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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, December 12, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 12, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in relation to its consideration of Bill C-32, an act to amend the Copyright Act.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the pleasure to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Immigration and Citizenship regarding its study of draft regulations for the landing of Convention refugees without identity papers.

• (1005)

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the Bloc Quebecois also laid on this table a minority report concerning refugees without identity papers.

There are two main differences between our report and the majority report. The first one concerns the waiting period. Second,

regarding two of the countries identified in the regulations, namely Afghanistan and Somalia, we think it is discriminatory. That is why we have tabled a minority report.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), to present in both official languages the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Health.

This is as a result of a decision that was made in the committee earlier today, recommending that the Minister of Health consider some transitional provisions relating to the sponsorship clauses of Bill C-71.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as a member of this committee, I would have a very short, very brief comment to make following the tabling of this report by the chair of the health committee. The opposition objected to these proposals.

* * *

SAGUENAY-ST. LAWRENCE MARINE PARK ACT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-78, an act to establish the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park and to make a consequential amendment to another act.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table today a bill entitled "an act to establish the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park and to make a consequential amendment to another act". The result of several years of concerted efforts between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec, this bill is aimed at improving the management and protection of the rich and diversified marine resources of that region of Canada, which is an absolute necessity after the flooding it has sustained.

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

* * *

[*English*]

INDIAN ACT OPTIONAL MODIFICATION ACT

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-79, an act

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to permit certain modifications in the application of the Indian Act to bands that desire them.

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

* * *

[Translation]

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-80, an act to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley, to establish certain boards for that purpose and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

* * *

• (1010)

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-364, an act to amend amend the Income Tax Act (change RRSP deduction to a tax credit).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the RRSP system is to assist Canadians in building up capital to provide a reasonable retirement income. It is not intended to shelter wealth or to defer taxes on the amounts accumulated beyond the amounts required to provide for that reasonable retirement income.

Tax fairness and equity must be protected within our Income Tax Act. That includes making sure that the tax benefits do not unreasonably favour certain taxpayers over others. In the current RRSP system the RRSP deduction favours high income earners over low income earners.

Therefore to address these matters this bill proposes to convert the RRSP deduction to a non-refundable tax credit and to establish a lifetime contribution limit on RRSPs.

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

* * *

BILL C-234

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.) moved:

That, no later than the conclusion of Routine Proceedings on the tenth sitting day after the adoption of this motion, Bill C-234, an act to amend the Criminal Code, shall be deemed reported back to the House without amendment.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate what Bill C-234 is all about. Bill C-234 eliminates section 745 of the Criminal Code. It extinguishes the right of a first degree murderer to have their parole

ineligibility reviewed after serving only 15 years of a life sentence. Bill C-234 makes a life sentence mean life.

• (1015)

On November 21, 1996, in a ruling that my motion on the Order Paper was in order, the Speaker said: "The motion moved by the hon. member for Crowfoot in fact provides the committee with a period of time in which to consider and report the bill if it so chooses. At the same time, the motion provides the House with a mechanism to remove the bill, which is its property, from the committee so that the House itself can take up consideration of the bill".

The Speaker further stated: "The House does not know what has occurred in committee and consequently cannot know what amendments the committee has made to the bill. Therefore, if the House wishes to once again take possession of the bill, then the inclusion of the words "without amendment" establishes clearly that the House will be dealing with the text of the bill it adopted at second reading".

My motion is based on my privileges and those of my colleagues being breached.

The action of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs not reporting Bill C-234 back to the House impedes members from performing their legislative duties. It impedes members from debating in this House, an open forum unlike the committee, an issue which is of utmost concern to our constituents.

On December 13, 1994, Bill C-234 formerly Bill C-226, was referred to the justice committee by a majority of votes in this House. The minister of defence who was then the Minister of Transport, and the member for Vancouver—Quadra, along with 72 of their colleagues and all Reform members present in the House voted to send Bill C-234 to committee. All members who voted to send Bill C-234 to committee fully expected it to be reported back to the House, providing members another opportunity to debate the bill and where the final determination upon the bill could be made and I suggest should be made.

The fate of this private member's bill, the fate of all private members' bills should not be left in the hands of just a few committee members beyond the authority of this House. The House gave life to the bill and only the House has the authority in its final determination. For a committee to kill a bill which was given life by this House and a majority of its members is a violation of our privileges as members of Parliament.

Bill C-234 was circumvented by the justice minister's Bill C-45. The committee allowed Bill C-45 to take precedence over the private member's bill. Bill C-234 was introduced almost two years before Bill C-45 yet Bill C-45, a government bill, was the bill chosen by the committee to be dealt with first. If I had not put a motion forward in committee to have Bill C-234 dealt with, this

private member's bill would still likely be in limbo today in the justice committee.

Bill C-234 was dealt with simultaneously with Bill C-45. However, Liberal members of the committee were obviously more favourable toward the minister's bill which clearly led to the demise of Bill C-234.

This was evident in that Bill C-45 was promptly returned to the House. In only 11 days, Bill C-45 was introduced, sent to committee, reviewed in committee, debated at report stage and third reading and passed. All this was done with less than two weeks before Parliament recessed for the summer.

The justice minister had almost three years to introduce bill C-45, but he chose to drag his feet. He chose to introduce Bill C-45 at the eleventh hour. The justice minister chose to gamble with the emotions of the Rosenfeldts and the other 10 families whose children were murdered by Olson. The justice minister lost that gamble.

The justice minister is directly responsible for Clifford Olson's August 12 bid for early release. He is directly accountable to the Rosenfeldts and the other 10 families whose children were ripped from their lives by the hands of Clifford Olson. The justice minister is responsible for Clifford Olson's newsmaking attempts for early release.

The justice minister claimed Bill C-45 was not about Clifford Olson. He claimed the bill was not a result of Olson's August 12, 1996 date to make application for early release. Why then was the minister and his government so intent that the bill be passed before the summer recess? Why did the Liberal government ask us and the Bloc not to unduly delay this bill?

• (1020)

We provided our co-operation despite the fact that we do not support Bill C-45. We did not then and we still do not support it. We gave our word that we would not block the passage of the bill because we did not want to be responsible in any way for Olson's bid for early release. Unlike the Liberal justice minister, we did not want the Rosenfeldts and the other families to have to relive a nightmare they have endured for the past 15 years.

Although Bill C-45 would still give the likes of Olson an appeal to a judge, which I find absolutely repugnant and beneath contempt, there was the possibility that he could be denied the full judge and jury hearing he now has under section 745 by virtue of the actions of this government.

Bill C-45 was stalled by the Senate and Olson once again grabbed the spotlight he so predictably seeks.

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For the benefit of the members of this House who do not sit on the justice committee, I would like to read the testimony given by Sharon Rosenfeldt before that committee on June 18:

Emotional upheaval—that was what I felt on February 8, 1996, when I found out that Clifford Olson, the killer of my son, had applied for his 15-year judicial review. I do realize that the full application cannot be made until August 12, but I know that all the paperwork is ready.

I have known for the past number of years—

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I listened with great interest to what the hon. member was saying, but my understanding is that his motion really deals with trying to bring Bill C-234 to the House. It does not deal with Bill C-45 which has already gone through this House nor with the testimony of a witness before the committee.

If that is the case, at least my colleague should be given the opportunity to respond and enter into this debate. My understanding is that the motion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Order. The hon. member for Crowfoot has moved a motion that is before the House for debate. He is debating the motion and with great respect to the hon. member for Ottawa Centre, I do not think the remarks that he is making are far off the subject matter of the bill that was before the committee and which is the subject of the discussion. He is giving his reasons as to why the bill should have been reported. He may be expanding on that, but he is entitled to do so. I invite the hon. member for Crowfoot to resume his speech.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merry Christmas to you too.

If the hon. member would like to debate this motion, by all means let him enter into debate to express his concerns about anything I might have to say about this bill.

I will continue to quote what Mrs. Rosenfeldt said when she appeared before the committee. It is important that this House and all citizens of this country know the terror, agony and pain that victims of crime go through. She said:

I have known for the past number of years that it was his right to apply and that in all likelihood he would. Yet for some reason, although my mind knew it could be a reality, my heart, emotions and soul denied it. I was afraid to think about it, so I put my feelings on hold, something I've grown accustomed to. I know how to make certain feelings go numb. I learned how to survive like that.

You see, I have to stay strong because I made a promise to my son as his coffin was being lowered into the ground that I would do everything I could as his mom to ensure that the person responsible for killing him would be brought to justice. I promised I would never leave him until that happened. I know I have to put him to rest and that he

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deserves to be put to rest, but the laws in our country prevent both of us from experiencing any peace.

When I learned that Olson had indeed made the application, I was stunned. Suddenly many images flashed through my mind. I felt shock but I shouldn't feel shock. I felt angry but I shouldn't feel angry. I felt hurt but I shouldn't be hurting. I felt betrayed and I felt panic. I couldn't breathe and I couldn't stay still. I kept pacing from room to room. I wanted to cry, I wanted to scream and I wanted to run—.

I hope the justice minister is hearing this. I hope that all members of the House are hearing this eloquent description of the pain and agony this mother is going through and which this government is perpetuating by the actions it has taken. Mrs. Rosenfeldt went on to state:

Why do we have to go through this again? I felt weak and vulnerable. I cannot lose my dignity again—I went into the family room and I took my son's picture off the cabinet. I sat down and stared lovingly at him, outlining his face with my hands. He looked so perfect. You see, I always have to reconstruct his face in my mind because a hammer was used on him. He was beaten beyond recognition. I cradled his picture next to my heart and once again made the same promises I had 15 years earlier. I got on my knees and I asked God to give me the strength to keep my dignity.

This is very important to me because after Clifford Olson took my child's life, he also took my dignity for a while. I will not let Olson and the system do that again.

• (1025)

The justice minister failed to stop Olson. He failed to protect Sharon Rosenfeldt, her family and the 10 other families whose children were murdered by Olson, from feeling shocked, angry, hurt, betrayed, weak and vulnerable. Instead the justice minister and the Liberal government are protecting Clifford Olson and granting him rights he ought not to have by refusing to eliminate section 745 of the Criminal Code.

Bill C-234 protects the rights of victims. It protects the Rosenfeldts and other victims from enduring the painful memory of having their young children ripped from their lives.

Bill C-234 would abolish section 745 of the Criminal Code. It would take away the rights of killers to a review of their parole ineligibility. In doing so it would restore truth in sentencing by making life mean life with no hope for parole until at least 25 years of that sentence have been served.

In closing, to the members on the other side of the House who voted against Bill C-234, who voted in favour of allowing first degree murderers the opportunity for early release, I ask: What value do they place on the lives of their brothers and sisters and the lives of their children? Do they feel their lives are worth only 15 years? Will the joy and excitement which rings in the voices of their young children be forgotten after just 15 years?

I would like the justice minister and all members of the House to pause, particularly at this time of the season when our thoughts turn

to our family members, both close family members and extended family members, and to members of our communities, to our friends and neighbours, and think about their own children and then justify to Canadians why their lives and those of all their family members is worth a meagre 15 years.

Convicted murderers, rapists and others who take it upon themselves to assault or take the life of another human being throw all their rights away the minute they launch their deadly attack, all their rights, except to a fair and just hearing. For the criminal justice system to provide a killer with a so-called glimmer of hope or to restore their rights is a further injustice to the victim, the victim's family and an offence to Canadians because the killers did not offer a glimmer of hope of any kind to their victims. No, they viciously and sadistically murdered them.

Bill C-234 would restore that justice. It would make victims rights a priority. It would protect the families of murder victims. More important, Bill C-234 if adopted by the House, would place some real value on the lives of all Canadians.

I appreciate the Chair having ruled my motion to be in order and for allowing members of the House to make the final decision on Bill C-234. I would ask all members, whether or not they support the bill, to at least bring it back to the House so that it is this House which will make the final decision and not a handful of members of Parliament in the justice committee.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member went on at length to talk about his interest in ensuring the safety of Canadians.

• (1030)

It was the hon. member and his party that voted against every single piece of legislation that was introduced by the Minister of Justice that deals with the question of safety of Canadians. This is the very same member who did not hear the outcry from Canadians whose families were slaughtered by criminals. Many of my constituents have been killed by guns, by violence.

When the Minister of Justice introduced legislation that would ensure the safety of my constituents, these members voted against it. They voted against the gun control legislation. They have sanctioned the use of guns that are used in some cases to commit crimes. These are members of a party that voted against everything that had to do with the safety of Canadians from coast to coast. Now they stand up enraged, saying they were entrusted with the safety of Canadians.

They talk about the testimony of people who appeared before the justice committee. Where were they when people before the justice

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committee were appealing for support for the gun control legislation? Why did they not support the gun control legislation that would have helped reduce crime? Why did they not support other government initiatives that deal with the reduction of crime?

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that you cannot suck and blow at the same time and that is exactly what this member is trying to do.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, if this hon. member wants to stand before his voters during the next election and tell them very clearly that he voted in favour of the criminal rather than a safer society on Bill C-45 and on this private member's bill, let him do it.

Although he has taken the time of the House to raise the issue on the gun control bill, he has not told us how the registration of rifles and shotguns will reduce the criminal use of those firearms. Neither has the justice minister nor has any member explained how that will create a safer society.

Why did Reform vote against Bill C-41? We voted against Bill C-41 because the government created alternative measures for violent offenders. When Reform introduced an amendment to exempt violent offenders from alternative measures the government killed that amendment with this member's support.

Not only does Bill C-41 allow a legal process by which violent offenders may never see the inside of courtroom, it also encourages the courts to use conditional sentencing. From the time that Bill C-41 became part of our law two and a half to three months ago, the courts have freed rapists in at least in two cases, and a third one has just come to our attention. Serious violent offenders have been allowed to walk free while their victims have been traumatized and afraid to leave their residences. That is why Reform voted against some of the nonsense that comes down the pipe from the justice minister.

If this member wants to stand before his voters in the next election and debate with myself or any other member in the Reform Party, he will be skinned alive. Why will he get skinned alive? Because Reform wants reasonable and common sense legislation brought forward to deal fairly and in a balanced way with the safety of society and this legislation does not do that.

When our courts are encouraged to give conditional sentences to rapists that allows them to walk free while their victims cringe in their own homes, afraid to walk the streets, afraid to leave their homes, then there is something wrong with our justice system.

We will take them on in the next election and we will deal with these issues. We will allow the people to decide who is sucking and who is blowing. We can see clearly who is sucking and who is blowing in this country. It is the Liberals over there.

• (1035)

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what we have heard today is evidence of the Liberal philosophy. As a matter of fact, Canadians were astonished not more than a couple of months ago when the Minister of Justice, in the face of the people's cry for justice and in the face of all the victims of crime, tell them that the prime consideration of the criminal justice system must be the rehabilitation and reintegration of criminals back into society.

What about the millions of Canadians who are talking about the protection of society? What about consideration for the millions of victims of crime? The government continually supports the criminal. It does not give a whit for law-abiding Canadians. It does not give a whit for the victims of crime. The member for Ottawa Centre and the other Liberal members who are cheering him on today are evidence that the Liberal government cares only about its weak-kneed philosophy toward crime. It does not care about the cries of Canadians or the protection of Canadian society. Its system of justice stinks.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, all across the country there is a cry about the justice system and the Young Offenders Act. There is a cry for greater protection for those who are the most vulnerable in our society, our children and our senior citizens.

For the last 25 years that kind of philosophy has held sway in the creation of laws that grant greater and greater rights to the criminal. The Liberals have had the opportunity to show that their philosophy would create a safer society. However, that philosophy, that bleeding heart mentality, has failed. If it had worked it would have been wonderful but it has not worked. It has failed.

The victims of crime who appeared before our committees are crying out for some sort of changes. Those victims are full testimony of which I speak. They represent the common sense of the vast majority of Canadians who are speaking out on this whole issue of crime and the protection of society.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make some submissions with respect to this matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): I remind hon. members that the hon. member for York South—Weston has the floor. I think members might want to hear his speech.

Mr. Nunziata: Canadians, in due course, will have the opportunity to pass judgment on the record of the government with respect to criminal law reform.

Over the last three years and many years before that, Canadians have expressed in clear and unequivocal terms their desire for a balanced and just justice system. We have seen over the last number of years a justice system that is unjust, a justice system

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that is imbalanced, a justice system that appears to put the rights of criminals and those charged with criminal offences ahead of the rights of victims, families of victims and Canadians generally. Canadians are not happy with the criminal justice system.

• (1040)

What the government has done or what the government has not done, Canadian people will judge. It has had the opportunity over the last three years to bring in some meaningful criminal law reform.

For example, the government has made some progress with respect to the Young Offenders Act but the progress has been limited. It did go far enough. The Young Offenders Act still does not have the support and respect of Canadians. In my view it is an invitation for young people to break the law. It treats 16 and 17 years olds like children. Sixteen and 17 years olds are able to understand the difference between right and wrong. They are able to drive. For all intents and purposes they are adults but for some reason the government insists on treating 16 and 17 year olds like children.

The police across the country, those involved in the criminal justice system, have been crying out for changes to the Young Offenders Act.

What about murder in this country? What about murder and the penalties for murder? A law on the books today allows convicted killers like Clifford Olson, like Paul Bernardo, like Colin Thatcher, like all the other hideous murderers, to apply to be released after serving only 15 years of their sentences. That is unconscionable. That is not what Canadians want.

Canadians want a justice system that reflects their abhorrence at the crime of murder, premeditated first degree murder; the degenerates in our society who believe that they can deliberately take the life of another individual and then only serve 15 years.

I had a bill before Parliament, a bill that has been endorsed by every police association across the country, a bill that was endorsed by every victims' group across this country, a bill that was endorsed and approved by the overwhelming majority of Canadians. This government had a choice. It had an option. It could side with the criminals, it could side with first degree killers, Clifford Olson, Paul Bernardo and others, or it could side with the victims, the families of victims and the overwhelming majority of Canadians.

What route did the government take? Initially my bill to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code was endorsed in principle. Over 80 Liberal members of Parliament supported that bill. That was the will of this Parliament, the supreme law-making body in this country as far as criminal law is concerned. Over 80 Liberal

members of Parliament, including the Minister of National Defence, the minister of Indian affairs and others indicated publicly that they would support the repeal of section 745.

That bill, having received the endorsement of this Parliament, was then sent off to the justice committee. What a farce that was. The committee members rushed the bill through within a matter of hours. Is that a reflection of the government's commitment to consultation? We had mothers of murder victims pleading with the justice committee. Priscilla de Villiers and others came forward. Mothers of murder victims pleaded with members of the justice committee, saying: "Please bring some sanity to our criminal justice system". Those pleas fell on deaf ears.

The Liberal majority on the justice committee decided that they did not care about their constituents. They were not really reflecting the views of their constituents or all the people across the country who want to repeal section 745. Instead they became voting machines again, trained seals.

• (1045)

They were told what to do by the Prime Minister's office. They were reflecting a bleeding heart attitude to the criminal justice system which has caused Canadians to have disrespect for the laws of this country. Instead of truly representing their constituents and staying true to the votes they cast in this House of Commons, they decided to save the Minister of Justice some embarrassment.

The Minister of Justice was listening to a bleeding heart minority in this country that believes convicted first degree killers should have the opportunity to be released after 15 years.

Instead of responding to the wishes of Canadians, this government decided to respond to the wishes of convicted killers. This government decided to perpetuate the injustice in our criminal justice system by simply tinkering with section 745 of the Criminal Code. In so doing, the government not only exhibited an abysmal ignorance of the will of the Canadian public but it called into question the parliamentary system.

The other night the Prime Minister said on television that he was a democrat. He said that he believed in democracy. But democracy spoke in this House in its purest form. Members of Parliament voted to repeal in principle section section 745 of the Criminal Code. Then what did this government do? It used the back door. It manipulated the process. It voted not to report the bill back to this House. What a shame and what a shameless act to circumvent the will of the majority, the will of this House.

Thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, that you in your wisdom decided that that was unjust and undemocratic. Now the opportunity rests with this House to bring that bill forward. Government members have the option to change their minds but they would have to reconcile

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the votes they cast several years ago to repeal section 745 with their vote today.

They cannot have it both ways. They cannot pretend on a vote to be committed to criminal law reform and the repeal of section 745 and then acquiesce in this House like trained seals, like voting machines. Wake up and smell the coffee, my friends. The people of Canada want changes to the criminal justice system and they want them now. MPs either represents their constituents or they do not. They are either true representatives of the people or they are not.

This is not the time to engage in partisan politics. This is the time to truly represent and bring meaningful changes to the criminal justice system, and here members of Parliament have that opportunity. When they go to seek a further mandate from their constituents they will have to explain to their constituents why they sat on their hands and allowed themselves to be manipulated by back-room boys in the Prime Minister's office when they had a choice. That is what they will have to reconcile.

The repeal of section 745 and criminal law reform are matters that will put this government to the test in terms of its commitment and credibility. On many occasions over the past three years the Prime Minister has invited Canadians to judge his government by the red book. He waved that red book inside and outside of caucus. He said "you judge us based on the red book".

Lest we forget, there is a major chapter in the red book on governing with integrity. That was the commitment the Prime Minister made on tape, on radio and television stations. Each member of Parliament, I included, went out to the people of Canada and said: "Vote for us because we will provide honest government. We will govern with integrity. We promise you that we will not be like Brian Mulroney. We will not engage ourselves in duplicitous governance. We will govern honestly with you, for you in our government".

• (1050)

Their actions with respect to section 745 and my private member's bill would lead one to seriously question the credibility of this government and would challenge Canadians to reflect on the promise to govern with integrity. If they were truly governing with integrity and with honesty they would reflect the wishes of Canadians.

This is not a frivolous matter for Canadians. This is a serious matter. They fear for the lives of their family and children. They want a balanced justice system. It is time government members woke up and realized what Canadians want.

If they are true democrats in the true sense of the word, then they will stand and insist that the bill be brought back to this House and

that this House once again pronounce itself. They will have the option either to vote for or against it.

Dare they vote against the repeal of section 745, each and every one of their constituents will be made aware of that. The Canadian Police Association, as we speak, is asking every member of Parliament to indicate what they have done to contribute to the amelioration of the criminal justice system in this country. All members of Parliament should start thinking about what they have done personally, as a member of Parliament, not as part of a voting machine but as an individual member of Parliament, to improve the criminal justice system in this country. Yes, their constituents will judge them, based on the contributions they have made in improving the criminal justice system.

I plead with those members of Parliament who have a genuine interest in criminal law reform to stand up for what they believe in for a change. Stand up for meaningful changes to the criminal justice system so that Canadians can stand proud of their elected representatives.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the hon. member for York South—Weston on a very eloquent speech. He hit the points just right this morning not only about the failure of the Liberal criminal justice system and the inadequate legislation which has been brought forward over the last three years but also, and perhaps just as important, the failure of the Liberal government to live up to its commitment to Canadians to restore integrity and credibility to the House of Commons and to the governance of Canada. Perhaps that is even more important because it strikes at the very heart of the problems that are inherent in the system of governance which exists in Canada today.

I have travelled throughout my riding and across Canada and I know that what the hon. member for York South—Weston said was very true. Canadians are deeply concerned about the inadequacies of the justice system. They know that the legislation which has been brought forward over the past three years is totally inadequate in addressing the criminal problem which we have in Canada today.

I commend the hon. member for York South—Weston for bringing forward this private member's bill. Had it been supported by the Liberal majority, it would have seen the repeal of section 745. It is what Canadians want. It is what they are demanding. It is what they are crying out for. It is high time that those people over there started to listen to Canadians.

One of the things I am asked as I travel around the country is what can we do as individual members of Parliament and what can Canadians do. Every day we see members of Parliament tabling petitions in the House. Those petitions are protests from average Canadians from coast to coast. They are crying out for justice, for change and for the reform of the system.

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I would like to ask the hon. member for York South—Weston what is the next step. He and others have tried. I have tabled nine private members' bills in the House of Commons in three years, and seven motions, trying to move the government of the country which enjoys the majority in this House. I have tried to move it in the direction that I feel the majority of Canadians want it to move in.

• (1055)

What can be done now that it has squashed the member's private member's bill? We know the majority of Canadians are crying out for that change.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I guess when you are at 50 per cent in the polls you can afford to be smug and arrogant. However, as a journalist pointed out the other night, when the government is faced with honest questions from Canadians, it is like a bucket of cold water.

The government, it appears, has been sailing along for the last three years assuming that re-election was a matter of course, assuming that the Canadian public would continue to support it regardless of its actions.

