominated. We are talking about the issue of deputy speaker appointments.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, we are debating two things simultaneously today. Primarily and foremost of course is the matter of the appointment of the Deputy Chairman of Committee of the Whole, but we are also discussing and have discussed at some length the failure of the government to support and live up to a promise which is contained in the famous red book.

There are some members opposite who have read it. There are some who, we found by their own admission today, have not. Nevertheless, this is the holy bible of the Government of Canada, *Le petit livre rouge du président*, s'il vous plaît. I would refer to it as the red book of musings, a list of promises to be kept if convenient and ignored if inconvenient.

The other day we heard that 78 per cent of the promises in this infamous document have been kept.

• (1755)

I had a rather interesting conversation on the day the announcement was made with a very devout Liberal. I use the word devout advisedly because every time the Prime Minister's name is mentioned in this lady's presence she genuflects. Her exact words were: "My, but it must be nice to be able to write your own report card". That statement was made by a Liberal.

Let us forget about this fraudulent red book for a moment and consider the public position of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. He wrote a very scholarly report in which he recommended, without reservation, that two of the deputy speakers be chosen from among members of the opposition. There is no equivocation about that. That was his professional opinion. I would submit that it was a very sound opinion.

I have seen the hon. member sitting opposite. When this particular matter is raised he laughs quite openly. His head is rolled back and his hands are out. He finds it hilarious. I would submit that rather than taking this as a big joke, perhaps he should be reconsidering his contradictory position and withdrawing his name for consideration for this appointment.

It has been suggested by members opposite that if the government did accept the recommendations of the member for Kingston and the Islands and appointed someone from this side of the House that they would be duty bound to appoint a separatist because they form the official opposition. I do not know where that idea comes from. Certainly there is nothing in the standing orders which would suggest that it would have to be done that way. As a matter of fact, they have already bestowed an awful lot of positions, benefits, goodies, whatever you want to call them, on their dear friends in the official opposition by appointing every single committee vice-chair from that particular caucus.

Rather than get into a cat fight over that particular issue, I have a modest proposal, which is made on the assumption that the amendment we are now debating will be defeated. The government can do anything it wishes in the House. If our amendment is defeated and if the member for Kingston and the Islands will reconsider his contradictory position, my proposal is that this appointment should be from one of the smaller groups in the House. My modest proposal—and I hope it is not out of order—is that consideration be given to the member for Yukon. I think that

*Oral Questions*

would be acceptable to all and sundry, certainly on this side of the House.

That is not a motion. If it were it would be out of order. However, if we did that it would eliminate the taint of blatant patronage.

Speaking of patronage, since we have veered rather steeply into that area in this debate, I find it rather interesting that both my Liberal opponent in the 1993 election and his campaign manager have received very lucrative appointments to federal boards. How does that square with the red book of maybes, or the red book of possibilities?

• (1800)

I hope the government and particularly the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will give some thought to what I have said today. My proposal is made in all sincerity. If lightning strikes and the heavens fall and our amendment is actually accepted by this House, then my proposal will become redundant and will be of no importance. Since I do not expect that to happen, I wish that in order to instil a little more democracy in this place and a little more respect—

## NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wish to give notice that with respect to the consideration of the motion now before the House, at the next sitting I shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

**The Speaker:** The notice of motion is in order. I notice on my clock that 60 seconds have elapsed. The member will have those extra 60 seconds. The hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia on debate.

## APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, the 60 seconds do not matter because I was just winding up my speech.

In all sincerity I hope the government will give some consideration to my suggestion that someone who is totally neutral be appointed to the position and that that someone be an independent. Perhaps it would be the person I suggested or perhaps someone else. If such a procedure were followed, it would at least do away with the acrimony and would give greater respect to the office of deputy chairman.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, during the presentation of my hon. colleague from Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, the hon. minister made an

intervention which called for the extension of this debate at the next sitting of the House. This intervention is quite interesting in that there are no Liberal members presently debating the issue.

It is interesting because we on this side of the House view this as a matter of principle, that the Liberal government would bring forward an appointment at this time after three years in office without even paying any attention to its own promise. Then it turns around and tries to convince the Canadian electorate that it has done everything humanly possible to live up to the expectations of the Canadian public, the expectations that the Canadian public had following the Liberal government's election in October 1993.

It is very disturbing to me that the Liberals consider this issue to have no importance, that they will not even rise in this place to debate this issue with Reformers. It is very disturbing. One of my hon. colleagues points out, probably correctly, that it is simply because there are no arguments. There is nothing they can say to defend their position which runs so contrary to their own red book promise.

• (1805)

My hon. colleague put forward as an alternative a proposal that should our amendment to this motion for an appointment to the deputy chair's position be defeated, as I am quite sure it will be, perhaps the government would look beyond the partisanship of appointing someone from the official opposition, from the Bloc Québécois, or from the Reform Party of Canada, and look at the option of appointing one of the independent members.

It is certainly a very generous gesture on the part of my colleague to call for that consideration. However would the member consider the suggestion, in light of what the hon. member for Calgary Centre suggested earlier, that if our amendment were to fail, the government's first option be to have an open, honest and clear election for that position with the only candidates coming from the opposition ranks? Of course that would include the independents as well. They could submit names and have an election for that position rather than an appointment. Would he consider that as the first option, with a fall back position of the government appointing someone from the ranks of the independents?

**Mr. Morrison:** Madam Speaker, my generosity is exceeded only by my eloquence and I do appreciate the comments.

I have to accept what has been said by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River. Certainly, the ideal would be to have an election, as has been suggested by several members during this debate. However I deal with realities. I know the government does not like elections for anything. In this instance, if it could make an appointment that would be more palatable on the basis of non-partisanship, it would be a compromise. Certainly, if I had my



*Oral Questions*

druthers, I would like to see the position filled by an honest free election, preferably by secret ballot.

With respect to the matter of the parliamentary secretary and the request to extend debate, I hope he did that so that the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will have the opportunity to stand and explain at great length and in great detail the contradictions between his position while in opposition and his current position.

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I wanted to double check with the member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia to make certain that he agrees this debate is not about the qualifications or the standing of the member for Kingston and the Islands. This debate is not about his ability to fill the chair in place of the Speaker. We all know he is a very decent chap.

During the summertime, he took a ride on the Rocky Mountaineer Railway on the west coast from Vancouver to Kamloops and beyond. He probably thinks he understands the west now as a result of that trip. We all know he is a very decent chap. He gives wonderfully enthralling speeches here in the House. We really do like him.

I would like the member to actually confirm that this is not an attack on that member but that this is really a strike-out for the fulfilment of a promise made by the government and a strike-out for democracy.

• (1810)

**Mr. Morrison:** Madam Speaker, I would never dream of attacking the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. In fact if he does reconsider his contradictory position on this issue, we would continue to enjoy his presence on the other side of the House. If he does accept the position in the end, we will miss him terribly. He is a man who adds a little bit of spice—I might say frivolity but I will not—but I am not attacking the member for Kingston and the Islands in any guise.

**Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, today's debate arose from a situation the government created. It was the straw that broke the camel's back when the government failed to give the customary 48 hours notice of the motion it brought forward regarding the junior chair. If the government had not done that today, we would probably not have had this opportunity to talk about the broken promise that we have on the other side.

I would reiterate that this is definitely not an attack on the member for Kingston and the Islands, although by his own admission in this House he does not read the bills. Perhaps if he were the Speaker it would be an opportunity for him to read the bills, to follow every debate in great detail and to assist us with his knowledge of the rules.

If it had not been for the fact that the government had failed to keep a promise and then exacerbated the situation by not giving 48 hours notice, we would not be discussing this situation today.

The plain fact is it is a real mystery to the majority of Canadians why this government continually supports or seems to act in ways that support the official opposition instead of recognizing the contribution that is made by the Reform Party of Canada which represents a greater number of provinces and a greater number of interests across the country. There is a good case to be made for having a member from the Reform Party as one of the deputy speakers. It would be a good idea to put it to a vote in this House.

I know it is not the motion before us, but support seems to be gathering as we go through this debate today to have an election as we did for the Speaker. Because it was done by a secret ballot, whoever was elected through that process would have no idea who cast the ballots that elected him or her and it would be guaranteed to be impartial. Because of that, he or she would rely upon a good relationship with the members in this House to retain that position in to the future. I strongly support the idea of an election and I hope we will move to that, if not in the short term, certainly in the long term.