Canadians are much smarter than that. History is full of politicians and political parties that have taken the public for granted. It is full of politicians and political parties that have become smug and arrogant.

Many a political party has been leading substantially in public opinion in between elections. I have been through a lot of elections. I have seen a lot of politicians and leaders, David Peterson, Lyn McLeod, Brian Mulroney; the list goes on and on of people who had substantial support in the weeks and months and a year before an election.

It is important that Canadians continue to speak out about their feelings about the criminal justice system. Quite frankly, I am shocked that people like Darlene Boyd, Debbie Mahaffy, Priscilla de Villiers and Donna French have not been able to move members of Parliament with respect to section 745 and criminal law reform.

These are women, mothers who have lost children to murders, hideous, awful murders that have shocked the country. These are mothers who, in order to deal with their grief, have channelled their energies into trying to change the criminal justice system.

There are members of Parliament who pretend to be sympathetic, who pretend to understand, who pretend to share their grief. However, when the time comes to be truly representative and to listen to these mothers who have lost children to murder, what happens? Members of Parliament turn a deaf ear.

It is important for all Canadians right across the country to continue to speak out, to continue to challenge their politicians, call their members of Parliament, tell them how they feel, tell them

that they are not happy, tell them that unless there are meaningful changes to the criminal justice system, when they have the opportunity to vote they will take that matter into consideration.

Mr. Nick Discepola (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in my office and I could not help but rush down here to participate in this debate on the motion. I would like to put the facts straight.

The only difference between their proposition and our proposition is on the fundamental debate of whether 745 should be repealed.

The government members believe that the measures the Minister of Justice put forth are sound measures. Let me remind the hon. members that if we had repealed 745, like the member from York South—Weston wants, like the Reform Party wants, it would not have prevented the likes of Olson that the member hides behind today from applying for early review.

Let me state also that repealing 745 will not—

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River): I thought you said you were going to put the facts forward.

Mr. Discepola: As I said, the likes of serial killers like Mr. Olson and others would have fallen under the previous legislation. Instead, the legislation said that the government would repeal section 745 for multiple serial killers. They will not be able to apply.

• (1100)

In addition, in order to condemn a criminal in our society, only one jurist need object and the person is then innocent. That was changed. In order to apply for early parole eligibility the jurists must be unanimous, 13 out of 13. It seems to me that if 13 jurists agree that this person should apply for early parole, and again I stress, apply, for eligibility. It does not mean that they will get it.

Only the most naive politician would believe that Clifford Olson would ever get early parole. I am appalled to hear the Reform Party and other members hide behind Mr. Olson to promote their own political agenda. If that party had voted with the government in the spring, Clifford Olson would not even be able to apply. That is what the debate is about. Shame on those members.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I am frankly surprised that the parliamentary secretary would continue to be dishonest about the true facts. The fact is, had the government acted—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Order. I think the hon. member for York South—Weston, an experienced member, knows that it would be quite improper to suggest that any hon. member is dishonest. I would ask him to consider his words very carefully and, in fact, withdraw the words he used in suggesting that the parliamentary secretary is dishonest.

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Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I unequivocally withdraw that. However, I would like to add that it is an unequivocal misstatement of fact to suggest that Clifford Olson would not have been able to apply for parole. If the government repealed section 745 when my private member's bill was before Parliament, he would not have had the opportunity to apply.

I am not suggesting that Clifford Olson would ever be released prematurely. I am objecting to the fact this law gives him the right to drag the families of victims through the criminal justice system again after serving only 15 years. That is the injustice of section 745.

I conclude with this. Eighty per cent of those who apply are successful. Is that the result the government wants, to prematurely release convicted killers?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more that five members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): At the request of the government whip, the division on the motion stands deferred until 5.30 p.m. today.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and honour to present two petitions to the House, duly certified by the clerk of petitions on behalf of 416 individuals from across Canada.

The first petition, signed by 28 Canadians, calls on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provincial governments to make the national highway system upgrading possible beginning in 1997.

TAXATION

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition signed by 388 Canadians, asks Parliament to zero rate books, magazines and newspapers under the GST.

• (1105)

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a petition sponsored by the Canadian Automobile Association entitled Roads Work.

The petitioners call on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provincial governments to make the upgrading of the national highway system possible in 1997.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have five petitions to present to the House today.

Three of the petitions pray that Parliament have our present laws on obscenity strictly upheld thus demonstrating a will to protect the men, women and children of Canada from pornography.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the other two petitions the constituents point out that in the last 10 years gasoline prices have risen 466 per cent.

The petitioners request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next election. I fully agree with their prayer.

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition signed by about 650 British Columbians, some of whom are my constituents.

The petitioners ask that reading not be taxed. They state that the application of the 7 per cent GST to reading material is unfair and wrong. Therefore, they urge all levels of government to demonstrate their commitment to education and literacy by eliminating the sales tax on reading materials.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the citizens of Peterborough who wish to abolish nuclear weapons.

The petitioners point out that 30,000 nuclear weapons still exist on earth. They also point out that the International Court of Justice stated that there exists an obligation to pursuing good faith and

Routine Proceedings

bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict, effective international control.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the year 2000 of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition which is from residents who are concerned about the state of the national highway system.

The petitioners call on Parliament and urge the federal government to join with provincial governments to make the upgrading of the national highway system possible.

NATIONAL AIDS STRATEGY

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my last petition is from citizens of Peterborough who are concerned about the national AIDS strategy.

The petitioners point out that the national AIDS strategy, phase II, will expire on March 31, 1998 and that there is no commitment to renew or extend it.

The petitioners call on Parliament to ensure dedicated AIDS funding beyond March 1998 and to renew the national AIDS strategy.

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions.

The first petition has to do with the rights of grandparents and access to grandchildren. The petitioners ask that the Divorce Act be amended so that in no case may a father or mother without serious cause place obstacles between the child and grandparents. For the sake of brevity I will not read the whole thing.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions that in essence ask Parliament not to amend any acts that would give special rights and privileges to homosexuals.

ELK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that deals with a local issue. There is a very famous national park in my riding called the Elk Island National Park.

The petitioners ask that full access be maintained to that park and that the roads be kept open. There was a threat the roads would be closed.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have two more petitioners that deal with taxes, a very hot subject.

The petitioners ask Parliament not to increase the federal excise tax on gasoline. There is another budget coming and they are concerned.

TAXATION

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which very emphatically asks the government not to tax reading and to remove all GST from reading materials.

SENIORS

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions. The first petition deals with the fact that the percentage of Canadians over age 65 will almost double over the next 40 years from 12 per cent today to 23 per cent by the year 2030. The petitioners call on Parliament to work toward fair and sustainable income programs for seniors, ensuring those in need receive adequate and stable support.

• (1110)

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.): The next petition, Mr. Speaker, deals with the fact that police and firefighters are required to place their lives at risk in the execution of their duties on a daily basis, but the employment benefits of police and firefighters offer insufficient compensation to the families of those who are killed while on duty.

The petitioners therefore call on Parliament to establish a fund known as the public safety officers compensation fund for the benefit of families of public safety officers killed in the line of duty.

JUSTICE

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition deals with the fact that although Canada's crime rate fell again in 1995, its fourth annual drop following 30 years of almost constant increase, the petitioners call on Parliament to continue to take a tough line on crime and enact laws that will provide Canadians with the safe home and safe streets they so rightly deserve.

TAXATION

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my duty to present two petitions.

The first petition is signed by 138 residents almost exclusively from the city of Calgary. They ask Parliament to zero rate books, magazines and newspapers under the GST and under the proposed harmonized sales tax, and they ask the Prime Minister to carry out

Routine Proceedings

his party's repeated and unequivocal promise to remove federal sales tax from books, magazines and newspapers.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by 28 residents of the city of Calgary. It calls on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provincial governments to make the upgrading of the national highway system possible beginning in 1997.

THE JUDICIARY

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present two petitions which have been duly certified by the clerk and forwarded to me by the residents of Oakville—Milton.

The petitioners call on the government to conduct a public inquiry into the relationship between lending institutions and the judiciary and to enact legislation restricting the appointment of judges with ties to credit granting institutions.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, calls on the government to proceed with amendments to the Criminal Code that will ensure that the sentence given to anyone convicted of driving while impaired or causing injury or death while impaired truly reflects the severity of this crime.

HIGHWAYS

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present a petition from people in my riding and in neighbouring ridings that draws to the attention of the House the fact that 38 per cent of the national highway system is substandard.

The petitioners call on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with provincial governments to make the upgrading of the national highway system possible.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present three petitions.

The first petition is signed by a number of Canadians who are concerned about the criminal justice system. The petitioners say it is not fair and does not demand that criminals pay for their crimes.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament recognize the need for change within the justice system and work to put the victims' rights ahead of those of the criminals.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition prays and requests that Parliament proceed immediately with amendments to the Criminal Code that will ensure that sentences given to people who drink and drive and

anyone convicted of impaired driving causing death would receive a minimum sentence of seven years.

The petitioners pray that Parliament consider that particular amendment to the Criminal Code.

TAXATION

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition urges all levels of government to demonstrate their support of education and literacy by eliminating sales tax on reading materials.

The petitioners pray and ask Parliament to zero rate books, magazines and newspapers under the GST.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present this morning.

The first petition, along with many others in the House this morning, is an appeal to governments to not tax reading and to remove the GST on books.

I present these petitions on behalf of myself and of the member for Lethbridge.

HIGHWAYS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): The second petition is from constituents around British Columbia who are bringing to the attention of the government the substandard national highway system.

The petitioners pray that the government would join with the provincial governments to make the upgrading of the national highway system possible.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is on behalf of residents from all over British Columbia as well as some residents in my riding.

• (1115)

The petitioners state that the gay and lesbian people want their families to be self-supporting, free of government interference and to be valued for being active tax paying members of Canada. Therefore, they request Parliament to amend the current definition of spouse to include same sex couples so all Canadian families can be treated equally.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions today. The first one is from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that our police and firefighters place their lives at risk on a daily basis as they serve the emergency needs of all Canadians. They also state that in many cases the families of officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty are left without sufficient financial means to meet their obligations. The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to establish a public safety officers compensation fund

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to receive gifts and bequests for the benefit of families of police officers and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition comes from Oshawa, Ontario.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society. The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to assist families that choose to provide care in the home for preschool children, the chronically ill, the aged or the disabled.

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from Kentville, Nova Scotia.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the House that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems or impair one's ability and specifically that fetal alcohol syndrome or other alcohol related birth defects are 100 per cent preventable by avoiding alcohol consumption during pregnancy. The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to enact legislation to require health warning labels to be placed on containers of all alcoholic beverages to caution expectant mothers and others of the risks associated with alcohol consumption.

PAROLE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is with respect to section 745. There are several hundred signatories to be added to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have submitted petitions. The petitioners from Richmond Hill and Woodbridge are asking that the Government of Canada immediately repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code, the provision that allows convicted killers to apply for early release.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with respect to the Young Offenders Act and is signed by constituents in the city of Cornwall, Ontario. They call on this government to immediately bring in a new Young Offenders Act empowering the courts to prosecute and punish the young law breakers who are terrorizing our society by releasing their names and lowering the age limit to allow prosecution to meet the severity of the crime.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by residents of Swift Current, Saskatchewan and district.

The petitioners state that whereas 38 per cent of the national highway system is substandard and whereas Mexico and the United States are upgrading their national highway systems, the petitioners call on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with provincial governments to make the national highway system upgrading possible.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Is it agreed?

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I know you are aware that I have Question No. 9 on the Order Paper. It has been on the Order Paper since February 28 of this year. Prior to that the same question was on the Order Paper in the first session of this Parliament.

The question simply states: "What is the total dollar amount spent on advertising by the government and its crown agencies in fiscal years 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994 by province in each of the following mediums: television, radio, daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, monthly newspapers, billboards and direct mail?"

What I am trying to find out is if the federal departments can be accountable for how they spend their advertising dollars. Certainly they should be.

Mr. Speaker, you will probably recall this because at one time you were the parliamentary secretary to the House leader and I raised this issue with you many moons ago. You assured me that all but four departments had done their work, had presented the information and that the information would be forthcoming. I have since talked to your successor and he assured me that all the information had been gathered and it was just a matter of putting it in a report and that I should have it shortly.

I keep talking privately with the government House leader's office. I have not received an answer to my question. Lately I have had no assurance that it would be answered at all.

I am very confused by the mixed messages I am getting from the government House leader's office, and particularly his parliamentary secretary. Perhaps because his last name starts with Z he is the last one to know what is going on. However, I am getting tired of waiting.

• (1120)

Mr. Zed: Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleague that the Bible says that the last shall be first. I am sure an assurance was previously given but I reassure my hon. colleague that we are working on his request.

It is somewhat simplistic to presume that asking for information on four years of work literally involving hundreds and hundreds of groups and agencies within the Government of Canada is just a matter of pressing a button. It is important for the hon. member to remember that civil servants are spending their good time doing other important work for the people of Canada. While this matter is urgent in his mind, the reality is that it is not forthcoming with the same due speed he would wish.

I know he is a patient man and we hope to have the answer before Christmas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Everyone knows the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster is, as the parliamentary secretary says, a patient man.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I would like it verified which Christmas we are talking about.

Mr. Zed: Mr. Speaker, I assure my hon. colleague that we are hoping it will be a Christmas in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): The question was, shall the questions stand. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to repeal and amend other acts as a consequence, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): There are 36 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-60.

[Translation]

Motion No. 2 is identical to a motion proposed and rejected in committee. Consequently, and pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(5), it will not be selected.

Motion No. 35 cannot be submitted to the House, because it has not received the governor general's recommendation. Standing

Government Orders

Order 76(3) requires that notice of such a recommendation be given no later than the sitting day before the day on which the report stage is to commence.

[English]

The other motions will be grouped for debate as follows: Group No. 3, Motions Nos. 1, 13, 22 and 23. Group No. 4, Motion No. 5. Group No. 5, Motions Nos. 3, 4, 6 to 12 and 21.

[Translation]

Group No. 6, Motions Nos. 14 to 18, and Motion No. 36.

[English]

Group No. 7, Motions Nos. 19 and 20. Group No. 8, Motions Nos. 24, 25 and 26.

[Translation]

Group No. 9, Motions Nos. 27 to 30.

Group No. 10, Motions Nos. 31, 32 and 33.

[English]

Group No. 11, Motion No. 34.

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the table. The Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting. I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1, 13, 22 and 23 to the House.

[Translation]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-60, in the preamble, be amended by adding after line 21 on page 1 the following:

“AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada promises to respect the legislative authority of the provinces;”

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-60, in Clause 11, be amended by adding after line 27 on page 4 the following:

“(4.1) Notwithstanding subsection (4), where the Minister proposes to establish any policy or standard under that subsection, the Minister shall consult each province before establishing that policy or standard with a view to obtaining the agreement of the provinces to the proposed policy or standard.

(4.2) Where, after being consulted under subsection (4.1), a province advises the Minister that it disagrees with the proposed policy or standard and the Minister then establishes that policy or standard, the policy or standard shall not be applicable to the province where the province also advises the Minister that it does not wish that policy or standard to apply to the province.”

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-60, in Clause 20, be amended by replacing lines 28 to 30 on page 6 with the following:

“20. The Minister may enter”

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-60 be amended by adding after line 35 on page 6 the following new Clause:

Government Orders

"20.1 No agreement entered into by the Minister under section 20 shall infringe upon any power that the province may exercise over the inspection of food or a related matter pursuant to section 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867."

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday when I was moving a motion regarding travel for the standing committee on human rights, I believe there was an error. Either I misspoke or there was an error in transmission.

In any event, for further clarification, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to amend the motion or to move a motion that would indicate "televised hearings". Therefore, I move:

That, as part of its study of new technologies and privacy rights, six members of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Persons with Disabilities be authorized to travel to Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal and Fredericton during the week of February 10 to 14, 1997, for the purpose of holding televised hearings, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): The House has heard the terms of the motion proposed by the parliamentary secretary. Is there unanimous consent that the House consider the motion at this time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): There is not unanimous consent. Or did the no mean yes and it is agreed that we can consider the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): The House has heard the terms of the motion proposed by the parliamentary secretary. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to repeal and amend other Acts as a consequence, as reported by the committee with amendments, and of Motions Nos. 1, 13, 22 and 23.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since you have done such a nice job of reading the amendments, which we introduced this morning with the help of my colleague, the member for Lotbinière, and since you have grouped the motions, including Motions No. 1, 13, 22 and 23, in Group 3, you will note that they refer essentially to the federal government's intention of interfering in an area of provincial jurisdiction. Naturally, we must condemn this vigorously throughout this 35th Parliament, since this government takes advantage of its vast spending authority to blunder into areas of jurisdiction that, in many cases, are strictly the preserve of the provinces.

I am pleased to lead off the debate at report stage of Bill C-60. Through this legislative measure, the federal government is getting ready to create the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

The basic responsibility of this new parapublic agency will be to set standards for the safety, quality and manufacture of Canadian food products, as well as to develop minimum standards for imported products. This is obviously a very weighty responsibility for the government, and I am not in any way questioning the good intentions of the departments involved or their concern for public health.

● (1130)

However, I would like to remind the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the cabinet generally that their policies are hardly original.

I would point out that Quebec has had unified food inspection services for close to 20 years, yes, a 20-year head start on Canada. The federal government has wasted 20 years meddling in provincial jurisdictions in an attempt to get a glimpse of what they were up to so that it could then turn around and adopt the same strategies.

In terms of results, it would be hard to think of a worse approach, but then this is typical of this country: going over old ground, rewriting existing legislation, and changing the commas in order to be able to call it something new. Finally, let us return to the initial point of my speech, instead of launching into a stinging criticism of the state of this over-bureaucratized country.

As I was saying before, the purpose of Bill C-60 is to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Although this agency comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, it will consolidate the inspection services of two other major departments: Health and Fisheries. This leads me to believe that the federal government has studied the Quebec model thoroughly, for the bill provides for essentially the same bodies as in the Quebec government's system.

But the worst is yet to come. In its bill, the government calls for the agency, once created, to take precedence over all other food inspection systems. I find this federal attitude more than a little insolent.

Government Orders

I would like to draw the attention of the minister and his cabinet colleagues to a concept that is very simple, but ever so hard for the federalists to grasp: interference. This is a gift possessed by certain categories of people, particularly those elected members who belong to a federalist party, to duplicate, and even to deny the existence of, Quebec's distinctiveness in administrative and other matters.

Parliamentary rules prevent me from naming these individuals who are such past masters of the art of denying Quebec its fundamental right to affirm its identity and its distinctiveness. I cannot name names, but I can assure you that there are so many of them in this House, that they take up more than one side of it.

We in the Bloc Québécois believe that the government is showing its arrogance toward Quebec and the other provinces by attempting, in the preamble of this bill, to assume a certain legitimate right over provincial activities.

In this connection, our amendment is aimed at limiting the impact of such an element, which would have the effect of dismissing all of Quebec's demands in one fell swoop. For decades, the provinces, Quebec in particular, have been objecting to the federal government's attempts to restrict some of the provinces' vested powers, and even to grab up those powers, without any consideration of the provinces' constitutional jurisdiction in these spheres of activity.

The federal government is increasingly moving to centralize powers, while continuing to claim that it is doing the contrary, in order to downplay its illegitimate actions. Such cavalier interference into areas of provincial jurisdiction cannot help but slow down the constructive discourse that could be initiated between the provinces and the federal government. The Liberal Party, with its eye on the next election, is in the process of undermining the credibility of the agency in question. According to Liberal logic, the agency could control all food inspection services in the country by developing national standards. To us this is unacceptable, because it considerably restricts the ability of the provinces to establish and administer their own set of standards.

• (1135)

The provinces would otherwise be free to decide whether or not they wished to go along with certain food safety standards that are more a matter of local custom than public health. Perhaps I may recall what happened last spring, when the Bloc Québécois protested against the decision of the Minister of Health to prohibit and indeed ban consumption of raw milk cheese.

You will recall that Quebec is by far the biggest consumer of this kind of cheese. In the other provinces where this kind of cheese is

eaten, consumers are mostly former Quebecers or people who have been to Quebec and who appreciate this type of cheese. This is one example of eating habits in Quebec that are different from those in other parts of Canada.

At the Department of Health, people were thinking about all this, and probably because they had nothing else to do and had to justify their pay cheque, they said: "From now on, no more raw milk cheese will be imported or manufactured; cheese will have to be made with pasteurized milk". Of course there was a howl of protest from the official opposition, supported by consumers. I remember that someone put a question about this to the Minister of Labour, whose roots are Italian. I cannot refer to him by name, but he is a fellow citizen, formerly from Italy. When he saw he would no longer be able to get his favourite cheese, he said: "Oh dear, I will have to talk about this to my minister, because she is making a serious mistake". See, that is a good example.

In the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean area, they make a kind of *tourtière* called *cipâte*, made with partridge and hare. It is a local specialty. Tomorrow morning, an inspector with the new agency might say: "Cipâte is no good; it might be dangerous to the health of the people of Lac-Saint-Jean. So there will be a nation-wide ban on making *tourtières* with hare and partridge".

I realize you are going to say I am exaggerating. Eighteen months ago, who would have thought that a few senior officials at the Department of health would consider banning the consumption of the best cheese in Canada? But it happened.

Without the media coverage, the government would never have backed down under pressure from the Bloc Québécois. Not that the Bloc was incapable of doing a good job as the official opposition, but because the government, although this is a constitutional monarchy, often behaves like an autocratic and totalitarian government. It prefers to ignore the public interest and support the interests of the major lobby groups, while maintaining an illusion of power based on order and the public good.

In concluding, Bill C-60 is an important bill that will affect three departments. We in the Bloc Québécois found a number of weak points in Bill C-60.

• (1140)

We intend to introduce more than 35 amendments in the course of the day, and my colleagues and I will do everything we can to try and make the Liberal majority think twice. I know that several people on the government benches think our amendments are very constructive and could improve the bill considerably. The purpose of the first group of amendments is simply to prevent the federal government from infringing on provincial jurisdictions.

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[English]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are at the report stage of Bill C-60. My colleague from the Bloc Québécois has proposed a large number of amendments.

This bill went to committee prior to second reading, and the purpose of a bill's going to a standing committee of the House of Commons before coming to this House for approval in principle is to allow the committee more opportunity to make amendments and reshape the bill in the most effective and useful manner after hearing witnesses and government officials give reason for the bill and what should be in it and what should be changed from the initial bill tabled.

Reform tried to use this opportunity to introduce several amendments at committee stage. In fact, 25 Reform amendments were proposed in committee during the clause by clause consideration of the bill after we had heard from a number of witnesses.

Because we have introduced our amendments at committee stage we of course are unable to reintroduce the same amendments at report stage. Therefore we have not introduced amendments at this point because we sensed a wall of resistance by the government to any proposals we would make.

The rationale behind the majority of our amendments to this bill was simply to make the new single food inspection agency more accountable to Parliament. I have noticed that some of the amendments proposed by my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois move in that same direction, but often in a slightly different vein than those amendments we proposed. Even in committee my colleagues from the Bloc and Reformers often voted together on issues where we could make the food inspection agency more accountable to the Parliament of Canada and not just leave it as an option that the committee at the wishes of the government could look into the effectiveness of this new agency, but in fact that it must review the effectiveness of the agency and that the agency must be more accountable to this institution.

Over the years Parliament has less knowledge and less control over what is happening in the vast bureaucracy, the new agencies that have been constructed by governments. We feel that the trend needs to be reversed.

While the government members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food could at any time review anything, we all know that because the committee has a majority of government members, the committee need not review anything if the government does not wish it to.

We are trying to reverse that trend so that government will be seen to be more accountable and will indeed be more accountable.

The new food inspection agency begins its operation under this legislation in 1997. It will become one of Ottawa's largest bureaucratic entities, with 4,500 employees and a budget of \$300 million. We are not talking small potatoes here at all.

Federal officials contend that ending interdepartmental overlap and duplication in such areas as enforcement, risk management, laboratory services, informatic systems and communications will save taxpayers \$44 million annually starting in 1998-99. But surprisingly, no detailed breakdown is available to back up this estimate.

When we ask questions about where exactly is the \$44 million going to be saved, departmental officials did not know where that was. They really had not arrived at that stage yet. It was just a figure they seemed to have pulled out of the air and expected the savings to be realized.