I refer to the report "Reviving Parliamentary Democracy: The Liberal Plan for House of Commons and Electoral Reform". In fact, the member for Kingston and the Islands was one of the authors of the report. I have it here and I know I cannot use props so I cannot hold it up. I quote from a passage on page 9 which is headed "The Independence of the Chair":

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

That position is actually supported by the member for Kingston and the Islands.

It is a shame that this government has not put itself in the position of keeping this promise. It is very disturbing and if the government had not irritated us by failing to keep this promise, we would not be in this debate today.

Perhaps in the long run it will turn out for the best because it has brought attention to the issue. The government side has been unable to put up any speakers to counter the arguments. It has been incapable of defending its position and it has now done the disgusting thing of moving notice of closure on this discussion. The government is going to close us down so that we cannot have a decent debate on the issue. Frankly, the government members do not want to discuss it.

We have heard about the terrible reputation of the Mulroney government in moving closure and closing down debate in this place. This government that talked about more free votes, talked about appointing junior chairs from the opposition, has moved

*Oral Questions*

closure four times as often as the Mulroney government. It is striking out for new records in that respect.

• (1815)

The Prime Minister loves to claim during question period that he is only adhering to the well established traditions of parliamentary democracy. Maybe he has not bothered to take a look at what is happening in other parliamentary democracies in the 30 years he has been here. He is still working under the same rules he learned 30 years ago.

If he had bothered to take a little look when he was on one of his trips to the U.K., he would have noticed that it is quite common in the mother of Parliaments for members to vote with members on the opposite side. It happens a couple of hundred times a year. There are no penalties for that. People do not get tossed out of caucus. It is one of those things that has developed as Parliament matured.

Unfortunately the Canadian Parliament is mired in the old ways of doing things. It has not caught up with the information age. It really is one of the most backward institutions in the world today.

As many members know, I am from New Zealand and there have been dramatic changes there in the parliamentary system. It would not be faced with a debate about filling junior chair positions from the opposition benches. In New Zealand the government introduced the initiative and referendum. It has a mixed member proportional system of electing members and it has really shown creativity in adapting the parliamentary system to the information age.

Meanwhile, here in Canada we remain mired in the ways of the past, in what the Prime Minister likes to call tradition. "More free votes" he said. I guess if we had one he could say that he had fulfilled his promise of more free votes. I do not think that is what the Canadian people thought he meant by more free votes. Certainly it has been a major disappointment.

I write a weekly column for a newspaper in my riding, the *North Shore News*. I had already put together the material for next week's report. It is just by pure coincidence that it dealt with promises that had been made by this government. It is very appropriate that I raise it today.

The promise that has been broken today by refusing to allow the appointment of a junior chair from the opposition benches is just one of a long list of broken promises. My colleague for Kootenay East actually put together a list of the top 10 broken promises. I think it is probably appropriate that there be some exposure of those right here in this Chamber.

Obviously number one on the top of the list would be the jobs, jobs, jobs promise which is in chapter 1 of the red book. Instead of jobs, jobs, jobs we are stuck with 1.4 million unemployed, 500,000 Canadians looking for work, youth unemployment at 18 per cent or higher, and polls showing one in four Canadians to be worried about the security of their jobs.

Second on the list from the member for Kootenay East is preserving and protecting medicare. We have already heard some discussion in the debate today about the tremendous cutbacks there have been in the transfers in support of medicare across the country. Meanwhile, members of the government stride around the country saying what a wonderful job they have done, paying lip service to the protection of medicare while they busily cut the funding, creating longer wait lists, probably creating the possibility that people die while on those waiting lists.

If we look at the figures, by the 1998-99 fiscal year the present government will have cut \$7 billion from social transfers to the provinces, completely contradictory to the promises made on page 74 of the red book.

It is just like the promise made about appointing deputy or junior chairs—broken promises. As much as the Liberals try to say they have kept their promises, even the ones we can kind of give them some credit for keeping, are only kept in a sort of halfway manner.

When they talk about keeping their promises on the debt and deficit, if we really look deeply we would find that they have cut the heart out of some programs in order to give the appearance of making progress, while at the same time increasing our total debt by almost \$100 billion in three years.

**An hon. member:** Shameful.

**Mr. White (North Vancouver):** That, frankly, as one of my colleagues says, is shameful. They are trying to deceive the public into thinking that things have been achieved and promises have been kept when they really have not.

• (1820)

One of the favourite promises was to scrap, kill and abolish the GST. The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister made good use of that on the campaign trail. Boy, did they whoop that one up. When they were asked how would they do it, they just said: "Wait till after the election. Do not ask me now. Ask me after the election". My goodness they did not take long to break that promise.

Now we have this unsuccessful attempt to have every province buy into a scheme to harmonize the GST with the PST and create all sorts of new distortions and dissatisfactions like the tax on books. We are faced now with all manner of new problems instead of curing the basic problems that are there with the most hated tax

*Oral Questions*

in Canada, the GST. That just came from yet another broken promise of this government.

I know there is one here that strikes a cord with a number of people in my riding. One of the broken promises is stable multi-year funding for the CBC. What a joke.

The Reform Party was attacked during the 1993 election for telling the truth about the subsidies to the CBC and the need to cut some of the fat out of that organization. What happens? The government says it will never cut a thing, and cuts much more than the Reform had ever said it would cut. How the government gets away with breaking these promises I do not know.

Promise number six was to renegotiate NAFTA, red book, page 24. Two months after taking power the Prime Minister signed NAFTA. Thank goodness he did. If we had not had free trade helping this country stay afloat we would be in deep trouble today. However, the Liberals made a promise and they did not keep it.

Then we have—my goodness, this is a hot one that we have had fun with the last couple of weeks—a code of conduct for politicians, red book, page 95. There has not been a new code. The Prime Minister only uses his secret ministerial guidelines when it suits him to do so. In the U.K. the guidelines are made public. In fact the whip of the Reform Party had a copy of the guidelines from the U.K. in the House just a week or so ago. It is a large book that sets out all of the rules to which ministers of the crown have to adhere in order to be ethical. What a change it would be here if we had something like that.

If the Prime Minister wants to claim that he is keeping with the traditions of parliamentary democracy, let him produce his ethical guidelines for ministers. Let the public read them so that everyone can understand what is happening on that side of the House.

Then we have number eight, appointments based on competence, red book, page 92. I do not want to embarrass anybody by naming names in the House. I know there are a lot of people can identify a couple of hundred Liberal patronage appointments. I know the member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia mentioned this amazing thing that happened in his riding. Two people who were Liberal supporters suddenly were qualified to take up amazing jobs on parole boards and receive wonderful rewards for their loyalty to the Liberal Party. We see that happening right across the country. It happens in my riding. Liberal supporters are being rewarded with blatant patronage appointments.

The number nine promise was more free votes with which I already dealt earlier. I should mention the red book page number in case there is anybody out there who has not used the red book for firewood yet. They can read it on page 92. The Prime Minister has only permitted one free vote in three years—

**Mr. Epp:** That was prearranged.

**Mr. White (North Vancouver):** That was prearranged, yes, thank you very much to my colleague for reminding me.

The number ten promise was that the Liberals would eliminate trade barriers between the provinces, red book, page 22. We know that those have not been eliminated. In fact, those trade barriers are still costing the economy between \$6 billion and \$10 billion a year.

We are back at the beginning again. A situation developed today because the government did not keep its promise. Despite all the hoopla at its convention during the weekend, despite all the resolutions that were rammed through so fast that we all got wind burn, as mentioned by the whip, we are debating an issue that is very important. It is related to democracy in this House.

• (1825 )

We really should object to this closure motion that has been moved. We should request that the government stand up and support democracy and allow a member of an opposition party to be appointed as a junior Chair.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I found the member's comments in reference to this amendment quite enlightening. It is always good to hear the performance of the government.

**An hon. member:** Non-performance.

**Mr. Hanger:** Or the non-performance, as pointed out. I think the member for Vancouver North expressed it quite well in outlining all the broken promises.

I too had an opportunity to look at point No. 10 which was the reason for this debate today. Point No. 10 deals with the independence of the Chair and the reduction in the level of partisanship. Those are certainly worthy statements to make.

I also looked a little further. As the member for Vancouver North mentioned, in the early part of the Liberal red book it states that mounting criticism of the House of Commons and its proceedings reflect the frustration of citizens and parliamentarians alike with the continuing failure of Parliament to address effectively the problems that face us.

Here we have a statement in the red book with some definite outlines which the Liberals say they are going to change. Unfortunately, as the member for Vancouver North outlined, they are not going to do that. They have already fallen short on their promises and it has only been three years.