● (1145)

We are very concerned about this new federal food inspection agency not because we think it is a bad idea but because we see examples of previous experiments along this line and what has happened. The most obvious one is the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which was created to be accountable and responsible to the department of agriculture. However, it has run amok and has no confidence by and from the industry. This was revealed the other day in our committee when several people from the industry appeared on the issue of cost recovery. The prime example they put forward as an illustration of the failures of cost recovery was the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which was designed very much along the same lines as this agency.

Therefore, members will understand why we are concerned that this agency be held more accountable to Parliament and to the committee that reviews the effectiveness and the work of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

As I said, 25 Reform amendments were put forward in committee and only two were accepted, one being a clarification of which minister was responsible for the federal good inspection agency. There was some concern because the minister of agriculture was not put in the original document and in fact the government may be intending to do away with the department of agriculture. Therefore we insisted that amendment be included.

The other amendment that was accepted was in the preface of the document. It merely indicated that part of the mission statement of this new agency was to be cost effective. I am very pleased that was put in the preface of the legislation. Unfortunately, when we tried to give it some teeth by putting forward amendments in the actual clauses of the bill that would ensure its cost effectiveness, the government put up a wall of resistance and refused to accept every and any amendment we put forward.

We think that actually more than \$44 million could be saved if the government knew what it was doing and had a responsible plan in place and had actually thought this thing through more than picking a number of \$44 million out of the air.

With regard to my amendments put forward by this grouping by the Bloc, Motion No. 1 is an amendment that would require the government to respect the legislative authority of the provinces but it does not deal with much else. This may be considered symbolic but we think it looks like a motion that could be supported because we certainly do recognize that in some areas the provinces do have authority.

With regard to Motions Nos. 13, 22 and 23, we do have some concerns, particularly on Motion No. 13. While consultation with the provinces is to be applauded and we support it, the fact that each province's approval is required to establish standards does cause us concern that we may see some trade barriers developing between the provinces, above and beyond what we already have, using standards as a way to protect one's own provincial area of the industry at the expense of a neighbouring province. Of course that is not the way to unify the country. We really do have some concerns about Motions Nos. 13 and 22.

Motion No. 23 is another amendment with respect to the jurisdiction of the provinces. We support their jurisdiction but are not sure that this particular jurisdiction needs to be entrenched at this point in the act.

I think I will have more opportunities to speak to this bill as we progress through the various groupings.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no question that the federal government gives a great deal of consideration to the jurisdiction of the provinces and believes that the jurisdiction of the provinces is the provincial responsibility. We also believe very strongly in the process of consultation with the provinces and with all the stakeholders in the industry. There is no question that is important.

As well, this government has certainly set forward the committee's ability to deal with all issues and all matters that come to its concern that it wishes to further explore. A committee certainly has the ability to deal with issues such as PMRA, provincial-federal agreements and any other issue that comes forward.

• (1150)

There is no way that this government wishes to infringe upon the provincial ability. However, we feel that the amendments which are being put forward at present are really not needed within the bill. This government has and will continue to respect the jurisdictional legislative authority of the provinces. Indeed, clauses 14, 20 and 21 of Bill C-60 significantly enhance the ability of the federal

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government to collaborate with the provinces while fully respecting the provincial jurisdictions.

With respect to entering into agreements with the provinces, such federal-provincial corporations may be involved with matters of potential financial liability. These arrangements will have to be reviewed by the finance minister.

Clearly, the government will enter into agreements only which explicitly allow provincial agreement by the provinces. In other words, we are not going to enter into an agreement with the province and say the federal side wants this, but the province has no say. An agreement is an agreement; it is an agreement between two parties. As a result, the federal government and the provincial governments will agree before a document is signed.

Furthermore, the Government of Canada will continue to respect the jurisdictional level of all governments. I should note with respect to the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Health that the intent of clause 11(4) is to clarify and not alter the role of the Minister of Health in establishing food safety standards. The current process of establishing food health and safety standards already provides for consultations with stakeholders and includes the provinces.

The federal jurisdiction includes setting food safety standards for all Canadians under the Food and Drugs Act.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the last time I spoke in this House on the bill establishing the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, I spoke of reducing costly overlap and advocated harmonizing and simplifying standards so as to reduce the burden of regulatory requirements and promote competition in business.

I concluded my argument by saying that the focus had to be on co-operation between partners and respect for legislative jurisdictions. I even invited my colleagues to reread sections 91 to 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which apparently they did not do.

The Province of Quebec combined its food inspection activities in 1978. Now it is the federal government's turn, and it is proposing the same thing. It wants to harmonize. That is all very well, but there is no need to upset the established order. The rules must be obeyed.

I want to direct your attention to the lack of compliance with the Constitution and the lack of respect for our partners, the provinces and the employees. The present government finally decided, in 1996, to standardize food inspection.

In his latest budget, the Minister of Finance announced his financial game plan for this new agency. I would remind you that that was on March 6. Here we are, a few days away from

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Christmas, and the federal government is pushing members of Parliament to pass their bill.

And I mean their bill, because there was no serious consultation. Although the briefs submitted to the Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture contained some very sound remarks, they remained on the shelf like dead ducks, in my opinion. The government apparently did not take them into consideration, because it continues to propose the same bill at the various stages of the process, with very few amendments.

● (1155)

In my first speech, I denounced the fact that, as presented by the government, this agency might become a real patronage haven, and this is an understatement. The Liberals want to use the new Canadian Food Inspection Agency to reward their friends. At first, it will have only a few members like the president and board members. But two years later, the agency having moved and the employees having lost their permanent status, new appointments will be made. Who knows what the future holds. There might be a few Liberal candidates here and there who will have bitten the dust in the election.

Subtlety is not our Liberal friends' strong suit. It is obvious that, through this bill and clause 5, the minister is trying to give himself the power to appoint the president and the executive vice-president. The odds are he will probably designate a friend or an old classmate, as is so often the case.

Then, under clause 10, the minister wants to appoint an advisory board of 12 members. Have you ever seen a cowboy movie with only one bandit? There is always a gang, is there not?

Also, the minister will choose individuals who share his vision. Like-minded people do business together, belong to the same party, help one another. Unfortunately, the Liberal fraternity is still very well represented in this House.

Worse yet, under section 22, the minister will approve the agency's corporate or five-year business plan. Can we let that happen? It is understandable, under the circumstances, that the minister wants to retain a degree of flexibility just in case. If that is not remote control, it certainly is acute interference. The government is trying to control the agency and turn it into a club for its friends.

Under clause 11(4), the Chrétien government, through its health minister, will be able to establish policies and standards relating to the safety and nutritional quality of food. That is exclusively the prerogative of the provinces. As in the case of raw milk cheese, the government is interfering in something that does not concern it.

All this is far from reassuring in terms of our government's transparency. Some will say there is nothing new under the sun, and they will be partly right, as far as this government is concerned. As

you know, I am a straight talker and I like to see people get their due.

I often say that we have to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. However, in the case before us today, Quebec could end up indirectly subsidizing the inspection services of other provinces, under clauses 20 and 21, which provide for the establishment of federal-provincial corporations. There is a real possibility that Quebec could end up paying for this. Looking at how the federal government deals with the other provinces—and I am thinking of the GST harmonization process—you realize that “la belle province” is heavily penalized.

The Bloc proposed many reasonable amendments, to make sure the agency is immune to discrimination and patronage, so it cannot be misused by the Liberal government. But the Liberals refuse to make the necessary changes, because these changes would adversely affect their plans. The fact is that the agency will become a real haven of patronage.

The Liberals are in a bit of a hurry to pass certain bills before Christmas. This is not good.

There is something suspicious. Given what the Liberals are trying to do with this legislation, nothing should surprise us any more. It is easy to figure out that the Liberal government is trying to score political points, to win votes, with this bill. An election will be called in the spring. That is why the government is in such a hurry.

We in the Bloc Québécois have proposed amendments designed to protect our fellow citizens. We want transparency. We believe the House of Commons committee should monitor or be otherwise involved in the process.

The bill, as presented by the Liberals, is a step backward, not forward.

● (1200)

This government did nothing to promote debate. I am talking about a meaningful public debate on the quality of Canadian and imported foods.

What type and level of services are we going to provide in order to protect our fellow citizens? Would you believe the government restricted consultations with the producers, provinces and unions concerned. Members of this House are the only ones left to block this legislation. Any hope for transparency in the establishment of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency now depends on the will of the members of this House to vote according to their conscience and for what is reasonable.

I am thinking of the bill to create this agency, because it is necessary and it is important. But it should be amended to eliminate the possibility of patronage appointments.

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Furthermore, are they afraid to hold a serious debate on the quality of our services? One could think so, given the fleetingness of the consultation. There was no consultation, because the Liberals are in a hurry to ram their bills through.

In conclusion, the government is locating the agency in the National Capital Region, but for how long? Here again, we must be vigilant, for they could be tempted to move the head office around, depending on where they want to score political points. That is their long term escape plan. This will be a blow to many honest employees in the National Capital Region. Their rights will be disregarded.

The Liberals are masters of patronage and political intrigue. In all sincerity, I must oppose the government's Bill C-60. I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

In addition, I urge Liberal members to vote freely and join us in rejecting this bill. In the past, a member of this House stated, not without attracting attention, that patronage was a political fact of life. I, for one, say that we must stand up and condemn this manner of operating. If bills leave the way open to patronage, they should be rejected.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time is up.

[English]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the report stage amendments to Bill C-60, the legislation which will put in place the federal food inspection agency. I will be making presentations as we go through these groups of motions but I will only speak to Motions Nos. 1 and 13 from group 3.

First, I support the amendment in group 1. It could be considered to be a symbolic amendment which asks the federal government to respect the legislative authority of the provinces with regard to this legislation. It is important, it is not strictly symbolic and it deserves to be supported.

This amendment deals with process. I would like to quote from a brief presented by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, probably Canada's largest organization representing farmers across the country. The brief was given to the committee dealing with Bill C-60. I will read a couple of paragraphs from it. I think it should be entered in *Hansard*. I support most of what is presented by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in these two paragraphs.

It talks about the process although in part the process that has led up to this legislation being where it is right now.

• (1205)

"The intention to streamline efforts to save costs and create a more efficient system is one which CFA has supported from the

outset. The consultation process concerning the structure of the new streamlined entity was good as far as it went.

"One of the major failings from an industry point of view, even now as the legislation works its way through Parliament, is a real business plan with costs and realistic revenue projections that can be shared with those who are effectively the shareholders. As cost recovery systems become part of business life, government must realize that, as in any other business, those who pay call the tune. When industry is forced to pay user fees it considers itself not just a stakeholder, but a shareholder".

I have just one more paragraph from the brief presented by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to the agriculture committee.

"From this point of view, it is somewhat difficult to comment on the legislation Bill C-60. As are most other pieces of new legislation, it is enabling legislation. Most of the detail will be in the regulations which we do not have to review. We also do not have a clear understanding of the financing of the agency. Statements such as: 'There will be no new cost recovery fees for the first year of operation, April 1997 to March 31, 1998', when the industry knows that a new battery of fees will be imposed on April 1, 1997, create at best a level of scepticism, at worst, a level of distrust. The fact that the legislation creates a single stand alone food inspection agency with no clear accountability to shareholders gives us pause. What are we being asked to comment on?"

The closing question is what are they being asked to comment on? That is so true. With this legislation, as with so much other legislation that is presented to the House, it has a very broad scope, without enough detail, not enough clear guidance and restriction. It implements an institution and a policy which is uncertain at best. That is what the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is saying. It is also a big concern to me.

The devil is in the details. The regulations will not be debated and passed in the House either at committee or right here on the floor. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is very upset about it and so am I. It has presented its case very well on this new agency. It does not approve of the process.

I support Motion No. 1 dealing with another part of the process, asking for the approval of the provinces in regard to this legislation.

The second motion from this grouping I would like to speak on is Motion No. 13. I oppose this amendment.

The amendment requires the minister to establish policy standards in consultation with the provinces. I approve of that part of the amendment. Of course there should be consultation with the provinces. There should be approval from the provinces. However, the amendment requires the approval of each province.

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Of all governments, this government should know how difficult it is to get unanimous consent of the provinces on an issue such as this. To its credit, the government took the initiative to put in place the agreement on internal trade. It is an agreement which required the unanimous consent of the provinces to remove some of the trade barriers between the provinces that have been put in place over the last 130 years.

• (1210)

Unfortunately many sections of the agreement on internal trade are blank because the government could not get the unanimous agreement of the provinces. Even the completed sections are not being honoured. It is almost impossible to do anything about an infringement or failure to honour the agreement because it requires unanimous consent of all provinces. It does not work. This amendment calls for unanimous consent of the provinces but it is highly unlikely that any major change like this would ever pass.

With regard to the agreement on internal trade, I propose—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Could the hon. member conclude his remarks in the next few seconds, please?

Mr. Benoit: Madam Speaker, I thought I had only spoken for five minutes. I guess our watches are not synchronized.

In closing, since we cannot get unanimous consent in regard to the agreement on internal trade, other Reformers and I have proposed that instead of a requirement for unanimous consent there should be a requirement for the approval of at least two-thirds of the provinces which would include at least 50 per cent of the population, the double majority. This is just an example. I am not saying exactly what should be done here.

I would probably support that kind of formula in this amendment. But it is not there so I do not support it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak once again to Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to repeal and amend other Acts as a consequence.

As I have said before in this House, the need for a federal food inspection agency comes from pressure exerted by municipal and provincial governments, the agricultural sector, fisheries and even consumers.

The setting up of a single food inspection authority was therefore awaited anxiously, but not at any price and particularly not under just any conditions.

When Bill C-60 was examined in committee, and in this House, the Bloc Québécois presented numerous amendments, which we are to debate today. The reason for so doing is simple: the bill, as

presented, is deficient in a number of areas. It has, therefore, been necessary to improve it, primarily in order to reassure the agriculture and agri-food sector, and especially to ensure that the federal government respects provincial jurisdiction over food inspections.

I would, therefore, like to explain to my colleagues on the government side the reasons why the amendments presented by the Bloc Québécois are necessary, useful, unavoidable even, if we do not wish to see the Canadian Food Inspection Agency become another den of patronage and source of conflict between the provinces and agricultural industry representatives.

I will, therefore, explain why it is vital for the government to accept, and vote in favour of, the amendments we are debating today. The situation is as follows: the initial block of amendments address the appointment of future directors of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Bill C-60, as tabled by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, offers no guarantee of the competency and expertise of those who will be selected as president and vice-president of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

We believe it is vital for the bill to be amended so as to ensure that the person directing the agency is not selected for his political allegiance to the party in power, but rather for his real abilities in the area of food inspection. These appointments must, of course, take place after the provinces and organizations representing agricultural interests have submitted to the advisory committee the names of candidates for those positions.

• (1215)

Since this is about the quality of decision making in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the government can hardly refuse to support amendments in this respect. Common sense and a desire to avoid wasting public funds should be more important than the government's partisan interests. This is a matter of fairness and common sense.

The second group of amendments refers to the powers of the advisory board, which board shall advise the minister of agriculture on the mandate of the agency. The Bloc Québécois wants to make sure that the minister obtains from the advisory board all the data, opinions and expertise he needs to make informed decisions.

To be able to do so, the board must be given broader powers. That is why we suggest that Bill C-60 give the advisory board the authority to speak out on all matters it deems relevant to food inspection.

The amendments we are proposing will give the advisory board the authority to answer all questions and speak out on all issues submitted to it by the inspection industry, the provinces and the representatives of its employees.

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We also want the advisory board to be able to give its opinion on inspection service rates, facilities, products and the rights of the agency. The purpose of these amendments is to let the advisory board take a position on the real issues at stake in food inspection. We do not want a puppet advisory board at the beck and call of the responsible minister.

That having been said, the membership of the advisory board will also have to be changed. The amendment we are proposing would add one representative of the union or unions present in the agency. We think it is necessary to include agency employees in the board's consulting process if we want to keep abreast of what is really happening out there in the food inspection sector.

I believe that the quality of the services offered by the agency will be better protected if the advisory board is given a real mandate that allows it to speak out on the real issues.

The third group of amendments deals with the status of the agency and its employees and the powers of the responsible minister and the auditor general. In my opinion, he should be able to consult all members of the industry he considers representative and the provincial governments before drafting his report. This is not currently the case.

This is why the Bloc is presenting an amendment to require the auditor general to consult these people and organizations so they may express their opinions and recommendations on the agency's operation. The aim is to ensure that provincial governments, the public and the users of the agency's services may comment on ways to improve the services, thus requiring the auditor general to take them into account in his report.

As regards the status of the agency and its staff, we believe it would be dangerous to make the agency a separate employer under the terms of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. The intent of our amendment is to avoid describing the agency as a separate employer in order to preserve the vested rights of employees assigned to the agency.

Furthermore, we want to enable those who currently represent unionized employees affected by the agency's creation to continue to negotiate the assignment of jobs and positions within the agency and all matters pertaining to personnel management.

The aim here is to protect the rights of employees to ensure that, after the two year transition period provided in the legislation, they continue to enjoy the benefits of the Public Service Employment Act. Otherwise, the situation would be unacceptable.

Finally, we note that the powers accorded the minister are watered down and at times vague with respect to agreements with the provinces on food inspection. Under our amendment, these agreements would be signed by the minister responsible and the provinces without the need for approval by the governor in council.

• (1220)

Our amendment changes the rule so that the minister responsible for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency alone is accountable for decisions involving the agency.

This leads me to my conclusion that the minister of agriculture and his government should not be reluctant to implement the amendments we are debating in this House, because they are based on logic and common sense. I would like to think they will apply good judgement when it comes to time to vote on them.

[English]

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to rise and address the concerns that I have regarding Bill C-60. I am interested in what the members of the Bloc had to say. I share their concern that the power to investigate and the power to know exactly what is going on is of utmost urgency.

I understand that the stated purpose of this act is to establish the Canadian food inspection agency in order to consolidate and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of federal inspection services related to food, animal and plant health and to increase collaboration with provincial governments in this area.

I am concerned, the same as the Bloc is, that this power deals with food inspection, including risk management. It is very important that we look at risk management and the power again to look and investigate. I would be very interested in knowing exactly what direction we are taking when we speak of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of federal inspection services.

Since they relate to food, animal and plant health, are we talking about food, animal and plant health as we know and recognize it now in its natural part in our society or are we talking about food, animal and plant health that has DNA changes to it? This is not very clear.

If this new act sets out the new agency's framework in terms of responsibilities, accountability and organization, exactly who is the new agency working for? Who is it responsible to? Who is it to be accountable to? I am sure we would all hope it is the people of Canada.

Because of the fast moving changes already occurring in our food chain with plants and animals, should there not be a control factor somewhere in the agency's framework?

When this new Canadian food agency begins operation in 1997, it will become one of Ottawa's largest bureaucratic entities, with 4,500 employees and a budget of \$300 million.

Federal officials contend that ending interdepartmental overlap and duplication in such areas as enforcement, risk management,

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laboratory services, information systems and communications will save taxpayers \$44 million annually starting 1998-99.

Of course we have nothing yet to substantiate these claims but certainly duplication is a problem and anything we can do to cut that down is of benefit to all of us. I am sure most of us are aware of the massive costs at this time to the taxpayer when federal and provincial governments duplicate their services, not to mention the lack of efficiency and effectiveness as a result of this duplicity.

I recently read an article in *Reader's Digest* written by Premier McKenna of New Brunswick, a Liberal premier, who speaks of the terrible costs in duplication of government services. He speaks of the cost as high as \$5 billion a year.

The Reform Party supports downsizing and consolidating the operations of the federal government, but I fear this act will accomplish little except to shuffle names and titles. This act will also continue to decentralize authority for food inspection in the hands of the federal government.

The Reform Party believes the government should acknowledge that since the provinces already provide many of these same inspection services, the emphasis should be on decentralization and encouraging common inspection standards. Along with what the Bloc said, the provinces need to have strong impact on this.

I want to backtrack a bit to the part that I spoke of in relation to federal officials who are responsible for enforcement risk management, laboratory services and information systems and communications because that is very easy and it can be said very quickly but there is a lot in those few words.

I believe we are talking here about looking after our food chain, and certainly that is what the inspection agency's job should be. On whose behalf, again, are all these rules and regulations set up? If it is not for the protection of Canadian citizens, young and old alike, who is it for?

Where is the information and communication with our citizens, the Canadian taxpayer? Who is minding the shop, ladies and gentlemen, and on whose behalf? Two years ago I had to alert citizens in my constituency all about the possibility of rBST injections into dairy cows. They were not notified. There was nothing sent out. There was no communication and no information given. This is very terrifying.

• (1225)

In laboratory services, we have many fine research scientists who, I realize, are very excited by all this new knowledge and the future possibilities. As these new and exciting ideas pour forward, who is asking Canadians if they want these changes? What about

enforcement and risk management? What laws are being enforced and where is the risk management control?

I do not believe I am the only member of Parliament who receives weekly correspondence from my constituents who are alarmed by the changes taking place in their food chain, alarmed at the new genetically engineered food. Where is this mentioned at all in the new food inspections bill? Where is the caution?

I now receive books, letters and all sorts of correspondence from all over British Columbia asking me to look at the changes and to consider the apparent lack of caution, as those who would benefit in a monetary manner push ruthlessly ahead to force their will on Canadians.

I recently watched "Jurassic Park". I am not a movie goer, but I happened to catch it on TV last week. I did not find it scary in the physical sense but I found it alarming in the research and academic sense. I am not the first person to say this, but the message of the film to me was not can we do it but should we do it.

There are those who would argue that we are overpopulated and that the world at present cannot feed all of its people and that justifies scientists' changing our natural world as we know it. I agree that overpopulation is serious, but surely the answer is not to move full steam ahead in chaos, for indeed none of us knows where this will lead us.

Unfortunately, when we talk of global food production we have to admit there are serious problems. The human population is growing and we are losing 24 billion tonnes of topsoil a year.

Yes, third world countries need food and I fear all this new biotechnology hype is not helping the third world. Rather, those investing are venture capitalists and they need to find investors. How can we expect a starving third world country to come up with the money needed to invest?

What are we doing in the food inspection bill to take a look at what is around the corner? Surely what we do in legislation will reflect what is to come. We should not have to backtrack all the time.

Canada and I imagine the United States as well have a lot of food that is wasted every year. I have been to dumps in the Okanagan where beautiful ripe peaches, ripe tomatoes and ripe vegetables of all types have been thrown out. Why did we not dehydrate them or reprocess them? Surely the food inspection agency could come to grips with some kind of process so that food would not be wasted.

We send money to these third world countries that we do not have. That increases our tax burden. Yet we have food which we do not send. For countries to waste food when there are starving people in the world is not acceptable. To suggest that we must protect our food market so as not to flood the market and cause

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lower prices is not an argument. Surely we have enough intelligence nowadays to be able to deal with both major issues.

We now have concerns that there are a number of products which have been changed. Canola is herbicide intolerant. I am not sure whether that means more or less herbicide is needed. We have tomatoes with fish genes in them to make them more tolerant. There are flavour saver tomatoes. I wonder if anyone has ever gone to a plant that has been ripened by the sun and tasted a ripe tomato. I do not think anything can top that. There are pigs with human genes in them. Even our fish are being engineered to grow faster.

What are the negative side effects? In B.C. we have good research scientists. One of them spoke on the weekend and told us that one of the side effects is that this particular engineered fish is a more aggressive feeder. Therefore it is not unlikely that if released into a natural setting it could over eat and cause the demise of our natural salmon. That is not unrealistic to suggest.

We are not using any controls. Food inspection has to deal with all aspects of food.

Every technology, no matter how beneficial, has unexpected costs. Today more than ever before we need researchers and scientists with ethical and moral values. Our research scientists should be free to explore where their curiosity and expertise take them in a controlled environment. However, if they have to be constantly aware of the economic payoff, then our scientists are not free to do their research and pressure is put on them to produce new ideas for those who want to exploit our world, as we know it, which results in the release of these genetically engineered food products on unsuspecting consumers. They are not being labelled. We do not really know what we are purchasing any more.

I have presented two private member's bills which deal with labelling. I hope those bills will be dealt with seriously.

I want to mention that there are occupational hazards related to biotechnology, which include diseases such as cancer, toxicity and product allergies. The main hazards are allergies from recombinant products, diseases, including cancer, and the production of novel disease organisms.