In the Reform Party's platform we outline two visions of Canada, an old vision and a new vision. The old vision is about the Liberals and the Conservatives and how they like big government, how they like to spend, how they like to increase taxes and how they like to feed the big spending machine that was created by them.

*Adjournment Debate*

I would like the member for Vancouver North to outline the new vision of Canada that Reformers would like to see. I would encourage him to give in as much detail as possible the new vision that we see for Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** The hon. member for North Vancouver has one minute left.

**Mr. White (North Vancouver):** Madam Speaker, I wish I could do this in one minute. The fresh start platform of the Reform Party of Canada is worthy of at least a 20 minute speech. It is really unfortunate that I am not going to have enough time to do that. If I can relate it to one thing the member mentioned, it is this whole issue of partisanship and the need to get rid of that. Part of the Reform vision of Canada is getting rid of the partisanship. We want to appoint people based on their skills and competence with open tendering and a much more open style of government.

Partisanship leads to waste and to the sort of situation that we saw last week with an \$87 million interest free loan being given to a company like Bombardier with billions of dollars in assets and quite capable of funding itself. Eighty-seven million is a tiny drop in the bucket to Bombardier. It is totally ridiculous to have a situation like that going on. It is being done clearly for partisanship reasons. Everybody in the country can see that is the reason. There simply is no need for it. Reform would put an end to that.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### TRADE

**Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the United States through the Helms-Burton bill is seeking to expand its embargo against Cuba to other countries, including Canada, by alleging so-called rights to United States property in Cuba. The United States is holding itself up as the censor of potential foreign investment in sectors which may include former United States property.

• (1830)

The United States believes that the property formerly owned by United States citizens cannot be freely used in Cuba and that it truly belongs to those who live in the United States and is not and will not be the property of the present Cuban government and will at some time be renegotiated back to the American people.

It claims, moreover, that international law requires the Government of Cuba to pay top, adequate and effective compensation.

A constituent of mine, Dr. Tarjei Tennesen, has done some very extensive research for me and this is why I have brought this question before the House.

There is no United States property in Cuba as far as international law is concerned. Ownership of such property was transferred to the Cuban people through a process of nationalization in conformity with international law, which was carried out through expropriation by exercising the power of article 24 of the Cuban constitution of 1940 and the corresponding articles of the fundamental law of February 7, 1959.

Moreover, the property of the United States in Cuba was liquidated under the International Claims Settlement Act of 1964 of the Cuba program of the United States Foreign Claims Settlement Commission and converted into bonds.

We have been criticized unduly for coddling Cuba and for being soft on the Cuban communist regime.

The document in this research indicates that the Americans are bullying countries for trading, openly and fairly, with Cuba, that they are using external legislation over extraterritorial matters which were settled very legitimately some years ago through international law.

In the months following the triumph of the revolution of 1959 the United States government began harassing the country in open opposition. The nationalization of United States property began again in 1960 in response to continuous attacks on Cuban economic targets, combined with United States domination of all basic sectors of activity in the country and the need, as the Americans suggested, to consolidate the new economic, political and social process in Cuba.

In 1960 the president of the republic and the Prime Minister acted to provide jointly, through resolutions, the nationalization by expropriation of property in Cuba belonging to natural or juridical persons having the status of United States nationals.

The transparency of the procedure instituted by the Cuban authorities is not only recognized by international law courts in the United States itself, but it has been confirmed by the validity under international legislation of the Cuban nationalization process in law suits brought forward by United States nationals.

I would suggest that Cuba negotiated in a transparent and open fashion the very timely payment of compensation through lump sum agreements concluded and implemented with Canada, France, Spain and Switzerland. Also, agreements were reached with other countries.

This open, transparent nationalization of property by Cuba is what the question is today. I ask the Minister for International Trade are we soft on Cuba. Are we condoning a communist regime in Cuba or are we trading in an open and competitive fashion?

*Adjournment Debate*

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to address this question on behalf of the Minister for International Trade.

The question of the Helms-Burton legislation has been before Parliament and indeed before the court of world opinion for the last number of months. It is clearly the position of the Canadian government, supported by the European Union, the Mexican government and a number of international forums that this is an extraterritorial application of U.S. law, that it is inappropriate and a fundamental breach of international conventions and international law.

The member raised some very interesting points and the government would agree with the points she has raised. Number one is that it is up to an individual state whether it expropriates or nationalizes property. Indeed in the past and in the present day even in Canada we have cases where the Canadian government or the provinces or their creatures, the municipalities, can expropriate under the Expropriation Act.