• (1230)

What is the concern? The concern is that many of these significant hazards are being ignored by the scientists who are doing research and those reporting on the research that these novel allergies in food products will impact on workers. In fact the escape of these genes on the coats of laboratory workers is occurring each day. Some of them are being taken outside the lab and this matter is not being dealt with.

I will conclude by saying we should look at all the research we have. Let us be very cautious that we do not just choose research that fits our particular purpose at the time and that we worry about all consumers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Madam Speaker, this group of amendments concerns mainly the respect of jurisdictions. The amendments proposed by the member for Frontenac and other BQ members of the standing committee on agriculture who spoke after him stand for a principle very dear to Quebecers, that is the respect of jurisdictions.

Agriculture being a shared jurisdiction, it cannot be denied that the federal government has a say in that area. But it cannot be denied either that the provinces also have a say.

As a member of the standing committee on health, I am very concerned by this issue. Food inspection will be the responsibility of the future agency of the Agriculture Department, but why is food inspected? It is inspected to protect the health of citizens, and certainly not to harm businesses, slaughterhouses or farm producers. The goal of food inspection is to preserve health, probably the most precious gift anyone can have.

I used to be political attaché to the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Crête: The best!

Mr. Dubé: There are some remarks that I cannot make in this House and I do not want to be partisan, but I remember very well that, in 1978, Quebec faced the same problem the federal government is now confronted with, that is the multitude of food inspection agencies.

For example, I will tell you what the situation was in Quebec in 1978. At the federal level, there were at least three departments, Agriculture, Health and Fisheries, and the situation was similar in Quebec. In addition, the Montreal area, Quebec City and a number of other major centres in Quebec had their own food inspection agencies.

Therefore, people dealing with food inspection said: "We respect the principles and objectives pursued by food inspection agencies, but enough is enough. It is impossible to work, food inspectors are always on our backs and they contradict one another". There was no consistency.

So, the federal government is now looking for consistency, very late of course, almost 20 years after Quebec. We agree with that objective because, at least, there will be only one federal agency. However, since there is also one agency left in Quebec, there will still be some duplication in respect to slaughterhouses.

I know about it. In my riding, there are slaughterhouses, as there probably are in every riding. These are referred to as type A and type B slaughterhouses. This may not mean anything to the people who are listening and who are not concerned by the issue, but these are the categories. Some categories of meat are approved by the federal government. Others are approved by the provincial govern-

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ment. In some cases, this means duplication for the businesses. There is still some duplication left, which is unfortunate.

• (1235)

That is why I agree with the member for Frontenac. He is telling us that one cannot stop the federal government from moving forward, because of some rules involving shared jurisdiction in agricultural matters. But please, do respect provincial jurisdiction in this area, as well as in health. Health is even more of a provincial jurisdiction than agriculture.

Personally, I hope there will be agreement between the provinces, even if the agency is federal. That would be simpler for everybody. It is also possible that we, in Quebec, do not want to control what is happening in British Columbia. If that province is more interested in letting the federal government do the whole thing, so be it. Except that, in Quebec, we have a specific culture. People always equate culture with language, but there is much more.

You know that, Madam Speaker. You come from a region that has a specific culture. That can also be true for food, or gastronomy. Now, this bill is suggesting that one agency could do the work efficiently for all the different regional cuisines.

A while ago, there was a reference to the cuisine of the Lac-Saint-Jean region. That is really good cooking. I know, because I have tasted it. Each region has its own specialties. Even the region of Edmundston, your region, Madam Speaker, has its own specialties. You know that people have different customs in different regions.

I do not want to go into distinctions, but we know that French speaking people do not eat the same food as English speaking people, whether they are in New Brunswick, in Quebec or elsewhere. We must recognize that fact.

In this case, who is in the best position to deal with these problems? The closest level of government. I am from Quebec. In my case, the closest level is the Government of Quebec, and all the more so because Quebec has been a leader since 1978 in matters of food inspection. At that time, I worked in the office of the Minister of Agriculture for Quebec, Jean Garon. I can name him since he does not sit in this House. That is to say that I followed this issue closely. Everybody quoted him as an example.

Incidentally, during our consultations, I met old acquaintances from the Quebec department of agriculture. I was told: "Strangely enough, the federal government is trying to copy us". So much the better if Quebec can influence and try to improve something that will apply somewhere else. I have nothing against that. But I believe the federal government should take into account the fact

that Quebec's mindset, culture, way of life, food, and behaviour are quite distinct.

At least, there is some change, some improvement. Instead of three federal agencies there will be only one. It remains to be seen whether this agency will respect areas of provincial jurisdiction.

I want to commend the member for Frontenac for his hard work on this issue. He brought it up time and time again in caucus, at every meeting, to make us realize how important this debate is. He mentioned it to me yesterday, and again today.

He even told me: "My dear colleague from Lévis, I know you have some experience in agriculture, even though it is no longer your field". Finding his exemplary perseverance and tenacity irresistible, I came here to speak in favour of his amendments, to support his views. We will never say it often enough, the member for Frontenac is a staunch supporter of the Quebec farming community. Without sounding like a victim, he has often said that farming was not mentioned enough in speeches in this House. If it were not for the member for Frontenac, the member for Lotbinière, and the member for Champlain, we would not hear much about farmers.

• (1240)

If we were to rely on the Liberal Party, the government, to speak about farming in the House, we would never hear about it. Today is a case in point. It is frightening.

Food inspection is a concern not only for farmers, but also for consumers. How is it that no Liberal members of the health and agriculture committees are speaking on this issue? I am not allowed to criticize them for being absent, but I can criticize them for being silent. This is incredible.

In conclusion, I will congratulate the member for Frontenac. I hope that members opposite will reconsider their position and join us in this extremely important debate on the issue of respecting areas of provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, I realize that the Liberal majority has decided not to answer the call of the member for Lévis. Once again, they remain silent on agricultural issues.

I am happy to speak to the amendments proposed by the member for Frontenac, telling the federal government that, even if it did update its vision of Canadian federalism and merged together all federal food inspection agencies, it was high time to make those changes because there was a terrible mess in that area.

However, in doing so, because of its very limited view of what had to be done in that sector, the federal government disregarded

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the fact that provinces already had some expertise and that they had developed some know-how.

With his amendments, the member for Frontenac wants to make the government listen to reason and realize that it should not interfere in provincial jurisdictions with this bill on food inspection.

Let me give you three main reasons. Sometimes we hear people say that separatists are against anything federal, but that is not the problem in this case; it is a matter of principle, of logic, of common sense.

Everyone knows about the first example, the raw milk cheese. Thanks to a Canada-wide way of thinking, a view I would say is almost cultural, they came to a ridiculous conclusion that mainly affected Quebec raw milk cheese producers, because there are more producers in Quebec, but also all Canadian producers, of course. The Bloc Québécois led a powerful fight on that issue at the federal level.

Did the Government of Quebec initiate the same kind of action in the case of food inspection? Not at all. Our practices are different, our point of view is different, but this has to do with our culture, with our perception of the future of our society, and it translates into concrete initiative like these.

Our first example was the planned ban on raw milk cheese. We had to wage a public fight, we had to demonstrate publicly the ridiculous side of the position taken by federal officials in order to win our case. Quebecers are looking forward to the day when it will no longer be necessary to do battle in the House in order to get things that make sense.

I would like to give you another example. If we allow the federal government to intervene in the area of food inspection, if we let it set standards and operating procedures, we will get some strange results. A case in point is lamb production.

Lamb production in Quebec is very different from lamb production in the rest of Canada. In Quebec, there are many small farmers with 200 to 300 sheep, sometimes less. In western Canada the flocks are much larger.

When a disease that should be eradicated is found in one flock, up to two years ago the practice was to slaughter all the sick animals and those who might have been contaminated, in order to eliminate the problem.

• (1245)

But the federal government, under pressure from western producers, who can be counted on to defend their interests, has changed the procedure. But it has always decided there would be only one rule across Canada; now, it was quarantine. The major impact of this in Quebec is that the management of a producer's

herd may be totally paralyzed because, when a producer has 200 animals and they are all placed under quarantine, we might as well say he has to shut his farm down. In western Canada, if 200 animals out of a herd of 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 are placed under quarantine, the economic impact is not the same at all.

This is to show you that if we decide that the federal government can interfere in this way with food inspection and management, we will get absurd results similar to the one I just described.

There is another sector in which the federal government should not enjoy unjustified powers, that is, the management of slaughterhouses. Our slaughterhouses vary widely in size. We need standards that may differ for the various types of slaughterhouses, without putting aside the rules on food quality and the guarantee that diseases will not spread.

There are still small regional slaughterhouses that can work. They are often multifunctional slaughterhouses that slaughter different kinds of animals. These facilities need to be regulated differently from what might be a very large slaughterhouse dealing with a single species, say pigs. There are major differences in terms of management, which results in practices being different from region of the country to another. In that sense, to give the federal government the power to establish standards and, with these national standards, to interfere in any province is not doing Quebec or any other province a service.

I would like to come back to clause 11 of the bill and to the amendment we put forward so that each province could veto the use of this provision by the Minister of Health.

We would not want to find ourselves in a situation where the federal government could decide to get involved, to interfere in a certain area—raw milk is still an excellent example to illustrate this point—and the province would then have to prove such interference is uncalled for. The onus should be reversed and each province should have a veto on the application of this provision so that, any time a decision made by the federal government in a given area is in contradiction with the province's objectives, the province may say: "Thanks, but no thanks. This just cannot be done here, and the reason for that is quite simply that it is not in keeping with our way of doing things".

We must therefore ensure that this bill to standardize food inspection at the federal level does not lead to what would amount to across-the-board standardization and that those who have a centralizing, federalist vision of Canada are not given yet another tool to impose national standards in an area that requires a level of flexibility unlike what is provided for in this government bill.

We must ensure that the provision about agreements respecting food inspection entered into by the federal government and any of the provinces does not leave the door wide open for federal interference in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

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To let the federal government provide services to the public on behalf of the two levels of government, thereby directly interfering with provincial jurisdiction, is only perpetuating a pattern. Once again, we have a basic choice to make: do we want a federal system where the delineation between provincial and federal jurisdictions is an incredible mess? Or could we not at least, while we are in this system, clarify the respective jurisdictions and let provinces keep the jurisdiction they have as regards food inspection?

• (1250)

As we can see, provincial governments, or Quebec in any case, are 10, 15, or 20 years ahead. Back in 1978, food inspection responsibilities were assigned to one department. Today, in 1996, the federal government is putting forward a proposal to that effect, but its proposal still reflects the old political assumption that the federal government should control all areas of activity.

This could lead once again to the problem of having to manage national standards, which do not necessarily apply easily and appropriately to each of the existing areas of activity.

As for constituents of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, those involved in farming in these various areas, every time they see duplication of government services, they point it out. They were delighted to see the federal government reduce the number of food inspection groups. It was about time, because three departments were involved, whereas there will be only one from now on.

This bill could, and must, be improved by giving provincial governments control over food inspection, so that, in two, three, or five years, we will not be in court over legal complications. If those concerned by food inspection measures need a loophole, in order to elude the law, well, let us leave the bill as is, as it will give them an opportunity to do so. Then, all they will have to do is blame governments for not minding their own business. Therefore, there must be a fee structure.

The burden of proof must be reversed. Food inspection must come under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government could, through its legislation, manage some aspects which fall under its jurisdiction, but it must not be allowed to interfere in such a way that, in two, three, or five years, through regulations, it ends up with even greater control. This is why I support the amendment by the hon. member for Frontenac.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is now on Motion No. 13. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Therefore, division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is now on Motion No. 22. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1255)

The next question is on Motion No. 23. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-60, in Clause 9, be amended by replacing lines 4 to 6 on page 3 with the following:

“9. (1) The Governor in Council shall, by order, direct that the head office of the Agency be in the location in Canada recommended by the committee referred to in section 9.1.

(2) The Governor in Council may, by order, direct that the head office of the agency be in a location other than the one recommended pursuant to section 9.1 but shall not make any such order unless

(a) the Governor in Council has provided the committee referred to in section 9.2 with all the reasons for such a change; and

(b) the committee has approved the change.

9.1 Such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters shall recommend, for the purposes of section 9, the location in Canada of the head office of the Agency .

9.2 Such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters shall, after studying the reasons for the change provided to the committee pursuant to paragraph 9(2)(a), either approve or refuse to approve, for the purposes of subsection 9(2), any change in the location of the head office of the Agency.”

He said: Madam Speaker, clause 9 is very simple and almost laconic. It provides that:

The head office of the Agency shall be in the National Capital Region, as described in the schedule to the *National Capital Act*.

The senior officials we met last September 26 have drawn to our attention the fact that tomorrow morning, six months or two years from now, after a change of government, a new agriculture minister could, by order, to ease his conscience and continue to indulge in patronage, have the agency moved to his riding. Of course, we want to shield our fellow Canadian citizens from any potential abuse in that regard.

Let us remember that it can be done through a simple order in council. Why should the head office of the agency move year after year? The Liberal government, already in power for over three years, is very patronage-minded. It could eventually move agencies from one city to another, and that can be very costly.

Our amendment proposes to involve the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. It suggests two things. First, the location of the head office of the agency would be reviewed and decided by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and not only through an order in council.

This would make the process much more open and at the same time revitalize the role of House of Commons committees that, in fact, do not do much except execute orders coming from above, in this case, from the minister himself.

Once the head office is located somewhere, a future move is always possible or could become necessary 30 or 40 years down the road. To govern is to foresee, and people in the government should be smart enough to expect that the head office of the agency will not be moved 3 or 4 years from now. But who knows? That could happen, as in the case of the House of Commons, which moved from Montreal over a century ago. You may remember that, according to our history books, the Parliament Buildings were set on fire following a minor rebellion and, in its wisdom, the government of the day decided to move Parliament to another province, Ontario.

● (1300)

The second objective is that the future relocation of the agency's headquarters be subject to an in-depth review of the need for such a relocation and that the new site be approved by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Relocating the agency's headquarters, with all this decision would imply—asking the employees and their families to move, moving the office furniture, renting space in another city, etc.—is out of the question without first having carried out a review of the reasons behind this decision. Of course, if it is a patronage decision, an irrational decision, then the committee, after hearing a lot of witnesses, would submit its recommendation to Parliament.

Changing topics, there is no need I guess to ask that the agency's headquarters, if they are to be established in the national capital region, be located in Quebec. When we go over the estimates for the Department of Agriculture, for instance, we see that, year after year, around 11 per cent of the departmental budget is spent in Quebec.

Let me remind the House that Quebecers represent close to 25 per cent of the overall population and pay over 23 p. 100 of the taxes collected in Canada. However, barely 11 per cent of the agriculture department's budget goes to Quebec.

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I approached the minister of agriculture to tell him that it averages 11 per cent, although there were times when it dropped to 9 per cent and other times when it reached 13 and 14 per cent, but on average it is 11 per cent. So, how could he explain why his department is only investing 11 per cent in Quebec? Well, he said: "It is easy to understand, dear hon. member for Frontenac. There are a lot of infrastructures in the nation's capital, in Ottawa, offices and such. The nation's capital can almost be considered as being a part of the province of Quebec". Are there so many people living in Quebec but working in Ontario? Could be. But not enough to make up for the difference and reach 23 per cent, which would only be fair in our view.

So, if it is true that everything done in Ottawa could be considered as being done in Quebec, would it not be possible to establish the new agency in Quebec, since it is expected to open up in the national capital region? Set on the river bank, it could lean towards Ontario, a bit like the leaning tower of Pisa. In New Brunswick, not much leans this way, since it would have to reach over Quebec.

Would my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, who sits with me on the standing committee on agriculture, be ready to rise now in this place and to say: "Dear hon. member for Frontenac, we will give you something today: we will establish the head office of the agency in Quebec"?

As you can see, clause 9 provides that the head office of the agency shall be in the national capital region. I bet you \$20 to \$1 that it will be in Hull. I am being generous, I bet you \$20 to \$1 that it will be in Hull. However, I am almost sure I will lose. It does not matter. I am willing to take the risk that you make \$20 on an outlay of \$1, just so that you can see the major injustice being done to Quebec once again.

The head office of the agency will be the reflection and the heart of the agency. It is estimated that some 4,500 jobs will be directly created by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Of course, all 4,500 jobs will not be at the head office but easily 800 to 900 of them will be. This is very significant. Readjustments will have to be made within three departments.

• (1305)

Without further delay, I challenge the parliamentary secretary who could make you win \$20, Madam Speaker. I challenge him to rise now and for once to make a decision not in favour of Quebec but a fair decision for all of Canada, that is, that the head office be located on the other side of the Ottawa River, in Hull, Gatineau or somewhere in the area.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, and I look forward to the parliamentary secretary's answer.

[English]

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-60 today. This bill proposes that the Government of Canada consolidate all federally mandated food inspection, animal and plant health services into a single federal food inspection agency. This agency will report to Parliament through the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

When the new food inspection agency begins operation in 1997, it will become one of Ottawa's largest bureaucratic entities with 4,500 employees and a budget of \$300 million.

Although the Reform Party supports consolidating and downsizing the operations of the federal government, we fear that this act will accomplish little except to shuffle names and titles. Instead the government should be considering the advantages of privatizing a significant portion of Canada's food, plant and animal inspection services.

Only \$40 million or 13.3 per cent of the agency's \$300 million budget is currently cost recovered. The agency already plans to dramatically increase this amount to more than \$70 million. While the Reform Party supports user pay and cost recovery, the cost of the service must reflect the true cost of providing the service, not the added expense of maintaining the government's bureaucracy.

The act should ensure that a greater priority is placed on cost avoidance and cost reduction. This is important as the agency created in this act will be responsible for enforcing and administering several federal statutes which regulate food, animal and plant health related products. This includes the Feeds Act, Fertilizers Act, Health of Animals Act, Meat Inspection Act, Plant Breeders' Rights Act and Seeds Act.

The act will also continue to centralize authority for food inspection in the hands of the federal government. The Reform Party believes the government should acknowledge that since the provinces already provide many of the same inspection services, the emphasis should be on decentralization and encouraging common inspection standards and more harmonization.

For these reasons the Reform Party opposes this bill. Turning to the bill itself, we have specific concerns.

Provisions in this bill seem to create an environment for empire building. Clause 5 of the bill states that the governor in council shall appoint a president and an executive vice-president of the new agency. These individuals will be responsible for the day to day operations of the agency. They will provide advice to the minister on matters relating to the mandate of the agency. There is no mention of the qualifications required by these people. This type of situation opens itself up to pork barrel politics.

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The bill also states that the president and the executive vice-president shall be paid such remuneration as fixed by the governor in council. We do not even know the salary amounts for these two positions. With this legislation, each member of the advisory board shall be paid such fees for his or her services as are fixed by the minister. Again, we cannot tell Canadian taxpayers how much they will be paying for these salaries.

This bill gives the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food complete control over this agency which is a vital part of the agriculture industry.

The Liberal member for South Shore has voiced his concerns over his government's bill in this House. He has commented on the lack of consultation regarding Bill C-60 in his constituency. The small and medium size seafood processors in his riding have also told him that they feel increasingly isolated by this government. I can assure the member that this isolation is shared by western producers and processors.

• (1310)

This familiarizes us somewhat with the Canadian Wheat Board. Commissioners on the Canadian Wheat Board are appointed and have received severance and pension payments that are hidden from public view. The minister is setting out to create the same type of regulatory agency with Bill C-60. The issue of severance packages, pensions, premiums and what have you in that agency is unbelievable to western farmers and it is causing a tremendous division.

The Canadian Food, Beverage, Consumer Goods and Services Coalition submitted some valuable criticism of this bill. It stressed the need for an agency built around a board of directors that would be truly accountable and effective in setting these policies. I would like to point out that this is the direction the agriculture minister is slowly turning to in hinting he will be making changes. Why is this not being done before the bill is passed?

The coalition feels an advisory board under the direct control of the minister will simply contribute to the continuation of the outdated policies and procedures of the original department. It stressed that the legislation should focus more on cost effectiveness and service to the consumer.

We in the Reform Party proposed an amendment to the preamble to identify cost effectiveness as an objective of the agency. The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food actually passed the amendment, albeit by a narrow margin. However, the Liberal majority on the committee succeeded in defeating all of our other amendments which were designed to bring more accountability to the agency and would have ensured more consultation with the industry.

For example, we would have ensured that the appointment of the president and the vice-president would have been done in consultation with the industry and would have been subject to a special subcommittee on food inspection. This is what the industry wants but it is not what the Liberals want so they defeated the amendment. This is another prime example of how this government operates.

We also put forth an amendment to ensure that the appointments to the advisory board that is created by this legislation would be open to scrutiny by a subcommittee of the standing committee. Of course the Liberal committee majority defeated this excellent amendment also. The Liberals seemed determined to derail any attempt by Reform members to give the agriculture and agri-food committee some responsibility and make it significant and accountable.

We also proposed an amendment to provide for a one-year moratorium on any further cost recovery actions so the standing committee could examine the consequences of the existing and proposed fees on the competitiveness of the Canadian industry. Another Reform amendment would have ensured that the fees would not have exceeded the reasonable cost of providing the service. Not surprisingly, these amendments were defeated also. This is unfortunate because it leaves all the power in the hands of the minister. There is no accountability and there is no consultation with the industry. These are severe detriments to making this agency what it should be.

I would like to quote a paragraph or two from a presentation by the Canadian Horticultural Council on December 10. This is what the council had to say about the cost of service:

"During the cost recovery round one discussions in 1984, the food production and inspection branch estimated the total cost of the fresh fruit and vegetable program to be approximately \$7 million. In 1994 when the cost recovery round two discussions were launched under the food production and inspection branch's business alignment plan, we were informed the costs for the program had increased to approximately \$17 million", more than double what they estimated. "Suffice it to say that in both cases we had to rely on the branch's word that the figures were correct. When we questioned how the program costs could have risen by \$10 million over the 10 year period, especially when a number of the services had been deregulated, we were informed that the rules were calculating the costs had changed". Boy, that is cost recovery.

• (1315)

Then we go into user pay. Another short example: "It is worth noting that between 1984 and 1994, the principle of sharing the cost based on public and private good has disappeared. In 1984 one-third of the costs were deemed to be for the public good and in 1994 there was no longer any public good".

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Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to realize that we are, right now, debating Motion No. 5.

This motion proposes an amendment to section 9 of Bill C-60, intent to have the committee look at where the location of the head office should be. The motion suggests that the head office be looked at within the purview of a committee and the committee make a decision where that head office should be located.

This amendment is not needed. In reality, during the discussions with the standing committee and the amendments put forth in the standing committee, clause 9 indicated very clearly that the head office would be located in the national capital region. That is very clearly in the amendment.

There is no legislative precedent in the Canadian Parliamentary system for having a standing committee to be involved in the level of detail in the administration in deciding where a building is located.

The minister is responsible and accountable for his budget. He is responsible and accountable to the Canadian public. He is responsible and accountable to this Parliament. Therefore it is very clear that as part of his duty he must make those detailed decisions and bring them forward.

I would at this time as well point out that it is of extreme importance to not only the minister but also to the department that all regions of this country be treated fairly and equally. We endeavour to make certain that where we are talking of research centres or all the facilities that exist in agriculture Canada, the proper facilities are placed throughout this country in order to serve that industry as well as possible.

There is no question that the decisions being made are made on the basis of fairness. I would assure my colleagues from Quebec that has been the case in the past with the department of agriculture and the department will continue to make certain that not only Quebec but all regions of this country are treated fairly with regard to those types of decisions.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would just like to comment on this grouping. We are really only dealing with one amendment put forward by the Bloc regarding where the agency's national office will be located.

The parliamentary secretary for the minister of agriculture just spoke and talked about the accountability that is in the system, and that this type of amendment is not required. I agree with him only on one point. This type of amendment should not need to be required. If there were accountability it would not be required.

I want to review with the hon. member some facts that prove that his argument is a bunch of hogwash. He says that the minister and the agency will be accountable. Let us look at the record of the Liberal government. Location is very important.

We have seen governments from as far back as I can remember playing political games with locations of head offices. Even recently in this Parliament the Liberals brought forward a piece of legislation that privatized CN Rail, which means that basically it should be able to run its own affairs. In the legislation it stated that the national office of CN Rail had to be located in Montreal. Talk about politics. What a bunch of foolishness.

• (1320)

The previous Tory government decided that for political reasons the national office of the Farm Credit Corporation had to be in my province in the city of Regina. That was a political decision. Where was the accountability? Where is the accountability now, where was the accountability then?