What is at issue here is not whether expropriation is legal and should be undertaken, it is whether proper compensation has been done.

The issues the hon. member raised are correct. The United States government has followed a 30 year path of isolation with Cuba. That simply has not worked. We have gone a different path.

In 1980 the Canadian government settled on behalf of Canadians any outstanding issues of compensation for expropriation. Most countries have done that. The U.S. has simply refused to do it.

At the end of the day, it introduced legislation which is in and of itself a violation of international law. I would agree with the hon. member opposite and would say to her that the actions that the Canadian government has taken are to protect the interests of Canadian companies which find themselves challenged or potentially threatened by this extraterritorial application of U.S. law.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais):** The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.35 p.m.)

---





# CONTENTS

Monday, October 28, 1996

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Canada Elections Act

Bill C-307. Motion for second reading .....	5709
Mrs. Terrana .....	5709
Mr. Langlois .....	5710
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	5711
Mr. Harper (Calgary West) .....	5713
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.) .....	5714

### Suspension of sitting

(Sitting suspended at 11.36 a.m.) .....	5714
---	------

### Sitting Resumed

The House resumed at 12.01 p.m. ....	5714
--------------------------------------	------

### Points of Order

#### Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs

Mr. Strahl .....	5714
Mr. Kilger .....	5716
The Speaker .....	5716

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Manganese Based Fuel Additives Act

Bill C-29. Consideration resumed of motion for third reading .....	5716
Mr. Pickard .....	5716
Mr. Nunez .....	5717
Mr. Morrison .....	5718
Motion .....	5719
Mr. Shepherd .....	5719
Mr. Sauvageau .....	5720
Amendment to an amendment .....	5721
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5722
Mr. Marchand .....	5723
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac) .....	5724
Mr. Fillion .....	5725
Mr. Paré .....	5726
Mrs. Debien .....	5727

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Colouring Boissevain

Mr. McKinnon .....	5728
--------------------	------

### Gérald Larose

Mr. Duceppe .....	5728
-------------------	------

### Nishg'a Agreement in Principle

Mr. Duncan .....	5729
------------------	------

### Health Care

Mrs. Sheridan .....	5729
---------------------	------

### The death of Arthur Tremblay

Mr. Fillion .....	5729
-------------------	------

### Social Programs

Ms. Brown (Oakville—Milton) .....	5729
-----------------------------------	------