It is not only with the locations of office locations, it is with the granting of contracts. All of western Canada was infuriated when the Conservative government offered the CF-18 maintenance contract to Canadair instead of Bristol Aerospace in Winnipeg even though Bristol Aerospace had the best tender with better quality and a lower price to offer.

Because of political expediency there was no accountability. It was a joke. A few members ran into Prime Minister Mulroney's office and demanded that the contract with Canadair be accepted for political reasons, and the Prime Minister bowed to their wishes.

What should be the criteria for determining the location of the national office? Has it even dawned on anybody to debate the criteria? The criteria for the location of an agency's head office should be cost effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. The most effective and productive location for the head office of the Farm Credit Corporation may just be Regina, I do not know. I do not think a cost benefit study has ever been done to determine where that national office should be.

The most cost effective location for the single food inspection agency might be the national capital region, but we do not know. That was not even a consideration. The minister said because there are other departments involved, this may be the right place. But nobody looked into it. Nobody crunched the numbers. That was the last thing on the agenda.

The first priority has always been political expediency: "How are we going to maintain the most votes? If we are in trouble in Atlantic Canada, then we had better put some office in Atlantic Canada. If we are in trouble in Alberta, we had better put something in Edmonton or Calgary".

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An hon. member: Stop being so cynical at Christmas time.

Mr. Hermanson: The member says I should not be cynical at Christmas time. It just so happens that a lot of civil servants have not enjoyed a very good Christmas because for some political reason their head office was moved from one end of the country to the other and they had to tag along. Had they known it would save them some of their own tax dollars, they may have been prepared to move from Ottawa to Regina or from Vancouver to Halifax.

What really happened was that they knew some politicians were playing some games with the location of their national office and their lives were being wrecked as a result. It is time we stopped doing that and look at cost effectiveness.

If this motion had stated that the head office of the agency be located in the most cost effective location in Canada, I would have jumped for joy. That would be real progress. But that is not quite what the amendment says. The Liberals had not even thought about that as a criterion for the selection of a location for their national office.

I am sick and tired of playing these silly political games, playing with people's lives and spending taxpayer dollars needlessly.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1325)

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-60, in Clause 5, be amended by

(a) replacing line 20 on page 2 with the following:

“5. (1) Subject to subsection (2), the Governor in Council shall appoint a”

(b) adding after line 24 on page 2 the following:

“(2) The Governor in Council shall ensure that persons appointed to the positions referred to in subsection (1) have a comprehensive knowledge and a broad experience of the areas dealt with by the Agency.”

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-60, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing line 24 on page 2 with the following:

“may be renewed for one further term.”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by adding after line 11 on page 3 the following:

“(1.1) Notwithstanding subsection (1), no person may be appointed by the Minister to an advisory board unless that person has been recommended for such appointment pursuant to subsection (1.3).

(1.2) Such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters shall invite each province and the organizations in that province representing agricultural interests to submit to the committee the names of candidates residing in that province for appointment to an advisory board.

(1.3) Subject to subsection (1.1), the committee referred to in subsection (1.2) shall, for the purposes of subsection (1), recommend from among the candidates the persons it deems most suitable to be appointed to the advisory board.

(1.4) The committee shall recommend persons under subsection (1.2) from each province and the percentage of candidates recommended from a province shall be equal to the percentage that the population of that province represents of the total population of Canada.”

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by replacing line 14 on page 3 with the following:

“Agency that such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters submits to it.”

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by adding after line 14 on page 3 the following:

“(2.1) On any matter within the responsibilities of the Agency, the board may advise

(a) a provincial government;

(b) a union representing some or all of the employees of the Agency; and

(c) a person from the agriculture, fisheries, food processing, food distribution and public health sectors.”

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by deleting lines 15 to 21 on page 3.

Motion No. 10

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That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by adding after line 21 on page 3 the following:

“(3.1) The Minister shall appoint at least one representative of a union representing some or all of the employees of the Agency to the board.”

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by replacing lines 22 to 24 on page 3 with the following:

“(4) The Minister shall appoint as Chairperson of the advisory board the person recommended for that position pursuant to subsection (4.1).

(4.1) Such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters shall, for the purposes of subsection (4), recommend the member of the advisory board that it deems most suitable as Chairperson of the board.”

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-60, in Clause 10, be amended by replacing line 27 on page 3 with the following:

“pursuant to the recommendation made under subsection (5.1).

(5.1) Such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters shall, for the purposes of subsection (5), recommend the amount that each member of the advisory board shall be paid as fees for his or her services.”

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-60 be amended by adding after line 44 on page 5 the following new Clause:

“17.1 The Agency shall, once every year, provide to such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters a detailed report respecting all actions taken in that year by the Agency in the exercise of its powers under section 17.”

He said: Madam Speaker, again, these motions are well grouped. Motions Nos. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 21 are amendments proposed by my colleague, the hon. member for Lotbinière.

The reason the Bloc Québécois is trying hard to improve Bill C-60 is because of the serious risk of patronage. From 1984 to 1993, another party was in office and some people would literally wake up at night despising the Prime Minister of the time, because they were so fed up with his politics of patronage.

The party that took over from the Mulroney government does not fare much better in this respect. This is serious, as you are well aware. The government, through the governor in council, will appoint the president for a term of five years which may be renewed, and also the executive vice-president. There will be an advisory board of not more than 12 members, who will also be appointed by the governor in council.

What is even worse is that the regulations governing employment in the public service will be suspended for an indeterminate period of time. This means anyone can be hired, whether it is an uncle, an aunt, a nephew, a niece, a brother-in-law, a mother-in-law, a sister-in-law, the niece's friend, the sister-in-law's nephew, even the grandfather, if he still young enough to go to work. This is a serious matter. We are talking about an indeterminate period of

time which could be six months, a year, two years, whatever. I have no doubt that the executive vice-president and the president will all be good friends, good Liberals.

These people will appoint employees of the new food inspection agency in a fashion similar to that of the government. We raised this issue during question period. The director general of the space agency, which is located in Longueuil, or Saint-Hubert, lives in Ottawa and refuses to move. So, the government pays \$1,300 a month to house him in a luxurious rental unit. Is it a friend of the government who is enjoying all this? Of course.

● (1330)

Look at the recent wave of appointments in our ridings. Our new returning officer in my riding is a well-known Liberal. The fact that he is a Liberal does not make him incompetent, but, by the same token, one need not be a Liberal to be qualified.

This retired gentleman was appointed, while we have young men and young women looking for work. They are very competent, but they do not have a job and have to rely on either unemployment or welfare benefits. This government has appointed in my riding a man who is drawing a good pension. Why not have given the job to a competent young person?

In my riding, the employment or unemployment insurance—we are not quite sure what word to use any more—board of referees is chaired by a notary who happens to be the daughter of a former Liberal member.

When representatives of the farm debt review board appeared before us at the agriculture committee, I was the only one to ask them: “Who do you have to thank for your appointment?” Jean-Yves, the representative from Quebec—he is from the St-Hyacinthe area—made it quite clear that he had his political affiliation to thank for it. And what affiliation is that? Liberal. In the greater Eastern Townships region, the same Jean-Yves has managed to win the nomination as Liberal candidate for the riding of Richmond—Wolfe in the upcoming election. He managed to get himself nominated.

Are we going to give the Liberal Party of Canada a blank cheque to waive the public service hiring procedures for an indeterminate period so that the new food inspection agency can become a patronage haven? Never. We will condemn this measure with all our might.

The fact that a person is a Liberal does not make that person competent. The name of Jean Bienvenue comes to mind; he was the minister of education in Quebec under Robert Bourassa. Guess what his political affiliation was. He was appointed superior court judge in Quebec. The fact that he was a Liberal did not make him a

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competent judge. He was appointed by the Liberals, not the Conservatives.

We have proposed countless amendments to improve on Bill C-60, so that the people of Canada could have a reliable food inspection agency built on a solid foundation. To have a solid foundation, the best qualified people must be hired.

One of these amendments suggests that the education and experience of the president and the vice-president should match the agency's management and service delivery requirements. Qualified people should be hired. Chances are the government party will vote against that to protect themselves, because they do not want to have their hands tied, they want to be able to appoint whoever they please.

• (1335)

By ensuring that the president and executive vice-president of the agency have a comprehensive knowledge and a broad experience of the areas dealt with by the agency, we would minimize the risk of seeing one or more unqualified person appointed to these positions, as was the case of Justice Bienvenue, to whom I referred earlier.

We are proposing that the president be appointed for a term of five years and, if he does an excellent job, he could be appointed for one, but only one, more term of five years. After ten years in a position, I would say he would have given all that he can give, and that is enough. I bet our friends opposite will vote against that too. What they want is to be able to appoint the members of the new agency for life, like the senators.

I urge our Liberal colleagues to consider carefully what they want to do. If they want this agency to be above suspicion, it has to be as free of patronage as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Madam Speaker, we are now dealing with group 5. A number of amendments were put forward by the Bloc to this part of the bill which deals with the ratification or review of appointments to the agency.

Reform introduced an amendment to Bill C-60 at committee stage. Our amendment stated:

No appointment shall be made under subsection 10(1) unless it is approved by a subcommittee of each of such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider

- (a) agriculture matters;
- (b) health matters; and
- (c) fisheries matters.

Government members chose to oppose that amendment in committee. Had it passed, it would have ensured that members of Parliament with knowledge and interest in the areas of agriculture,

fisheries and health would have been able to review appointments to the advisory board of the agency. They would have been able to review the staffing decisions of the agency. That would have addressed the patronage issue which my colleague from the Bloc so eloquently berated.

We support Motion No. 3. It ensures that persons appointed to the agency's executive by the minister are qualified. It is important that these executives not be the local Liberal who happens to donate the most money in the last election.

It is sad that the Conservatives and the Liberals are trying to outdo each other on patronage appointments. Under the Mulroney Conservatives, Marjory LeBreton was the de facto minister of patronage. They did not have a minister in the House, but they might as well have, it was so blatant. Nobody got appointed to anything by that Conservative government unless they met the credentials of being a strong Conservative Party supporter. Of course she got the biggest plum of all. She was appointed to the Senate, where she is now able to make her pronouncements after being a party servant for so many years.

The Liberals, not to be outdone, chose Penny Collette to be their de facto minister of patronage to hand out the appointments. We saw it recently in the appointment of returning officers across the country for the next election. That is the mindset of the Liberal government.

• (1340)

That is the fodder that feeds the political machinery. Some hope that down the road, if they pay my dues, donate enough money to the Liberal coffers, pound on enough doors or if they support the right person who happens to make it to the Prime Minister's chair or the leader of the party at least, they will get their reward and be well cared for.

It is one's party faithfulness and loyalty that becomes the paramount criterion for being appointed to these various boards, without public scrutiny and merit being the primary factor.

We support Motion No. 3.

Motion No. 4 limits the agency's executives to one term. If there is proper scrutiny of who these people are I do not think that type of step is necessary.

We support Motion No. 6. It would allow the standing committee to review the appointments to the agency. The last part of the amendment is a formula to force the minister to make the appointments based on an exact province by province formula. This is an excessive measure. It is getting away from merit and into a quota system. I believe members are quite aware of our feelings on people being appointed to positions or being hired based on quotas rather than merit.

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We support Motion No. 7. It would allow the standing committee to review appointments to the agency's advisory board. We argued that position in committee and the Liberals rejected it.

We oppose Motion No. 8. It would allow the advisory board to advise a provincial government or a union—we are not sure why the Bloc put that in. Perhaps someone can change our mind with a good argument.

We oppose Motions Nos. 9 and 10. Motion 10 would require that at least one of the advisory board members be from the agency's union.

We support Motion No. 11. This amendment would require the minister appoint as president of the agency the person that the standing committee deems to be the best candidate. This brings accountability and allows elected people to have a constructive role in matters concerning government agencies and the creation of these agencies.

We support Motion No. 12. It allows the standing committee to review matters related to the new agency such as the advisory board members' pay. One of the things that damaged the Canadian Wheat Board the most was the fact that no one knew how much the appointed commissioners received in salary. All sorts of rumours floated around about what they received. Finally there was a leak concerning their benefit package if they were to retire or be fired.

Farmers were shocked to find out that they were paying severance packages of over \$250,000 to these appointed commissioners. It was all kept secret. A lot of ill feelings developed toward the Canadian Wheat Board and the commissioners because this fact had been kept secret. Therefore, Reform supports this motion because it opens things up and everybody knows the dollars that are involved and whether or not they are adequate or too benevolent.

We support Motion No. 21. This would allow a review of the agency's operations once a year by the standing committee. Anything that can be done to bring elected people into a more meaningful role in reviewing the work of agencies such as the food inspection agency is a very positive step.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, several points have been brought forward by the leader of the official opposition which we agree are very important to the system.

However, we feel that most of the issues that he mentioned have been dealt with very clearly within the legislation. I know people can talk about patronage appointments and a wide variety of things, such as the offices and positions that people have, but the reality is there are four or five political parties in this House.

If we look at the representation of the people across the country, there are always going to be some Liberals who are appointed to positions. There are going to be some Bloc members who are appointed to positions. There are going to be some Reform members who are appointed to positions. Those appointments must be on merit. On this side of the House we do not question the fact that people are to be appointed on merit.

• (1345)

We feel that this legislation provides for an appointment process of the president and the executive vice-president on the same basis as we would appoint a deputy minister and associate deputy minister. The process ensures that knowledgeable, well qualified people will be selected for those positions. The legislation also allows for the renewal of the appointment of the president or the executive vice-president for one or more terms as appropriate. As such it will provide the government with the flexibility to ensure a consistent and continuous senior management structure in the agency.

With respect to the role identified for the Standing Committee of the House of Commons in the selection of advisory board members, there is no legislative precedent in the Canadian parliamentary system for having a committee involved with that type of detail. Yes, we have seen the fiascos of committees getting involved in the scrutiny of appointments in the United States. Quite frankly, it is a political tear down when we look at it. I think the public watches with interest when parties start that process. In reality, I am certain that the United States is very envious of the system we have in this country. It is very clear from the people we have in appointed positions that they do an extremely good job.

The minister is responsible and accountable to Parliament for the agency and its administration. As we look at it the minister is the end of those responsibilities. Quite frankly, he has the responsibility to consult very widely, check with as many people as possible and make certain the operation is running properly.

The purpose of the advisory board is clearly to provide the minister with advice with respect to matters relating to food inspection. Provinces, unions, and others will continue to seek input from a host of sources that will help the minister with his decisions.

With respect to the selection of the advisory board members, the intent of the legislation is to ensure that the minister can choose an advisory board from as wide a selection of individuals as possible. We do not wish to inadvertently limit or curtail the possibilities of choice of that board. Rather than mandating representation from specific interested parties, it is preferable to have a broad source of knowledgeable people, including the possibility of representation from the unions.

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With respect to fees paid to the advisory board members, these fees will be subject to Treasury Board guidelines that are in place in this country.

With respect to the reporting on intellectual property, this information is currently available and reported annually. For example, the food production and inspection agency of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada issued 1,621 fresh fruit and vegetable dealer licences in 1996 and is part of the summary list in part III of the main estimates. This reporting will continue in the agency. Furthermore, committees of the House will continue to review this sort of information as part of the main estimates process through the Appropriations Act.

I reiterate as well that where concerns come up and Parliament wishes to deal with them, we do have the committee process in place. That committee process is to allow members of this House to investigate whatever issues they feel necessary to further investigate. It will involve members of Parliament. Through that process I believe the House is well protected too.

The minister who is virtually responsible in the end must take the resource of what is going on, take the circumstances of the agency and make certain it is running properly. The House at the same time has its vehicle through the committees to investigate any concerns. Quite frankly, both sides of the House have a full opportunity in committee to voice concerns and bring forward witnesses to discuss issues that are pertinent.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-60, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act. At first blush, the bill seems pretty innocuous. I looked at it with the hon. member for Frontenac.

However, a closer examination shows what the Liberal Party wants to do. This is rather disheartening. The government comes up with nice bills, but it always wants to be able to appoint friends. Because the government wants to remain in office, it does not necessarily appoint competent people. Not to worry. It does not matter whether these appointees are competent or not. What matters for the government is looking after its friends.

Earlier, the hon. member for Frontenac proposed constructive amendments. My colleague sat on the committee. He made constructive suggestions, and I am anxious to see whether the government will have the courage to accept and support these positive changes.

Why do I say this? It is because, while I am still naive, I do notice certain things when I look at the current political reality. We

are the official opposition and people often say that the opposition is only there to block government initiatives. This is not at all the Bloc Québécois' vision, particularly since we are not even here to try to form the government.

Rather, we are here to defend the views of part of the public. I was elected to represent the Lac-Saint-Jean region. Therefore, I come here with certain views and I say to the government: "Listen, your bill may not be so bad, but we propose this change or that change". But to no avail. I am quite convinced that, when the time comes to vote, the government will turn a deaf ear.

It should come as no surprise that people are no longer interested in politics. It is always the same thing. It is always these little schemes to promote patronage. Of course, this is done quietly. It does not make the headlines. It is always done in an underhanded way. This is all very disappointing. Even though we are the opposition—I would rather say the watchdog of democracy—we should be able to work together at least some of the time, so that everyone can make a positive contribution.

This reminds me of the bill we talked about recently, which would have revoked the conviction of Louis Riel. Why did the government vote against the bill? This is ridiculous. When the opposition says black, the government says white.

But that is not what it usually says. Usually, it says: "The opposition is just there to disagree". I am sorry, but we do try to suggest some constructive changes. We try to raise some interesting points. But all we get is a completely negative reaction to any contribution we are prepared to make. I must say I find this very disappointing. I look forward to the time when we have our own country, so we can go our own way.

I will give a few examples from the bill. In clause 9, it says that the head office of the agency shall be in the national capital region or any other location in Canada. That is good. However, according to certain officials, the head office of the agency could be in Ottawa at first and then be moved later on by order in council. Basically, the question that comes to mind is whether the agency could go where it would be politically expedient. If things are not going well in a riding, this would be a good thing to have, so the government hands out a goody. That is what I dislike about the Liberal Party and the government.

In clause 10, it says that the minister responsible for the agency shall appoint an advisory board of not more than 12 members to hold office during pleasure for a term not exceeding three years. The minister would also appoint one of the members as chairperson of the advisory board instead of letting people qualified in this area who have to work with the food inspection people choose their own representatives.

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So the minister is making sure he can control the members of the advisory board and influence their decisions. That is pretty obvious. When you give a job to your friends, they can hardly turn around later on and bite the hand that feeds them.

In subclause 10(5), it says that the minister will fix the fees paid to the members of the advisory board. However, I may point out that in clause 8, it says that the president and the executive vice-president shall be paid such remuneration as is fixed by the governor in council. The question is whether this is a mere technicality or whether it is some kind of double standard that could lead to discrimination. This clause is unacceptable for another reason.

• (1355)

Clause 12 provides that the agency is a separate employer under the Public Service Staff Relations Act. Clause 13 provides that the president has the authority to appoint employees to the agency. When the bill was studied in committee, officials confirmed that there would be a code of conduct, of ethics, governing the appointment of agency employees. The thing is, however, that we will not know the content of the code before the bill is passed. It reminds me of the code of ethics of the ministers opposite: they have a fine code of ethics to show that everything they do is proper, except no one knows what the code is. It is completely ridiculous. What is the use of a code of ethics when people cannot even find out what it is about? Here again, it serves to score political points.

The officials told us that the usual rules governing hiring in the public service would be suspended during the transition period. Why do we not know what rules will be used?

We note therefore that patronage—discrimination even—will abound in the future Canadian Food Inspection Agency. This is why the Bloc Québécois has proposed reasonable amendments to prevent the federal government from abusing its power in this matter.

As I said earlier, we simply want to make a constructive contribution. I do not want to foul things up. So long as we are paying taxes to Ottawa, I want to be sure this country is run the best way possible. I am here to work, to improve bills while we are still here. I see these sorts of things, and then people ask me why we want to have our own country.

At some point, people have to try to understand more. As I said earlier, we wonder why people are not more interested in politics. I think it is because of this sort of thing.

Our colleague from Frontenac has contributed constructively. I would therefore invite the government to give it some thought, and perhaps we could work more together.

[English]

The Speaker: My colleagues, as it is almost 2 p.m., we will now go to Statements by Members. We will come back to the hon. member after question period as he has a few minutes left.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE LATE MARTHA MACDONALD

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week a very active and giving member of my riding of Brampton was tragically murdered.

Martha MacDonald was a caregiver with Brampton Caledon Community Living, an organization that offers support to mentally and physically disadvantaged people living on their own. She was a regular volunteer at the Ste. Louise Outreach Centre, a local food bank, and an active political participant. Her enthusiasm and passion will be missed.

On behalf of my constituents I offer my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Martha MacDonald.

In early November, Martha participated in a public forum on justice issues which I hosted in my riding of Brampton. She was quite vocal at this community event about the need for greater attention to the epidemic of violence against women. It is a very sad irony for me personally that this is my last memory of Martha MacDonald. Her comments foreshadowed the very tragic and unfair end to her life.

* * *

[Translation]

PORT OF TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Monday, I asked the Prime Minister to make the commitment that his government would give the port of Trois-Rivières the status of Canada port authority. I have been informed that the Minister of Transport confirmed this morning, in a letter, that the port of Trois-Rivières would become a CPA.

There is no need to thank the federal government for that since the port of Trois-Rivières meets all the established criteria. As the minister representing the Mauricie region, the Prime Minister had the responsibility of ensuring, right from the start, that the port of Trois-Rivières would be given CPA status since it meets all the established criteria. His responsibility was to do that and not to make a pitch for some local personality through various means.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister voluntarily ignored the second part of my question concerning the \$12 million accumulated by the port of Trois-Rivières. The Bloc Québécois is concerned about that and demands that the government leave this money for the

development of the port of Trois-Rivières instead of dipping into this surplus, as it did with the port of Quebec City.

* * *

[English]

DRUNK DRIVING

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the sincere and tireless efforts of the members of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Especially at Christmas, MADD reminds us with a red ribbon campaign of the tragic consequences of drinking and driving.

● (1400)

I commend MADD for effectively changing the attitudes of the public toward what used to be an acceptable social occurrence, getting behind the wheel of a vehicle after drinking.

However, the social pressure will not be enough to curb the high percentage of repeat offenders whose problems are more than bad judgment.

As a society we also have a responsibility to eradicate the ravages of drunk driving by addressing the cause, not only the effect.

Statistics show that up to 70 per cent of the drivers who cause death and injury through impaired driving do have alcohol problems.

Therefore I say it is time to enforce rehabilitation, even involuntarily, to prevent future tragic deaths. We must, as well, pass legislation like Motion No. 78 which will deal with this serious offence effectively.

Today I am again wearing my pin in honour of Cindy Verhulst, a young woman from Mission in my riding whose life was tragically cut short by a drunk driver.

* * *

WILF CARTER

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a special Canadian music legend. Many will recognize the name Wilf Carter, but perhaps he was best known to his fans as Montana Slim.

Wilf Carter was born December 18, 1904 in Port Hilford, Nova Scotia and died one week ago at the age of 91.

Wilf Carter was inspired at an early age by a yodeller who was passing through town. Wilf developed his own unique three in one or echo yodel, which became his trademark in the music industry.

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His famous yodel sparked his career, a career that spanned six decades and kept him on the road well into his eighties.

Wilf began his career while working in the grain fields of Alberta, singing at local dances, bunkhouses and parties.

Wilf was such a hit in the prairies that the Canadian Pacific Railway hired him to entertain trail riders on their summer packing trips through the Rockies.

One of his songs that I recall is "It makes no difference now". The truth is his career made a difference, for Wilf Carter was a legend in his own time.

On behalf of all Canadians and all those who knew him, we offer his family our deepest condolences. Gone but never forgotten.

* * *

RUPERT EVANS

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): I am pleased to acknowledge the initiative of one of my constituents, Rupert Evans, who travelled to Japan to build a frontier log home in a rural community north of Tokyo. Rupert Evans, Royal Buchanan, Bill Power and Dan Babcock spent six weeks in Japan on the project while enjoying the warm hospitality of their Japanese hosts.

The material and human expertise required to build the home were Canadian. Mr. Evans and his team amazed their hosts with their aptitude and dedication. They accomplished in six weeks a project which normally takes months in Japan. Rupert Evans and his construction team showed the Japanese what Canadian hard work and initiative are all about. Their efforts have stimulated demand for Canadian resources and skill in this field.