### Liberal Party

Mr. Hoepfner .....	5730
--------------------	------

### The President of France

Mr. Assad .....	5730
-----------------	------

### Middle East

Mr. Volpe .....	5730
-----------------	------

### Liberal Party

Mr. Discepolo .....	5730
---------------------	------

### Liberal Party

Mr. Culbert .....	5731
-------------------	------

### Liberal Party

Mr. Strahl .....	5731
------------------	------

### Liberal Party

Mr. Bertrand .....	5731
--------------------	------

### Liberal Party

Mr. Bellehumeur .....	5731
-----------------------	------

### Poverty

Mr. Taylor .....	5732
------------------	------

### Health Care

Mr. Bevilacqua .....	5732
----------------------	------

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### The Constitution

Mr. Gauthier .....	5732
--------------------	------

Mr. Dion .....	5732
----------------	------

Mr. Gauthier .....	5732
--------------------	------

Mr. Dion .....	5732
----------------	------

Mr. Gauthier .....	5733
--------------------	------

Mr. Dion .....	5733
----------------	------

Mrs. Venne .....	5733
------------------	------

Mr. Dion .....	5733
----------------	------

Mrs. Venne .....	5733
------------------	------

Mr. Dion .....	5733
----------------	------

### Employment

Miss Grey .....	5733
-----------------	------

Mr. Gray .....	5734
----------------	------

Miss Grey .....	5734
-----------------	------

Mr. Gray .....	5734
----------------	------

Miss Grey .....	5734
-----------------	------

Mr. Gray .....	5734
----------------	------

### Federal Investments

Mr. Loubier .....	5734
-------------------	------

Mr. Manley .....	5734
------------------	------

Mr. Loubier .....	5735
-------------------	------

Mr. Manley .....	5735
------------------	------

### Employment

Mr. Solberg .....	5735
-------------------	------

Mr. Peters .....	5735
------------------	------

Mr. Solberg .....	5735
-------------------	------

Mr. Peters .....	5735
------------------	------

### Zaire

Mrs. Debien .....	5736
-------------------	------

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	5736
--	------

Mrs. Debien .....	5736
-------------------	------



Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	5736
<b>Health Care</b>	
Mr. Hill (Macleod) .....	5736
Mr. Volpe .....	5736
Mr. Hill (Macleod) .....	5736
Mr. Volpe .....	5737
<b>Polygram</b>	
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	5737
Mr. Manley .....	5737
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	5737
Mr. Manley .....	5737
<b>Agriculture</b>	
Mrs. Ur .....	5737
Mr. Goodale .....	5737
<b>Government Expenses</b>	
Mr. Epp .....	5738
Mr. Massé .....	5738
Mr. Epp .....	5738
Mr. Massé .....	5738
<b>National Defence</b>	
Mr. Brien .....	5738
Mr. Massé .....	5738
Mr. Brien .....	5738
Mr. Massé .....	5738
<b>Dangerous Offenders</b>	
Mr. Hanger .....	5738
Mr. Gray .....	5739
Mr. Hanger .....	5739
Mr. Gray .....	5739
<b>Canadian Securities Commission</b>	
Mr. Telegdi .....	5739
Mr. Peters .....	5739
<b>Railway Transportation</b>	
Mr. Crête .....	5739
Mr. Anderson .....	5739
<b>Bombardier Inc.</b>	
Mr. Silye .....	5739
Mr. Manley .....	5739
<b>Disabled Persons</b>	
Ms. McLaughlin .....	5740
Mr. Nault .....	5740
<b>Trent–Severn Waterway</b>	
Mr. Adams .....	5740
Mr. Arseneault .....	5740
<b>Presence in Gallery</b>	
The Speaker .....	5740

<b>Committee of the Whole</b>	
<b>Appointment of Deputy Chairman</b>	
Mr. Gray .....	5740
Mr. Strahl .....	5740
The Speaker .....	5741
Amendment .....	5743
Mr. Zed .....	5743
Mr. Strahl .....	5744
Mr. Silye .....	5744
Mrs. Dalphond–Guiral .....	5745
Amendment to the amendment .....	5746
Mr. Szabo .....	5746
Mr. Williams .....	5746
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5747
Mr. Morrison .....	5748

<b>Committees of the House</b>	
<b>Public Accounts</b>	
Mr. Guimond .....	5749
<b>Procedure and House Affairs</b>	
Mr. Zed .....	5749
(Motion agreed to.) .....	5749

<b>Committee of the Whole</b>	
<b>Appointment of Deputy Chairman</b>	
Mr. Telegdi .....	5749
Mr. Hill (Macleod) .....	5750
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5750
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5751
Mr. Silye .....	5751
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5754
Mr. Hill (Macleod) .....	5755
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	5757
Mr. Culbert .....	5757
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5758
Mr. Duncan .....	5758
Mr. Morrison .....	5760
Mr. Williams .....	5760
Mr. Abbott .....	5761
Mr. Morrison .....	5761
<b>Notice of Closure Motion</b>	
Mr. Peters .....	5762
<b>Appointment of Deputy Chairman</b>	
Consideration resumed of motion .....	5762
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River) .....	5762
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	5763
Mr. White (North Vancouver) .....	5763
Mr. Hanger .....	5765

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

<b>Trade</b>	
Mrs. Brushett .....	5766
Mr. MacDonald .....	5767

**MAIL  POSTE**

Canada Post Corporation/Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

**Lettermail**

**Poste-lettre**

**8801320  
Ottawa**

*If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:*

Canada Communication Group — Publishing  
45 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard,  
Hull, Québec, Canada, K1A 0S9

*En cas de non-livraison,*

*retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à:*  
Groupe Communication Canada — Édition  
45 boulevard Sacré-Coeur,  
Hull, Québec, Canada, K1A 0S9

**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**

**Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique «Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire» à l'adresse suivante :  
<http://wwwparl.gc.ca>**

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Additional copies may be obtained from the Canada Communication Group — Publishing, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9, at \$1.75 per copy or \$286 per year.**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**

**On peut obtenir la version française de cette publication en écrivant au Groupe Communication Canada — Édition, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada,  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9, à 1.75 \$ l'exemplaire ou 286 \$ par année.**