We are opening doors to other markets, we are expanding opportunity for Canadian business and we are establishing good relations with foreign governments to facilitate trade.

Congratulations to Rupert Evans and his team for a job well done in showing that Canadian expertise is the best in the world.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I make this statement on behalf of my fellow island colleagues, four MPs.

A large group of islanders are concerned about a rash of criminal acts that has occurred on Prince Edward Island. The worst was the repeated sexual abuse of a three-year old girl in which the rapist suggested that she was actually the aggressor. We find that hard to believe. More to the point, a provincial judge sentenced this individual to only 15 months for this heinous crime.

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In response to this, my colleagues and I have received a petition from the Citizens Against Sexual Abuse of Children signed by over 11,000 islanders.

These petitioners call on Parliament to review the penalties associated with such crimes. They feel penalties are far too lenient and should be increased to provide a deterrent to protect the most innocent in our society, our children. We also request the Minister of Justice to formally respond.

* * *

[Translation]

**BOIS-DE-BELLE-RIVIÈRE FOREST
EDUCATIONAL PARK**

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my support for the ongoing negotiations between the city of Mirabel and the Department of Public Works for the purchase of the Bois-de-Belle-Rivière forest educational park.

Several reasons led me to this decision. In the past, significant public investments have confirmed the role of Bois-de-Belle-Rivière as a tourist area. The city of Mirabel has already said it is interested in protecting local plant and animal life. It has even created a corporation, called CPEM, that is responsible for environmental protection in the Mirabel area.

The Centre de formation agricole de Mirabel, headed by Denis Lauzon, is also very much involved in this project.

• (1405)

The people of the greater Montreal area are in favour of protecting the Bois-de-Belle-Rivière area, and that is why I am asking the public works minister to accept the request made by the city of Mirabel.

* * *

[English]

SENIORS

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to give fair warning to the Liberals that their proposed senior's benefit which places a 50 per cent tax rate on the income of Canadian senior citizens will not be tolerated.

The Liberals do not listen to Canadians but they will not be able to ignore the voice of Canadian senior citizens who will align themselves at the ballot box in the next election. Canadian seniors will not stand for the 50 per cent tax rate on their income.

Not only are the Liberals planning to attack OAS, they are also attacking the Canada pension plan. They plan to triple taxes for the CPP and cut seniors' pensions in half.

Canadian seniors will support the fresh start offered by the Reform Party of Canada. We are committed to rescuing the CPP and guaranteeing that every senior citizen receives every penny that he or she is entitled to under the Canada pension plan.

Canadian seniors know that Liberal and Tory policies do not work. Canadians want the security of the Reform Party of Canada.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have heard a lot this week about the Prime Minister's broken promises. The Prime Minister broke his promise to Canadians on the GST, on jobs, on the CBC and on many other issues. Some Canadians even say he lied, but today he went well beyond broken promises—

The Speaker: My colleague, we had a similar situation yesterday. We cannot say through someone else's words what we ourselves cannot say in this House. I judge that word to be unparliamentary and I would ask the hon. member to withdraw it forthwith.

Ms. McLaughlin: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some hon. members: Withdraw.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to withdraw the word.

Ms. McLaughlin: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. Of course I withdraw the word.

Today the Prime Minister is breaking not just a promise but a fundamental trust with aboriginal people in this country.

In 1969 he tried to assimilate aboriginal people with the recommendations of the white paper report. Now, 27 years later, changes are being introduced to the Indian Act which are not accepted by the First Nations of this country. Five hundred and eighty out of six hundred and thirty-three chiefs and councils say they were not consulted about this process.

Following the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples which came out just days ago, it is time for the government to finally listen to aboriginal people, to consult aboriginal people, and not to make unilateral changes to the Indian Act.

Aboriginal people are asking for a new relationship with Canada. Let us see the Prime Minister keep his promise this time.

* * *

[Translation]

CABLE TV

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following a CRTC decision, it seems that two French television stations in the national capital, CHOT and CFGS, will be moved

from their present location, channels 5 and 10, to less advantageous positions on the cable grid.

Two English channels, one from Pembroke and the other from Hamilton, will take their place, to the great displeasure of some 10,000 francophones of the region.

Moreover, two American networks, NBC and CBS, channels 9 and 13 respectively, will not be affected at all by this change and will stay in the channel 2 to 13 range. In my opinion, this is intolerable. Consequently, the CRTC rules should be changed to give priority to Canadian francophone and anglophone stations.

In conclusion, I invite Rogers, the cable company, known to be sensitive to the French presence in the region, to do everything in its power to prevent this from happening.

* * *

[English]

DONOVAN BAILEY

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more congratulations are due to Donovan Bailey, the world's fastest man. He has been awarded the Lou Marsh trophy as Canada's outstanding athlete of 1996.

He edged out a who's who of candidates vying for this prestigious honour, all of whom had their own outstanding achievements in their respective sports. It certainly says a great deal about the athletic talent we possess in Canada when one has to win two Olympic gold medals and set a world record to edge out the competition for the athlete of the year award.

Without a doubt his physical performance was tremendous, but his athletic skill was truly complemented by the grace he displayed in victory.

Donovan Bailey not only excels in sprinting, he sets an outstanding example to the youth of Canada. Congratulations, Donovan.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

BOLO AWARD

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, *La Bande à Gilet*, a radio program first aired on CJRP then on CJMP, in Quebec City, have been giving out the BOLO award for five years now. This award goes to an event or a person chosen by popular vote as having been or made the blunder of the week.

I am glad to announce in this House that the winner for this week, whose name will be officially announced only tomorrow at

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8.35 a.m., is the federal Minister of Health who earned the title for his anti-tobacco bill. BOLO to the Minister of Health.

* * *

[English]

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker:

This statement is about the word
The word that may not be heard
It's a word really common
Except with the brahmin

The word L-I-E is not free
It is bound by the House SOP
For in this house of repute
The rules make us mute

The Prime Minister may prevaricate
In front of Canadians so variate
But it's all self-deception
If he misjudges their reception

When he tells campaign stories
That could be writ by the Tories
He can later deny,
And say twas not I

He said we'll kill the GST
An abomination from Mulroney
But if we find that we can't
We'll just let people rant

If I do what isn't a word
I'll deny till all is absurd
The public won't die
If this guy who is shy
Is found to be telling a shmy.

* * *

[Translation]

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned this morning that IBM, CGI and the Informission Group, have just formed a consortium dedicated to solving the computer conversion problem before the beginning of year 2000.

Informission Group's RECYC 2000 software was chosen to adapt the computer systems to enter the third millennium. The consortium intends to create a software conversion centre which could be established in Informission's engineering centre, in Quebec City.

The activities of the consortium should create at least 1,000 jobs in Quebec over the next three years.

Skilled workers, an efficient R & D assistance strategy and an aggressive approach on international markets are the factors which allow Canada to attract projects like this consortium. Congratulations and good luck.

*Oral Questions***PORT OF MONTREAL**

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform you that the Port of Montreal will finish up the year 1996 in very good shape.

By the end of the year, there will be a 3 per cent increase in cargo handled. There was a spectacular 10 per cent jump in the volume of container traffic during the first 11 months of the year.

This increase is attributable to shipowners' confidence in Montreal's port facilities and in the quality of services available there. It is important to remember that a good part of this increase came about at the expense of the ports of New York and Baltimore.

The port authority is expected to post a net profit for the seventeenth year in a row. This profit should be in the neighbourhood of \$11 million.

We pay tribute to the work of the port's administrators and we urge them to keep up the good work they are doing as the engine of Montreal's economy.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Colleagues, at certain times of the year, for example St. Patrick's Day and Robbie Burns Day, we bend the rules a little. Today is one of those days. So in your name I will recognize the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

* * *

PEACE ON EARTH

Santa Claus (The North Pole): Mr. Speaker, through you and this democratic House I wish to convey on behalf of all the peace loving peoples of the world the very, very best.

May you all continue to strive for and encourage all those efforts that you have been involved in toward the encouragement and the development of peace operations throughout the world.

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

Best wishes for good health and happiness to you all.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

POVERTY

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Statistics Canada published figures showing that there were five million Canadians living under the poverty line, a 38 per cent increase since 1989. There are 1.4 million children living in poverty in Canada, 45 per cent more than in 1989.

Not only are families not getting any richer, but their average income has gone down by \$2,800 since 1989, and this is before the new EI system comes into the picture and further reduces their standard of living.

Is the Prime Minister aware that it is incumbent on him as Prime Minister to do a little more for the poor than wish them "Good luck", which was all he had to say the other evening on television to those seeking work?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we said when we formed the government was that we had a terrible situation on our hands.

The government found itself facing an annual deficit of \$42 billion. If we had not taken steps to correct this situation, there was a danger that the social programs that exist for the protection of the poorest members of Canadian society might disappear.

We took the bull by the horns—

Some hon. members: Ha, ha.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Yes we did, and we sorted out the problem of the deficit better than people thought we would.

What we are seeing today is that, in order to be able to create jobs so that people in difficulty can provide their families with the necessities of life, we must contend with the lowest interest rates in 40 years. We have an economy with the lowest rate of inflation in many years. The conditions are there for the economy to create the jobs that will make it possible for the most disadvantaged members of society to provide for their families, in particular their children, as they would like, in so far as possible.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat unfortunate that the Prime Minister sees it as a choice between reducing the deficit and helping people find work.

We have explained to him how taxation reform alone would free up \$3 billion for active job creation. We are not criticizing the Prime Minister for trying to reduce the deficit. We are, however, criticizing his lack of imagination when it comes to creating jobs and helping people find work.

The Prime Minister was outraged when former Prime Minister Kim Campbell said during an election campaign that the rate of unemployment in Canada would not drop below 10 per cent. The Prime Minister had a lot to say about that on the campaign trail. Is the Prime Minister more comfortable with an unemployment rate of 10 per cent now that he is holding the reins?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in January 1994, the rate of unemployment was 11.5 per cent and it was brought down to 9.4 per cent last year. Unfortunately, it has now gone back up to 10 per cent, but if OECD and IMF forecasts are any indication, we will have the best economic growth of all G-7 countries in 1997.

We believe that the unemployment rate is going to drop. But we have set up programs. For example, despite the financial difficul-

ties faced by the government, we introduced an infrastructure program in our first few months in office. You will recall that Mrs. Campbell said at the time that it was a ridiculous program, and members of this House used the opportunity to—

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would remind you always to address your comments to the Chair.

• (1420)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, through you, I voice my indignation at the government's actions.

Let us jog the Prime Minister's memory. Since the beginning of the year, and I hope the Prime Minister understands what I am getting at, through you, the number of unemployed in Canada has increased faster than the number of new full time jobs: 121,000 more people unemployed, but only 106,000 new jobs. The government is unable to meet the public's needs.

Is the Prime Minister able to understand that, if the situation continues to deteriorate in this way, it is because his government is not guiding the economic recovery, is not stepping in, is creating only a paltry number of jobs, and dead end ones at that, and because, to top it all off, UI cutbacks will take effect in January? This will be a terrible blow to the poorest members of our society, and it is the government's fault.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has got the numbers wrong. Since the beginning of the year, even though there has been a loss of around 45,000 jobs in the public sector, over 200,000 new jobs were created in the private sector in Canada.

Furthermore, in the preamble to his first question, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about family income. I would like to tell him that the truth of the matter is that family income has gone up since we came to office in 1993. Before then, family income had dropped dramatically during the recession between 1989 and 1991. But since we have come to office, not only have we halted this decline, but we have seen family income start to climb.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if family income is the topic, family income is \$2,800 lower than in 1989. These are Statistics Canada figures.

There are, however, limits to the statistical juggling that can be done, like the Minister of Finance's statement he has just made, telling us we are one of the top countries in the world where job creation is concerned and promising that the situation will improve. There are limits to everything.

My question is for the Prime Minister. What is his answer, he who is so fond of international bodies, to the OECD's statement that Canada ranks 17th out of 26 industrialized countries with its 1996 unemployment rate? What is the Prime Minister's answer to

Oral Questions

Statistics Canada, which is telling us that there were more newly unemployed people that new full time jobs in 1996? That is what Statistics Canada said.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): I have before me the figures for average family incomes in Canada. In 1989, the average annual family income was \$58,000. In 1993, when we came to office after three years of Conservative government, the annual income had dropped from \$58,000 to \$54,000. Today, it is going back up, at \$55,000.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance wants to talk statistics, that is what Statistics Canada is there for. We can see that, for 20 per cent of poorest families, the income is more or less unchanged, and that for the richest families it has risen, while for the middle class it continues to decrease. This is what the Statistics Canada figures show.

I think that the Prime Minister still has a chance to help those who are becoming more and more familiar with poverty, and he can do before certain measures of the new Employment Insurance Act are implemented.

My question is for the Prime Minister.

• (1425)

Could he not suspend implementation of employment insurance reform measures which end up impoverishing the unemployed by taking billions of dollars away from them in order to wipe the deficit slate of the Minister of Finance clean?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are measures to that effect. For instance, the changes we have proposed concerning employment legislation. We have guaranteed a 25 per cent minimum to families, which is a far better guarantee than the one in place before, because we are concerned about their situation.

* * *

[English]

CBC TOWN HALL

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's disastrous performance at the CBC town hall has sent the Liberal spin doctors into damage control mode. They have now suggested the CBC, a federal crown corporation established by an act of this House, rigged the town hall, purposely stacking it with hostile questioners who did not reflect the concerns of Canadians.

Unemployment, job security, the GST and national unity are the concerns of real Canadians. The questions raised at the town hall do reflect the worries and anger felt by 1.5 million Canadians who are unemployed.

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Does the Prime Minister really think the CBC rigged that town hall and that Canadians are not really concerned about jobs, about taxes, and about national unity?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the town hall was rigged. It is the first time that a Prime Minister has gone on a program like that for an hour in French and an hour in English. If I was afraid to face the situation, I could very easily have stayed at home. I am not afraid to talk to the Canadian people.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): I replied to all their questions. I told them that it is not easy to run a country. When we started as a government three years ago the people were telling us that Canada was virtually a third world country in terms of its finances. But I was happy to report to the people of Canada that night that now we are considered the best of the G-7 because we took the challenge.

I do not deny that there were people there who would like to work but cannot find a job. We are working on that. It is our priority. That is why we have established programs to improve the situation. Another credit to the nation is that Canada created 672,000 new jobs in the last three years. But that is not enough. We have to keep working on that and it is exactly what we will do.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we find it curious that the Prime Minister's colleagues stood when he said he should have stayed at home.

Canadians have every right to hold the Prime Minister accountable for his broken campaign promises on the GST. But that is extremely difficult when the Prime Minister's handlers keep him in a bubble, away from the public. We can understand why they do that, because the last time they let him out he attacked a demonstrator, told a bunch of kids in Winnipeg about imaginary friends and he ended up abusing Canadians at a town hall meeting.

• (1430)

The Speaker: I would invite the hon. member for Calgary Southwest to put his question.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is not afraid to attend town hall meetings, will he assure the House and all Canadians that he will not retreat back into his bubble, that he will present himself at more town hall meetings and public forums where Canadian voters can hold him accountable for his actions and his deeds?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not long ago I was challenged by his seatmate. We have a debate here every week and I am in the House more than many other members of Parliament.

With regard to the preamble to his question, it is no wonder the leader of the third party is affected because the support which the people of Canada have for him is going down month after month.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the issue here is accountability. The Prime Minister should expect to be held accountable to the 1.5 million unemployed for saying: "That's life, lots of luck, try harder".

In the last election when Kim Campbell said that unemployment would remain at double digits until the next century, she accepted the unacceptable and paid the price. By saying "that's life" to 1.5 million unemployed, the Prime Minister is also accepting the unacceptable and he will pay the price.

Does the Prime Minister, like Kim Campbell, consider the present levels of unemployment acceptable and the status quo is good enough? Is that the real reason he rejects public criticism of his jobs policy?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we came to power the first thing we did was have an infrastructure program to create jobs. That was strongly opposed by the Conservatives. As the House will recall, it was opposed by the hon. member who is the leader of the third party.

After the program was established he was the first one to come to the government for money to create jobs in Calgary. I do not blame him, but it shows that as long as there are people who want to work, this government will be working to create jobs for them.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN SPACE AGENCY

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry.

On Tuesday, the Minister of Industry tried to downplay the serious allegations against the president of the space agency and his executive vice-president. The minister wanted to put the blame on Mario Rinaldi, the former vice-president and comptroller of the space agency. In fact, the latter was fired for having criticized a number of dubious practices at the space agency.

Does the minister admit that Mario Rinaldi, then vice-president and comptroller of the space agency, was suspended from his position because he revealed some dubious practices of his executive vice-president, Alain Desfossés, to Mr. Evans, president of the agency?

• (1435)

[English]

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, it is clear that the allegations the hon. member keeps making are in fact the complaints of a discontented former employee of the agency, one of four vice-presidents—the vice-presidential positions having been eliminated in a reorganization of the agency—who is unhappy because he is no longer employed in the agency.

He has indicated that he wants to take legal action against the Canadian Space Agency. It is his right to do so. In the meantime, it is very inappropriate for a member to make accusations on the floor of the House where people being accused are not in a position to defend themselves. The issues will be resolved in a court of law.

[Translation]

The hon. member must be aware of the fact that everyone has the right to answer charges and to have his day in court.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister hide behind a grievance, when the people against whom these serious allegations were made are still with the space agency, unless he wants to protect his former adviser, Mr. Evans?

[English]

The Speaker: We must not impute motives, my colleagues, in questions.

[Translation]

I would ask the hon. member to please put her question.

Mrs. Venne: This is my question, then. Does the minister want to hide his appointee, Mr. Evans? Does he want to protect Mr. Evans, the person he himself appointed president of the space agency?

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 quite prepared to defend Mr. Evans because he has not done anything inappropriate.

A few days ago, the hon. member raised a question about the amount, it was about \$100—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Manley: —which was not even been paid. I am sure her constituents are delighted with her concern about the amounts spent by government employees. I am sure her constituents would also be interested to hear this is the same member who filed a claim for expenses totalling nearly \$5,000, for a Canada-NATO interpar-

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liamentary conference where she did not even attend the conference meetings. She just voted—

Mr. Loubier: Liar.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beaver River.

* * *

• (1440)

TAXATION

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Merry Christmas, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister is trying desperately to convince Canadians that he never ever promised to scrap, kill or abolish the GST, but on television, radio and in newspapers he has said quite clearly that he would scrap, kill or abolish the GST. Again I say that tapes do not lie.

As Richard Nixon said in the United States: “I am not a crook and I did not erase the tapes”, I am sure this Prime Minister wishes desperately he could erase the tapes. He cannot erase the tapes, so why does he not just admit that he blew it and apologize?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish they would quote the whole situation.

For example, yesterday she referred to what I said in the House about killing the GST on May 2, 1994 before we referred the problem to the committee. I said: “We are trying to change the GST to replace it with a fairer system of taxation”. That is all I said. We referred the problem to the committee and the committee recommended harmonization, which was mentioned in the red book. It was recommended as being the best course to take. A month later, in December of this year, the Reform Party, on page 131 of its minority report, said: “Integration of the provincial sales tax and the GST and tax in pricing are desirable in principle and Reform has supported this policy”.

In that context we said we would replace the GST with a tax that would be integrated with provincial taxes.

Look at what is happening in Newfoundland, for example. Rather than paying 20 per cent, they will be paying 15 per cent next year under harmonization. That is different from the GST. It is a different tax. It is integrated.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that might get wild cheers from his caucus, but it sure as heck did not go down the other night at the CBC town hall meeting.

On April 26 of this year in this House the finance minister said about the GST: “We made a mistake. It was an honest mistake”. I think people respect him for that. Even the Deputy Prime Minister admitted that she made a mistake. It took a while, but she finally resigned over the GST. The only person in here who stubbornly

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clings to the illusion that the Liberals did not promise to scrap, kill or abolish the GST is the Prime Minister, who is whistling and dancing right now.

Why does the Prime Minister not join with his colleagues, the finance minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, stand and say to this House, say to the CBC so it can be played on the news tonight and say to the people whom he scorned in the town hall meeting the other night: "I blew it. I am sorry. We made a mistake"?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, virtually every time a member of the Reform Party stands to ask a question, the member contradicts their party's established position.

The Prime Minister yesterday and today read from the Reform Party's report on the GST its unequivocal support for harmonization. He has read its unequivocal support for tax in pricing. Yet day after day members of the Reform Party stand and contradict it.

There is another question the Prime Minister might ask them. Members of the Reform Party stand and say that they would like to see tax cuts. Perhaps the members of the Reform Party would then tell us why is it in their report on the GST that they advocated the base be broadened to tax food and drug products?

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN SPACE AGENCY

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is interesting about the Minister of Industry is that, each time we raise the question of the space agency, he adopts one of two attitudes. Either he makes light of the matter, saying: "That is nothing, just bits of paper", or he goes up the wall, pulls himself up to his full height and lets opposition members have it.

The real problem is not the \$100 or so that Mr. Evans may have spent, it is the principle. The problem of Mr. Rinaldi, the vice-president, began the day he refused to backdate a document to save Diana Durnford, an employee in the minister's office, from having to pay \$557.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1445)

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): My question is this. Why is the minister trying to hide the truth and why is he refusing to have an outside independent investigation so matters could be clarified and people would know once and for all what happened at the space agency?

[English]

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, it is difficult to make anything more banal than the opposition does.

In repeating allegations that were made to the newspapers by a disgruntled former employee of the space agency who is taking his complaints to court, the opposition is continuing to cast aspersions on the characters of people who have done nothing wrong and who are not in a position to defend themselves here.

The member, who ought to know better, just made an allegation with respect to an overpayment of \$557.82—just so we have some perspective on the amounts here: \$375.85 for unpaid leave and \$181.97 for two days of work—to a former agency employee who was subsequently hired in my office as a political adviser. Although the overpayment was a result of paperwork relating to the transfer of the employee from the agency and although the question was in some doubt, because that person is of high character and did not want to be associated with anything that could be embarrassing, she gave the benefit of the doubt to the agency and repaid the amount in question. And these people raise it on the floor of the House of Commons.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, she may have repaid the money, but after the refusal to backdate a document.

What causes concern in all of this is the incestuous relationship between the space agency and cabinet. The minister's adviser left cabinet to go to the space agency, and Diana Durnford left the space agency to join cabinet. The minister's credibility is a source of considerable embarrassment in this matter.

I would like to ask him now, and I hope he listens carefully, whether today, from his seat, he can tell us if he himself looked into Mr. Rinaldi's allegations before saying they were totally false?

[English]

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, of course in my responsibilities as minister I would ask the agency for a full explanation of all of the allegations. I have received that explanation.

I have just described in detail how silly one of the allegations is. The same is characteristic of the allegations that were repeated in previous days by the member for Saint-Hubert. I am satisfied that there is nothing wrong.

Oral Questions

However, I point out again that Mr. Rinaldi will have his day in court. If he has been unfairly treated, a court will decide that and I presume he will be rewarded in damages. But in the meantime, to cast aspersions of this sort is simply unfair, unfounded and I would suggest improper.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I would like to refer him to page 90 of the red book. He said: "If a government is to play a positive role in society, as it must, honesty and integrity in our political institutions must be restored".

Today Canadians from coast to coast are calling into question the integrity and credibility of the Government of Canada. How does the Prime Minister reconcile his promise of governing with integrity with his broken GST promise?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy he has the red book. He should read the page where we stated we would integrate the GST with the provinces through harmonization. It is stated in the red book and it is exactly what this government is doing at this time. We have signed an agreement with three provinces and are about to sign a fourth one. We are progressing in replacing this tax with an integrated tax.

I gave the example of Newfoundland where the people were paying 20 per cent tax. Next year they will only be paying 15 per cent. This is a change from what existed before. This is exactly what we said we would do in the red book from which the member is reading.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think what is compounding the problem is that the Prime Minister refuses to recognize what his promise was. He has now had the opportunity to review both the audio and video tapes. Not only did he promise Canadians that he would scrap the GST, he also promised caucus on a number of occasions that he would scrap the GST. How does he reconcile his promises to the people of Canada and the caucus with his broken promises?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would turn to the page in the book about the GST and read to the House of Commons what the promise was that this party made to the people of Canada. We always said that we wanted to replace the GST with a harmonized tax. This is exactly what we are trying to do at this time. We are not progressing as fast as we would like.

The Government of Ontario at the beginning of its tenure said it wanted to have the integration of the two taxes but it has not signed yet. Some day Ontario will sign the agreement and will have the same situation as that in the maritimes.

The hon. member cannot even read back to the House of Commons what he campaigned on when he ran in the last election.

* * *

[Translation]

KENWORTH

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

The unemployment insurance benefits of workers who were laid off when the Kenworth plant in Sainte-Thérèse closed last April have now run out. What a wonderful Christmas present it would be for these workers to have the plant reopen, now that the unions and the Quebec government have finally reached an agreement with PACCAR. All that is missing is co-operation from Ottawa, without which nothing can happen.

Since this is a matter of some urgency, will the minister undertake to approve before Christmas the financial support required to re-equip the plant and retrain the manpower?

• (1455)

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know, discussions have indeed taken place since the Kenworth plant closed. There were discussions in Quebec City between representatives of PACCAR, the Quebec government and the Canadian government, which I represented.

The negotiations are going well. The word is that the end may be in sight. There are still a number of elements regarding the business plans that the Canadian government is waiting for. When we have received all the information, we will be able to make our position known. At this stage, it is too early to take a position.

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the unions certainly do not think it would be too early if it happened before Christmas.

One month after the government granted Canadian Airlines a \$20 million tax rebate, could the minister show he is as understanding about customs duties owed by Kenworth, which stand in the way of the plant reopening?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find the official opposition's position difficult to understand. There are several jobs and many families at stake, which makes it an extremely important matter.

Business of the House

Hence the need for negotiation, serious negotiation. There are a number of elements directly involving the Canadian government, be it customs duties or the agreement between Industry Canada and Quebec. We are seriously looking into the matter and, as soon as a position can be defined, we will gladly go ahead, if that is what is called for.

* * *

[English]

RADIO-CANADA INTERNATIONAL

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Radio-Canada International is Canada's fair and balanced voice around the world. Most of us recognize and know that it will cease operations on March 31, 1997. This will mean that Canada will be the only industrial nation worldwide without a voice on the international scene.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. What does he intend to do to preserve Radio-Canada International not just for the short term, but for the long term?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we certainly recognize how important it is to have an effective voice for Canada abroad to promote trade, development, culture and the other values of Canada. To pursue that we in the government are working on a broader strategy to use new technologies and all the assets we have. We recognize that Radio-Canada is an important element of that.

In light of the funding changes CBC had to make, we recognize that we have to fill in a gap during the time that we work on the broader strategy. We can say that through the work of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, other ministers and myself, we will be able to provide ongoing funding for RCI and at the same time help it convert to a new instrument for Canada's voice abroad to present Canada in an effective way.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I hope I have the same amount of luck with my question as the previous questioner had in terms of getting a response.

The *Globe and Mail* told us today that the government is planning to proceed with allowing multiple licensing for fishing on the west coast. The minister of fisheries will know that the fishers on the west coast have indicated they are against this proposal.

With the same enthusiasm that the government called for a vote by the Canadian Auto Workers regarding Canadian Airlines International, will the government now follow suit by agreeing to what the fishers on the west coast and the Government of British

Columbia are calling for, which is to have a vote before the government proceeds with this issue?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to the Fryer report which was released today. It talks about a number of things and a number of areas in which action should be taken in support of the fishermen, the fish and the coastal communities.

I have to tell the hon. member that he did not put all the information to the House. The recommendation made by Mr. Fryer, who was the third independent party, essentially was that there was an agreement reached on November 27 among the three parties, federal, provincial and the third party, that a vote would take place. But that vote would take place at the end of 1997, not now.

• (1500)

The Speaker: That completes question period for today. I do not know when the session is going to end, but should it end tomorrow, then this would be the last Thursday of this year that we have together.

In the spirit of the season I would invite all of you to a very small reception which I will be having in Room 216 from about four to six o'clock. You are more than welcome.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this question will be a little different from my usual one. I would like to ask the government whether we will be sitting tomorrow, and if so, will we be debating Bill C-71, the tobacco act, at report stage?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is possible that some spirits will help us get into the right mood for the season. It may be that for some, not for me. Your invitation will be most helpful in establishing the proper mood. I hope I am in it already and not because of any spirits, I assure you.

The legislative program for today and tomorrow remains at least for now Bill C-60, the food inspection agency legislation and Bill C-23, the nuclear safety bill.

I do not intend to call the tobacco legislation either today or tomorrow.

My most recent report on legislation that we have sent to the other place indicates that we still do not know how the other place is dealing with a number of items that require Royal Assent in the immediate future.

Privilege

If any of these bills were to be sent back to us for further action, we propose to deal with them on a priority basis with a view toward completing consideration before we rise for a holiday break.

I think it only fair to advise the House that the government sees it as clearly being in the public interest that some of these bills be finally disposed of before Christmas and if circumstances compel the House to sit next week to do this, we are prepared to take the necessary action to bring this about. I am certain that nobody here views this as a desirable course, but right now we must await decisions in the other place.

By way of conclusion, I want to advise the House that we face a heavy legislative agenda during the winter and we will have to give serious consideration in January whether the public interest requires the House returning a bit before the scheduled February 3 date. If members have ideas about travels or vacations in January, please bear this in mind in making any plans.

In the hope that we can wrap up on schedule I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and all the other members the best for the holiday season and, yes, even for the new year.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

During question period, the Minister of Industry commented erroneously on my participation in the activities of the Canada-NATO Parliamentary Association, which took place last November 18 to 20. I was present at those activities.

In addition, the minister implied that I had wasted taxpayers' money by not taking part in the activities and meetings of the association, when in fact I was present. Furthermore, I would like the minister to note that I was seen there by the Liberal members for Nipissing, Hillsborough, Saint-Denis, Mississauga West and South Shore, as well as by Senator Rompkey. I certainly had enough witnesses.

I therefore ask the Minister of Industry to withdraw his untruthful comments about me.

The Speaker: Dear colleague, the minister who made the remarks is here. He may wish to clarify.

• (1505)

[English]

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, let me make one thing very clear.

If there is one thing that I consider to be despicable and beyond reproach, it is to make accusations of people who are not in a position to defend themselves. I admit I accused—

Mr. Loubier: Cheap.

Mr. Manley: There is a bird in the front row over there. I accused the member for Saint-Hubert, based on information that I received from two of the members of the committee that she has just cited.

If she is prepared to stand in the House and say in the presence of all of us that she attended the working sessions and not only the social sessions of the Canada-NATO Parliamentary Association in Paris, that she attended the plenary session and voted on the resolutions, then I abjectly apologize to her.

I wish that she would accord to others the right to be able to answer accusations that are made of them.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I think it is now clear. Accusations were made. He said he was mistaken.

[English]

We are trying to clarify a situation. Let me put everything into perspective as I understand it. During the course of question period, the hon. Minister of Industry raised a point about whether another hon. member attended some meetings that had to do with NATO.

The hon. member, who was mentioned, stood in her place and said that she was at all the meetings. That was her position. I then asked the hon. minister if he would clarify what he said and, in my view, he said that if the hon. member claimed that she was there, and she did, she said in front of all of us that she was there and she did everything, I can only accept the member's word.

Having accepted her word, the hon. minister said that he abjectly apologizes and withdraws. In the absence of any other information, unless there is more information, I have an accusation and a withdrawal. I do not want to get into an open debate.

This is a question of privilege and the hon. member has asked and the statement has been withdrawn. In my view, the statement has been withdrawn.

I address myself to the hon. Minister of Industry. Did the hon. Minister of Industry withdraw his statement?

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I was not there. If the hon. member is saying in this House that she attended the working sessions and that she voted in the plenary session, then I cannot deny that. I cannot say otherwise. Therefore I abjectly apologize if that is what she is saying. I accept it.

Points of Order

• (1510)

The Speaker: In my view an abject apology is a withdrawal and I accept it on behalf of the House. I consider this matter to be closed.

I am going to move on to a point of order, the hon. whip of the Reform Party.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is an all-party agreement on the way question period is run; the order of the questions, the rotation and how it goes from one party to the next.

During question period after the fourth question from the official opposition you then go to a Liberal member and then normally to a Reform member. Mr. Speaker, this time you failed to recognize the fourth member of the Reform Party and I wondered why. We had a member standing who was not recognized.

The Speaker: I consider that to be a reasonable question. There has been an agreement for three years that we have gone to. When I come to the ninth question, which is the fewest questions I believe we have had in this session, I usually go to an independent member. That is the reason why today in my judgment I went to the independent member for Kamloops. That is a reasonable question.

Do I have a point of order over here? Is this the same point of order?

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that I cannot speak on it but I was named by the member opposite.

The Speaker: Order. Is the hon. member talking about the point of order by the hon.—

Ms. Beaumier: Mr. Speaker, I tried to be recognized.

The Speaker: As far as the question of privilege is concerned I have ruled on that and we are beyond that now.

I am talking about a point of order here. Let me clear up this point of order and I will return to the hon. member's question of privilege. I am going to the hon. member for Sherbrooke on a point of order.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is on the same point of order. I was interested in the remarks made by the whip of the Reform Party about question period and how it operates. This is fundamental to the very workings of the House of Commons.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sherbrooke has the floor. I would like to listen to him.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, as I was about to say, my understanding of question period is that this is very much the preserve of the Speaker. You will know that taking instructions from the party as far as I am concerned and as far as my knowledge of the rules and the traditions of this place is concerned is a direct contradiction.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Charest: As I was saying, this is a direct contradiction of the role of the Speaker which consists of first and foremost of protecting the rights of the individual member of Parliament. That being said, I noticed during question period something unusual in that the member for York South—Weston, if I understood correctly, was given a position in question period by agreement with members of the Reform Party who substituted one of their members with the member for York South—Weston. With the complicity of members of the Reform Party, who are now controlling the order of questioners that you, Mr. Speaker—

• (1515)

The Speaker: I address myself to the hon. member for Sherbrooke. I thank him for his vote of confidence. Ultimately the Speaker has to take responsibility for question period, and I do.

At the time when I was looking for a questioner, I looked to the House and the member for York South—Weston was on his feet. No one else was on their feet—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I can see we are going to get into a protracted discussion on this, but today I recognized the hon. member for York South—Weston and I take complete responsibility for that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we all know how it works here in the House. There is an agreement between the parties, and the Speaker protects the rights of independent members. It is very clear that today the member for York South—Weston worked out an agreement with the Reform Party so that he could have a turn to speak.

The member for York South—Weston has been successful in his attempt to join the Reform Party, unlike the member for Sherbrooke who tried to do the same thing almost one year ago. It is as simple as that.

[*English*]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Sherbrooke, I would concur with what the hon. member has said.

We certainly accept, Mr. Speaker, your intervention that you are in fact responsible for question period and we abide by your rulings, but I would hope that in the future, if the practice is going to be what the hon. member for Sherbrooke has said, that perhaps there could be a fuller debate among all the political parties and

members in order that we fully understand the practices which are going to commence.

As the hon. member for Sherbrooke has said, if these cozy relationships between the Reform Party and the hon. member for York South—Weston are to take place, I think the House should be informed of them.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when you were instructing the hon. member for Sherbrooke, he said very loudly and distinctly: “That’s a lot of bull”. I suggest that he withdraw that statement.

• (1520)

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, I want the record to be very clear with regard to this whole episode. The Minister of Health is absolutely right with regard to the precedent that has just been set in this House. This precedent goes to the very fundamental rules of how the House works, of democracy itself within this place and of the role the Speaker plays with regard to the rights of the individual members.

As of today the record shows that a deal was entered into between the Reform Party and an independent member so that the independent member could take up a position that a Reform Party member would have held normally in question period, and that the Speaker of the House of Commons complied with that instruction.

That is what took place. I want to register the fact that this is the record. I think this is objectionable because with regard to the workings of the House of Commons this is a situation in which the Speaker of the House is yielding his responsibility to the parties, a responsibility that he must uphold and assume in the name of each member of this House and not in the interest of partisan politics within the House of Commons.

The Speaker: In these interventions on a point of order, as your Speaker I am ultimately responsible; there is no one else. I can categorically say that no matter what deals may be concocted, it would always rest on my decision as to who would be posing a question.

I recognized the hon. member for York South—Weston. He was standing.

Many times over the course of my time in the House, members have given way to other members who may want to place their questions. If the way question period is carried out is not acceptable, then I suggest perhaps the House leaders come together again and look over whatever agreement was arrived at some three years ago before I took the chair, and if it needs to be fine tuned, your Speaker is the servant of the House and I will continue to be.

To my colleague from Sherbrooke, I find it rather sad that under these circumstances, if the hon. member did mean it as a rebuke to

Privilege

the Speaker of House, it would come out in this way. If the hon. member wishes to pursue the discussion, I would invite him, as I would invite all hon. members, to take up the discussion with me in my chambers. I would be very happy to hear what the hon. member has to say.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to prolong this discussion but as I was sitting in this place near your chair, I observed the member for York South—Weston standing. No one else in this House stood at that time.

As a matter of fact, you did not directly point him out. If the tapes are reviewed they would show there was a pause while you looked through the House. There was no indication that another member wished to speak at that point in time.

• (1525)

I certainly do not understand the accusation brought from the member for Sherbrooke in that case because you had no choice at that time but to recognize the standing member.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, just for clarification so that those watching will know how the rules work, there is a schedule for the S. O. 31s, the one minute statements that precede question period. In times past we have given a spot to his co-worker, the hon. member for Saint John, who has spoken in a traditionally Reform spot because we knew she had something to say and we let her say it.

In times past, the Bloc Quebecois has substituted in the member for Yukon in the Indian affairs committee, another member of a minority party who was substituted in on a Bloc’s schedule. This is because members of Parliament have privileges that are exchanged and we help one another out if it is appropriate.

Where we help out the member for Saint John on occasion or if somebody stands and is recognized in the House because no one else is standing, there is certainly nothing inappropriate. It certainly does not deserve the condemnation of the member for Sherbrooke who used the language he did to address the Chair.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I think this has gone on long enough. I would like to bring this point of order to a close.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege in that I was named by the member for Saint-Hubert as someone who would verify her attendance at all the NATO sessions. In fact, I was at a 12 hour voting session of NATO on the plenary session and the member

Privilege

was touring the Versailles with one of my assistants. So the member was not there.

The Speaker: We have a member who has risen in this House and made a statement implicating another member of Parliament. I have ruled on one point of privilege, and that is behind us. I am dealing with another point of privilege where the member for Mississauga West has made a statement. The member she made a statement about is in the House now.

If the hon. member for Saint-Hubert would like to make a statement of clarification, I invite her to do so.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I most certainly would.

The member for Mississauga West unfortunately did not take part in the activities of the Canada-Nato committee on Monday, November 18. She declined to fly to Toulouse with the committee, because, as she told us, she was already familiar with the facilities at L'Aérospatiale in any event.

So I do not think the member has any business casting aspersions, since she herself did not participate in all the activities.

• (1530)

[*English*]

The Speaker: I think we are having just an ongoing debate. I would rule that this is not a point of privilege on either side and I would like to rest this here.

I have a question of privilege that I am going to hear before the point of order. The hon. member for Sherbrooke on a question of privilege.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, now that it has been confirmed that the Reform Party did enter into this agreement with the member for York South—Weston, my point of privilege is derived from the remarks that you have just made in regard to the functioning of question period.

I return to the principle that is the cornerstone of the operation of government, the principle of the recognition of the rights of the individual member elected in his or her respective constituency with all the rights and privileges associated with that election.

You have in your remarks, Mr. Speaker, just informed the House that if the House wished to review the operations or the functioning of question period, that there would be a consultation among the leaders of the recognized political parties.

What am I to draw as an individual member, considered at least in this place as an independent member, from the remarks that you have just made? If I am to understand them correctly, it means that my rights in regard to the functioning of question period is something that will be negotiated by the respective leaders of the recognized parties in the House of Commons.

Who will in that respect, Mr. Speaker, speak up for the rights of the individual member of Parliament? Who will at this point—

An hon. member: You are the one that made the deal, John.

Mr. Charest: Oh, please. Mr. Speaker, if I am allowed—

An hon. member: You have got your privileges too.

The Speaker: I want to hear the hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Mr. Charest: In this respect, Mr. Speaker, if the leaders of the respective parties are given the opportunity to debate, to decide, to influence you in your decision in regard to how question period must function, when and at what point will the individual members for whom this is a basic cornerstone of the operations of Parliament be given equal rights and equal time? Surely you can see from those remarks how the basic rights and privileges of each member are affected, in particular my own rights and privileges.

One remark, Mr. Speaker, with regard to rising or not rising. I hope the members will spare us the grand designs about members rising in this place when every day for the last three years members have been constantly designated for question period, not when they rose but actually were sitting right in their place and never rose. I hope we will be spared the great sermons about rising or not rising in their places.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question and I suppose you would have to rule whether or not it is a question of personal privilege, but certainly it is a question regarding the privileges of members of the House of Commons who keep the government accountable to the people of Canada.

Having said that, the rules of this Chamber, as all members should realize, and the hon. member who just spoke should realize, are rules that have come to us by custom, that have come to us by precedent.

Those very precedents on question period evolved over a long period of time and changed, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, very drastically in the past 10 years to the point where the major political parties do have assigned periods during question period. The role of the Speaker also has evolved to the point where the Speaker must follow those precedents and those customs as have evolved here in this Chamber, not in any other chamber under the so-called British parliamentary system, because each system is

different and each system has its own system of changing the rules of procedure for question period, as the Speaker so well knows.

• (1535)

I am very surprised that the hon. member would rise in the Chamber and bring this up as a point of personal privilege. It was approximately seven years ago that we adopted as a custom in this Chamber the point of respecting designated questioners by the major political parties in this House. It was so left up to the Speaker that if the person designated for that political party did not stand, the Speaker was free to choose, as is stated in the rules, the person who catches the Speaker's eye who rises first. The Speaker has to follow those customs.

The hon. member is perfectly correct. Perhaps we should take it under advisement and appoint a committee of people from outside the Chamber to examine the rules and to bring in some of the changes that are necessary to bring back the power of the individuals in the House of Commons. However, it is very surprising that the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party should be objecting to the very rules that were brought in while the Tories were the administration in power in this House.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say also that I remember those days the member talked about. Of course I was an independent in the House seven years ago.

I find it unbelievable that the member for Sherbrooke is talking about being hard done by. He and his party used to laugh and cajole every time I would try to stand. I thank the Lord for John Fraser who was the Speaker then. He told me: "If you have a question, I will make sure that you get on". I did not get on very often. I know that in the 34th Parliament I had exactly 15 questions, precious few, three or four a year, which is a darn sight less than what the independent member for Sherbrooke gets. It is unbelievable that he would cry foul on this.

I know that our party as well as other parties in the House of Commons would be willing to make some of those changes so that independent members would get recognized more freely, but in the next Parliament so that it will not look quite so self serving that someone would want it now. There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention something you said earlier. When you stood up and said that the member for York South—Weston was the only member on his feet, the member for Sherbrooke hollered out: "That is a lot of bull". He challenged you, Mr. Speaker and he challenged the position of the Chair. He was asked by one of my colleagues to withdraw.

I am asking you, because he respects the Chair as he certainly should, that he would withdraw the comment he hollered at you:

Privilege

"That is a lot of bull". He did not holler it at another member of the House, but at you and you should not stand for it, Mr. Speaker. Please make him withdraw.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really torn with this issue. The members for Sherbrooke, Beaver River, Gander—Grand Falls, the Minister of Health and others have already spoken to the issue.

I think we would all agree that the direction the Speaker has given the House that if it is the wish of the membership of the House to reconsider some agreements or arrangements that were arrived at when we first came to this 35th Parliament approximately three years ago, that possibly it might be timely in the early part of the new year to sit down and have a discussion.

Now specifically to the point raised by the hon. member for Sherbrooke regarding members outside of the official parties. I do not have the records, Mr. Speaker, but I would deem and feel confident in saying that those members who are outside of the "official parties" at this time in this Parliament have had their privileges safeguarded, protected, defended by you the Speaker, and others as the member for Beaver River said earlier with regard to your predecessor, Mr. Fraser.

I would hope that if the House chooses, it would make that undertaking to have those discussions among the parties as suggested so that we could put this matter to rest for the time being. I think we are all fatigued, we are all stressed. But certainly there should be no doubt in the confidence of the Chair and its speaker.

• (1540)

The Speaker: My colleagues, in my view this is a debate. I know all hon. members wanted to participate in it but in my view it is probably time to move on.

I would suggest to the hon. member for Sherbrooke, with all respect, that this point was brought up by the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona early in the Parliament. At that time I did do a lot of thinking about it. As your Speaker, I have tried to be as fair as I can with all the members and parties, especially the independent members. I have always felt that it was my responsibility to see to it that the independent members had as much of a chance as anyone in the parties. I will continue to strive to do that. I would like to move on at this point.

Is this a different point of order?

An hon. member: It is about withdrawing "bull".

The Speaker: Colleagues, I did not hear the word. I would just as soon move on from here.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to repeal and amend other Acts as a consequence, as reported by the committee with amendments, and of Motion No. 5.

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not raising a point of order. I will use the three minutes I have left to conclude my speech on Bill C-60, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act.

Earlier, I said I was very disappointed by what I heard when the hon. member for Frontenac asked members for their views on this legislation. The bill includes provisions that can certainly be associated with patronage. As I explained, the government appoints friends so as to remain in control.

I said I was very disappointed, because it is always the same thing whenever the government introduces legislation. It comes up with a nice bill and with the best possible intentions, but we can always see this will to keep control over everything.

The hon. member for Frontenac made very constructive remarks. I will conclude by saying that, in my opinion, the official opposition is not here only to oppose measures, but also to provide a different perspective, particularly since the Bloc Québécois expresses the views shared by a large number of Quebecers.

I am anxious to see which ministers will vote against the bill. As usual, unfortunately, it is a bit like taking the views of Quebec and claiming that they are totally erroneous.

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Frontenac who did a tremendous job. He introduced a host of amendments to the bill which, as was to be expected from the hon. member, are based on common sense and the public interest.

• (1545)

Although the subject has not been widely publicized, it is a very important one that affects the daily lives of Canadians and Quebecers. The bill merges the inspection services of three departments, health, agriculture and fisheries, which from now on will be

consolidated in one and the same agency that comes under the department of agriculture or the minister of agriculture.

This agency will have an annual budget of \$300 million—this is big bucks—for three years and a staff of 3,400 employees. That being said, now for the bad news: the three entities that existed before had a total of 4,000 employees, so we are losing 600 inspectors. When we say \$300 million, we must not forget that this reflects a budget cut of \$44 million. So there is every reason to be concerned, but I will get back to that later.

The general position of the Bloc Québécois on this issue is negative. We are against the principle of creating this agency, because we in the Bloc Québécois consider that constitutionally, this is an area that comes under provincial jurisdiction, in Quebec and in the other provinces. So we are against the very entity that will be established by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

We are annoyed and concerned. Annoyed because considering the powers given to the minister by this bill, the minister will be able to appoint the chairperson, the deputy chair and all the members of the advisory board that will be created along with this agency. We are concerned because, as other members have already pointed out, this is a new patronage mill, and when we make this kind of remark to the government, it is clear we are referring to the patronage appointments made by the Liberal Party of Canada.

When we talk about patronage and the Liberal Party of Canada, we know what we are talking about, and so does everyone else. In Canada, in Quebec, for instance, returning officers, who play a very important role in our electoral process, are still appointed on an exclusively partisan basis. Nowadays we would have to look far and wide in Canada to find a returning officer without solid Liberal roots.

We had another example today, when a new lieutenant-governor was appointed, a lady who probably comes from a good family and has the qualifications. I know she was president of the Quebec Office des personnes handicapées, but all of the insiders know that her greatest qualification is, no doubt, having been a Liberal Party of Canada candidate in the past. So her appointment today as lieutenant-governor of Quebec is because of her good Liberal connections, and we can be pretty sure that there has been no great consultation with the Government of Quebec.

We had another example this morning, and another yesterday in my very own riding. It was announced, a bit prematurely because the official announcement had not been made, that the port of Trois-Rivières would be recognized as a Canadian port authority. And who was on the guest list? Two people who could not have been representing anything other than the Liberal Party of Canada. When it comes down to it, it is like an opening ceremony for a section of highway, a Cegep, a hospital or a CLSC in Quebec attended by a representative of the Parti Québécois.

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That is not how we do things in Quebec, not even, I think, how the Quebec Liberals do things. Here we have an imperialist mentality, Mr. Speaker, which you no doubt recognize. We must speak out against it, because it is such a primitive notion, as if the Canadian state belonged to the Liberal Party of Canada.

• (1550)

Returning to Bill C-60, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the powers assigned to the Minister of Agriculture, there are certainly grounds for annoyance here. We know that this is just one more den of patronage that has just been created by the Liberal government to which it can appoint its buddies. Justification for annoyance, justification for concern.

Concern, because, as has just been said, when food inspection services affecting the daily lives of Canadians and Quebecers are cut, when 600 inspector positions are cut, when \$44 million are cut from services, one cannot help but be concerned about the quality of services that will be delivered throughout the country in future.

We are all the more concerned because there is a trend to privatization in an area as vulnerable as food inspection. According to what we hear, a new system has been developed, which may well take the place of the present system, if we are not careful, rather than complement the government system. That is very important.

According to our information, the inspectors could be in conflict of interest or the business could be in conflict of interest with itself. One wonders whether private funds are involved. If the owner of a slaughter house has to provide direct or indirect payment to the inspector supervising his production and if the inspector is pressured by his employer, where does his loyalty lie?

Whose interest is the inspector going to want to protect, the private interest or society's? His employer, who has power over him, or the public whose interest and health he is paid to protect?

With this sort of privatization, which is so fashionable, in the neo-liberal context of deregulation, we are dealing with a basic issue: people's health. I would be very happy to be in my own skin rather than the government's in the event of public health problems involving poisoning as the result of laziness or some sort of lack of control in which the interests of the employer and those of the public are in conflict.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the concerns of the Union des producteurs agricoles. It has significant reservations regarding this bill. It would like to have people from the agricultural milieu who know what they are doing, who are capable of making the distinctions and recommendations required in food inspection, rather than masses of pals of the Liberal Party.

Furthermore, the Union des producteurs agricoles wants all the budgets—and this may not be easy with the \$44 million cut—currently with health, agriculture and fisheries to be transferred. The three budgets should be combined, and not cut.

There is the danger of cost recovery. It underlies all of that. We hope all of this will not be done on the backs of farm producers, and it is the hope of the UPA as well.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-60 which, as was just mentioned, will establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The purpose of this bill is to group under a single agency all the federal government's food inspectors.

• (1555)

First, I want to mention, like the hon. member for Trois-Rivières just did, the excellent work of my colleague for Frontenac, who is the official opposition's critic for agricultural issues. Thanks to his vigilance and to his knowledge of the industry, he has been able to raise basic issues relating to agriculture and more specifically to the creation of this agency.

My first point was mentioned by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, but it is worth repeating: Quebec cleaned up its food inspection sector several years ago already. It grouped together its inspectors who, until a few years ago, were spread out in several departments of the Quebec government, and at the municipal level. The situation was such that a municipal inspector would go to a restaurant to check certain things.

For instance he could check the sanitation of the premises. Then, the health department inspector would come along to check the quality of the food. He would be followed by the agriculture department inspector, who would check the origin and quality of the food items. This meant a series of visits, of forms to complete, and of reports which, more often than not, would not bring about any changes, but would definitely create problems for those trying to do business in an intelligent manner.

Giving a single agency responsibility for all this at the federal level makes sense, but in our opinion, we repeat, the federal government ought to abandon its responsibilities in this area and reach an agreement with the provinces, most of whom, I am convinced, are doing this efficiently, providing quality inspection services and ensuring that our fellow citizens feel secure when buying food for home consumption or when they eat out.

Having said this, passing this bill will not solve the problem. In examining Bill C-60, we note three terrible flaws. Clause 10, which refers to the establishment of an advisory board, as there are in a number of other areas, provides for an advisory body made up of people from a variety of backgrounds, who ought to be competent in the field in which their expertise is sought, people who meet together to study the various issues put before them, in order to

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report to the minister and to advise him, so that he may make good decisions. That is self-evident. No one is against the establishment of such an advisory board.

Yet we see in the bill before us that it is the minister who will be appointing these men and women, who will be sought out in related fields, and the minister alone will have the power to appoint them to this advisory board.

• (1600)

That is where we start wondering and having doubts about the credibility of this advisory board. If the minister alone decides who is to be appointed, it seems likely, considering the way the Liberal government operates, that there will be few people on this board who do not already share his point of view.

In our experience, more often than not, the Liberal government will appoint its friends, people who are clearly identified with the Liberal Party, organizers and fund raisers who will be asked to advise the minister.

The hon. member for Frontenac, the opposition critic for agriculture, told me that in the agriculture committee, he put the following question to witnesses who came to share their expertise on a bill. He asked them where they were from and what their ties were with the Liberal Party of Canada. One of them, who was from Saint-Hyacinthe, said quite frankly that he owed his appointment to the fact he was Liberal.

I see the Minister of Health who agrees with me, and who thinks it is quite normal to proceed in this fashion. It is the Liberal way. My colleague managed the incredible feat of having this put on the record of the House. There it is, printed proof of this practice of the Liberal Party. I am sure no one will challenge this.

This practice has an inherent risk, and that is our message. We are very critical of this section which gives the minister so much power. If this advisory board consists of people who are, I would not say subservient, the term is perhaps a bit too strong, but who tend to think along the same lines as the minister because they share the same political views, go to the same political meetings, give funds to the same political party, how can we trust the integrity of these people when the time comes to make decisions and advise the minister?

Will these people, who were appointed because of their political allegiance, have all the freedom, all the independence they need to be able to tell the minister when he gives them dossiers they will have to think about and when he asks for their advice, will they be able to muster the requisite credibility, freedom and independence? Will they be able to tell the minister: "Here are the guidelines you suggested; they do not reflect what the people in this sector want; they do not meet the needs of the public"? Hardly.

This is not to say that being a Liberal means being incompetent. Conversely, to be competent, you do not have to be a Liberal. I think the first criteria should be competence. That is what my colleague mentioned in his speech, and what is reflected in the amendments he is proposing.

In fact, the Bloc Québécois, the official opposition, through the hon. member for Frontenac, suggests that the Standing Committee on Agriculture appoint these people. I think this is a very useful suggestion and I also think that every time the federal government makes appointments, its appointments should be scrutinized by the various parliamentary committees.

• (1605)

In this way, thanks to the way the parliamentary committees operate, because their members represent the government and also the various opposition parties, we have an opportunity to question these people, and I will conclude on this note, and have the assurance that wise choices are made so that the best candidates will be chosen to give the best possible advice to the minister.

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-60 at report stage. My colleague from Frontenac has indicated we have reached the motions in Group No. 5. Curiously, it is a point I like to criticize the government on. The motions in Group No. 5 refer to the way the government can organize the human resources in these agencies, that is, how it appoints people to the agency.

I must say right off that the federal government tried the same thing in another bill, the one on fisheries, because it tried to create the fisheries tribunal and make it quasi legal, a quasi tribunal. In that instance I mentioned government fronts. Once again, it is the same thing: a patronage haven.

When the minister claims the right to appoint people himself and to define, extend and renew mandates, what are we talking about? How does this differ from hiring someone from the public service? At least this person becomes apolitical, he will have to work under all future governments, regardless of their colour. But in this case, they take money and make absolutely sure that this will be a place that provides a job for the friends of the party. My colleague from Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead made this point very clearly.

Here we are approaching Christmas, two weeks away from it. The Liberals are trying to ensure a fine Christmas present for their friends by pushing us to debate this bill. They want to be sure that there is something under the tree for their friends, once the bill is passed, like the gift of future jobs. It is time to get real.

My hon. colleague from Frontenac has raised some good points. We will never say it often enough today: when the Bloc Québécois sends its soldiers to the front, they come prepared and, as a good

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soldier, the hon. member for Frontenac has done an excellent job in this matter. I can see him smile, but he is modest.

I would like to come back to a few points. If the federal government wanted to be consistent and say: "This is not a Christmas present for our friends", would it be prepared to accept that the agency be made up of people, if nothing else, appointed by the Standing Committee on Agriculture?

Why refer to this committee?—I notice the parliamentary secretary responsible for agriculture is joining us. We have had the opportunity to work with him. He is from Nova Scotia—Someone described it earlier as a patronage haven, but I will address that later. But I want to make sure to catch the attention of the hon. member, because there are still a few good Liberals. We must not lump them all in the same category. Since the good ones are so few, when we catch one, we better make sure they hear what our expectations are.

• (1610)

As I was saying, to prevent the proposed agency from becoming a patronage haven, why would its members not be appointed by the advisory board?

The parliamentary secretary opposite has had to face us in committee. The people opposite know they are in majority any way in the various committees, but at least official opposition members and the other members of this House can have a say. That is what I call transparency; that is what I call having faith.

My second point is the following. Why not ensure that candidates are selected from within the various communities and that the appointments to be considered in committee are made by the community. Let me explain.

If we are looking at an inspection system for fisheries, for instance, the fisheries community would submit to the Standing Committee on Agriculture a list of recommended candidates who have knowledge and expertise in that area. I am sure a joint fisheries-agriculture committee can be struck at that time for the specific purpose of considering who should be appointed to the agency.

Why oppose such an amendment? Perhaps to make sure that the only requirement for getting appointed to the board of this agency is to be a card-carrying member or friend of the Liberal Party.

Let me now move to another point that needs to be addressed. This agency is supposed to be a Canada-wide agency. Since Canada is made up of ten provinces, why not have specified, for each province, in the formula for determining how many administrators or inspectors will be involved, a percentage that would take the relative demographic importance of the province into account. Why not?

In just a few minutes, we were able to make three suggestions to improve the perception, the political philosophy behind all this.

We realize that it may be reasonable to try to ensure that, in Ottawa, the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. We cannot go against virtue and oppose the idea that the various inspection systems are being consolidated under a single agency, since we currently have a fisheries division, a food division, and a drug division in the health sector. The idea makes sense, but the problem is how these changes will be implemented.

The work done by the hon. member for Frontenac regarding this issue will have to be taken into consideration, if we want to improve the bill to make it good for all Quebecers and Canadians, including those in Nova Scotia, whom the parliamentary secretary, who is listening carefully, represents.

If the government does not support the amendments or motions moved by the hon. member for Frontenac, what will Canadians and Quebecers think of the bill?

They will think: the more things change, the more they stay the same. In Canada, we switched from the Conservatives to the Liberals. But what has changed? What has changed is that the friends of the Conservatives have lost their jobs; they have been replaced by friends of the Liberals.

The bill is a means to appoint Liberal Party friends who are in waiting. Indeed, not all the Liberal friends got jobs, and they are getting impatient.

The government has an opportunity to clean up the situation and to rebuild the credibility of the bureaucratic system. It has an opportunity to restore public confidence through the people who will represent the public and who will work for it.

• (1615)

But if, once again, the government lets go of such an opportunity, what will people think? If they are friends of the Liberal Party they may think they will receive a nice Christmas present, but if they are ordinary citizens they will probably think the government is pulling another fast one on them.

I pointed out earlier that the government is doing the same thing with the Fisheries Act. The Bloc Quebecois is opposing this, again thanks to the information provided by the hon. member for Frontenac, who prepared the amendments very well. The Bloc Quebecois will once again oppose the bill.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my voice to that of my fellow Bloc Quebecois members in condemning this bill. We often have occasion to discuss a new bill in the House. Generally, when a bill is brought before the

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House, it has been gone over by ministers' advisers and the various groups working in the same area. After a certain amount of consultation, a bill is tabled and, as is the custom in Canada, brought before the House for discussion and improvement through amendments from the various parties and the various members, even those forming the government.

But this time, I am very surprised at the arrogance with which the government threw this bill onto members' desks and told them: "Whether it is good or not, vote for it, we are going to pass it". Although we tried to suggest some entirely logical amendments that the government could easily have lived with, we met with complete arrogance.

I have noticed this arrogance getting worse for a number of months now. Having come to office with a red book full of fine promises and good intentions, this party began by holding pseudo-consultation sessions that consisted of a few days spent examining—they did not really know what to do—issues such as the Canadian forces abroad. After these brief sessions, they would say: "There, we have just kept our promise of consulting members more thoroughly, of giving them more opportunities to participate". The page was turned, and lo and behold, we found ourselves back in the Trudeau era, when the interests of friends of the party dictated what got done, not the interests of the people of Canada and of Quebec.

Today, this government is gagging us and asking us to quietly approve a bill like this, a bill that gives the minister the power to appoint everyone who will run this agency or who will advise the government. This is completely ridiculous. We could always say that this is a government without much experience, that it is perhaps full of good intentions and should be given a chance. But look at its track record. They say that history repeats itself, and when you look at the past performance of the Liberal Party of Canada, can you trust such a government?

I have already said in the House, and I repeat, that trusting Canada's interests to the Liberal Party of Canada is worse than putting Dracula in charge of the Red Cross blood bank. I have already said in the House, and I repeat, that trusting this government to make unbiased appointments is out of the question. We have only to look at the three years since they have been back in office. It is unbelievable. Take the Senate appointments alone. Have you ever seen a more shocking display of patronage? Mr. Mulroney would never have gone that far; he consulted the provinces before appointing senators.

• (1620)

Never. This government is not characterized by its transparency, but by its arrogance. That arrogance is felt in its bills, in its appointments, in its political speeches. This Prime Minister is the total incarnation of arrogance.

What I have difficulty understanding is how Liberal MPs are keeping silent, preferring to serve a party, and their party buddies, to serving the interests of the people in their riding. Off-putting, that. I see them with their heads down. I understand their embarrassment to speak on such a bill. They prefer to say nothing rather than defend such a thing. Their constituents would laugh at them. As the kids I used to teach would say: Believe that? Give me a break!

It is incredible to table such a bill and to force the Liberal MPs I see around me to keep quiet, to hunker down in embarrassment in their seats. Their red book has not only changed colour to blue, things are even worse than that.

We are worse off than in the days of the Conservatives. I remember those days. I know how things work within a traditional party, but they would never have gone that far. The most corrupt party, the most patronage-riddled party, the most self-serving party in Canadian history is the Liberal Party of Canada.

I understand the shame we can see on the faces of hon. members opposite. When I run into them in the halls, they tell me that it makes no sense to be forced to vote in favour of such a bill. They tell us the same thing in committees. They tell us they can no longer talk to their leader, they do not see him any more. They only get instructions, it is a matter of believe or die.

If they do not toe the line, they face the same fate as the member for York South—Weston, who dared to remind party members, at the time of the budget, of their promise to abolish the GST. He was told: "You dare question; out you go". He is a loyal member, whose fine interventions while he was in opposition helped bring down the Conservative Party. He opposed patronage and arrogance.

Now he finds that his party is behaving even worse, ten times as badly as the Conservatives. It makes appointments and tables bills simply to be able to pay back the party faithful, increase election funds and behave more arrogantly than before.

Meanwhile, the Liberal members elected in good faith are keeping their mouths shut. They have a responsibility. I see the many members opposite listening bowing their heads in silent approval.

I would like them to rise and express their approval rather than encourage me to continue, because what I say is true, and they are unable to control their own party. Let them rise, instead. Perhaps they stand a better chance of being re-elected if they rise than if they pipe down, as they have been for the past few months.

The government is endlessly introducing bills, without consultation, full of things that could be corrected through the wise counsels that could be provided by Liberal, New Democrat, Reform and Bloc Quebecois members.

The best example involves the member for Frontenac, who proposed amendments that would be acceptable to any citizens' committee, whether it sat at city hall or as part of a softball league.

They would say: "We are putting a softball team together. Is it all right with you if we talk about it among ourselves before appointing people to run our club?" Everyone would say: "By all means, let us talk about it." That is all the hon. member is suggesting in his motion.

His amendment says: How about it, if the agriculture committee of this place, where all the parties are represented, said, for instance, let us make a list of all the suggestions received from all over the place, or just about, and put a subcommittee in charge of meeting the candidates to ensure, first, that they meet the legislator's requirements and, second, that they have adequate knowledge—that is what the amendment says—in order to effectively perform their duties?

• (1625)

After these consultations have taken place, recommendations would be made to the minister. The minister may retain fifteen of the names on the list as acceptable candidates and these people would be appointed. Or else, he would go back to the committee, saying he objects to such and such a candidate for this reason or that. Could there be anything simpler?

That is how things are done everywhere else, even on a parish council. On a church wardens' board or a school board, that would go without saying. But no, the Liberals have raised arrogance to the status of a motto. "Arrogance, arrogance, arrogance". During the election, it was "jobs, jobs, jobs". Now it is "arrogance, arrogance, arrogance".

Then they come and tell us: "Take it as it is. It is Christmas time; it will go down well. Do not worry, we will make objective appointments."

As I said earlier, the past foreshadows the future, and to trust this party to make objective appointments is to dream in technicolour, it is a Christmas story that will turn out badly.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, since the Liberal members present seemed to really enjoy my speech, I would like to get the unanimous consent of the House to continue indefinitely.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

The next question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

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Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more that five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 8. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 9. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

• (1630)

The next question is on Motion No. 10. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question will be on Motion No. 11. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 12.

All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: A recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The next question will be on Motion No. 21. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[English]

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment

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are as follows: the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, official languages; the hon. member for Bourassa, immigration; the hon. member for Peterborough, Trent-Severn Waterway.

* * *

[Translation]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: Dear colleagues, I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill C-347, an act to change the names of certain electoral districts, with amendments.

* * *

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to repeal and amend other acts as a consequence, as reported by the committee with amendments.

The Deputy Speaker: We now move to motions in Group No. 6.

[English]

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions with the two opposition parties and I think you would find unanimous consent that the remaining groups of motions be deemed to have been read, seconded and a recorded division called for. Then the remainder of the afternoon will be open for debate.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member's request?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I was not consulted.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member asked for the unanimous consent of the House. Did members not hear the question?

Mr. Plamondon: No, Mr. Speaker, we did not.

The Deputy Speaker: Will the hon. member please repeat her question?

[English]

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, my suggestion is to allow the remaining time to be devoted to debate on the amendments before the House. Therefore, I ask that the House give its unanimous consent that the remaining groups of motions be deemed to have been read, seconded and a recorded division called for.

• (1635)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member's proposal?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to Group No. 6.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-60, in Clause 12, be amended by replacing lines 28 and 29 on page 4 with the following:

"12. Notwithstanding that the Agency is a separate employer under the Public Service Staff Relations Act,

(a) section 7 and subsection 69(3) of that Act do not apply to the Agency; and

(b) for the purposes of paragraph 92(1)(b) of that Act, the Agency is deemed to be designated pursuant to subsection 92(4) of that Act."

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-60, in Clause 12, be amended by replacing lines 28 and 29 on page 4 with the following:

"12. The Agency is deemed to be included in the definition of "federal undertaking" in section 2 of the Canada Labour Code and that Act applies, with such modifications as the circumstances require, to the Agency and its employees."

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-60, in Clause 13, be amended by replacing lines 30 to 34 on page 4 with the following:

"13. The employees of the Agency shall be appointed pursuant to the Public Service Employment Act."

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-60, in Clause 13, be amended by replacing lines 30 and 31 on page 4 with the following:

"13.(1) Subject to paragraph 12(a), the President has the authority to appoint the employees of the Agency."

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-60, in Clause 13, be amended by adding after line 31 on page 4 the following:

"(1.1) One year after the Agency is established, the President shall provide, for study, to such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters, a detailed report respecting the criteria used in making appointments under subsection (1)."

Government Orders

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-60, in Clause 93, be amended by replacing lines 23 to 27 on page 29 with the following:

“93. (1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act, or any provision of this Act, or any provision of any Act enacted or amended by this Act, comes into force on a day or days to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council.

(2) The Governor in Council shall not make the order referred to in subsection (1) unless it has been advised by the Minister that the Minister has prepared a Code of Conduct and Ethics to govern the appointment of employees by the Agency.”

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on motion No. 15. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 16. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 18. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 36. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

We will now move on to Group No. 7.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-60, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing lines 30 to 34 on page 5 with the following:

“16. Notwithstanding section 9 of the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act, the Agency may, with the approval of the Minister,”

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Motion No. 20

That Bill C-60 be amended by adding after line 37 on page 5 the following new Clause:

“16.1 (1) Notwithstanding section 16, the Agency shall not procure goods and services, including legal services, from outside the public service of Canada unless the Agency has satisfied itself that such goods and services are not available within the public service of Canada.

(2) Notwithstanding section 16, where goods and services, including legal services, are to be procured from outside the public service of Canada, the Agency shall, before procuring those services, call for bids for those services from the private sector.”

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 19. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next vote is on Motion No. 20. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

We now move on to the motions in Group No. 8.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-60, in Clause 22, be amended by replacing lines 4 to 8 on page 7 with the following:

“corporate business plan, for study, to such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters for study by that committee.

(1.1) After studying the corporate business plan, the committee referred to in subsection (1) shall either approve or reject the plan.

(1.2) Where the corporate business plan is approved, the committee shall advise the Minister of the approval and the Minister shall table a copy of the plan in the House of Commons for approval by that House on any of the first fifteen days on which that House is sitting after the Minister is advised of the committee's approval.

(1.3) Where a corporate business plan is laid before the House of Commons under subsection (1.2) and rejected by that House, the Agency shall not implement that plan.”

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-60, in Clause 22, be amended by adding after line 8 on page 7 the following:

“(1.1) Before submitting its plan to the minister, the Agency shall consult

(a) any person from the agriculture, fisheries, food processing, food distribution and public health sectors whom the Agency considers appropriate to consult;

(b) any government of a province that has advised, in writing, the Agency of its wish to be consulted; and

(c) the unions representing some or all of the employees of the Agency.”

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-60, in Clause 23, be amended by replacing line 40 on page 7 with the following:

“detailed statement of the assessment by”

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 24. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

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The next question is on Motion No. 25. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 26. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

We now move on to the motions in Group No. 9.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-60, in Clause 24, be amended by replacing lines 6 to 9 on page 8 with the following:

“24.(1) Subject to the regulations, the Minister may, on January 1, 2000, fix the fees to be paid for a service or the use of a facility provided by the Agency.”

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-60, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing lines 17 to 20 on page 8 with the following:

“26. (1) Before fixing a fee under section 24 or 25, the Minister shall consult with the advisory board and may consult with any persons or organizations that the Minister considers to be interested in the matter.”

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-60, in Clause 26, be amended by replacing lines 19 and 20 on page 8 with the following:

“persons or organizations that have an interest in the matter or that have expressed an interest in the matter to the Minister.”

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-60, in Clause 27, be amended by replacing lines 29 and 30 on page 8 with the following:

“27. (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), the Treasury Board may make regulations for the purposes of sections 24 to 26.

(2) Every regulation the Treasury Board proposes to make under subsection (1) shall be sent by that Board for study and approval to such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters.

(3) Where, after studying a proposed regulation referred to it under subsection (2), the committee rejects that regulation, that regulation may not be made by the Treasury Board.”

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The next division will be on Motion No. 27. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next division will be on Motion No. 28. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

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The next division will on Motion No. 29. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 30. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion stands deferred.

We now move on to the motions in Group No. 10.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-60, in Clause 31, be amended

(a) by replacing line 29 on page 9 with the following:

“31. (1) The Agency must keep books of account”

(b) by adding the following after line 31 on page 9:

“(2) One year after the Agency is established, the Agency shall make available for inspection its books of account and records for that year.”

Motion No. 32

That Bill C-60, in Clause 32, be amended by replacing lines 40 to 42 on page 9 with the following:

“(c) provide a report to the President, the Minister and such committee of the House of Commons as is designated or established to consider agricultural matters on the audit, opinion and assessment.”

Motion No. 33

That Bill C-60 be amended by adding after line 42 on page 9 the following new Clause:

“32.1 Before providing the report under paragraph 32(c), the Auditor General of Canada shall consult

(a) any person from the agriculture, fisheries, food processing, food distribution and public health sectors whom the Minister considers appropriate to consult; and

(b) any government of a province that has advised the Auditor General of Canada, in writing, of its wish to be consulted.”

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 31. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next vote is on Motion No. 32. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 33. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

We now move on to the motions in Group No. 11.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-60 be amended by adding before line 1 on page 10 the following:

“32.1 The provisions made by any Appropriation Act for the fiscal year in which this section comes into force or a subsequent fiscal year, based on the Estimates for that year, to defray the charges and expenses of the public service of Canada within the Departments of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans and Health in relation to any matter for which the Agency is responsible by virtue of Section 11 are deemed to be an amount appropriated for defraying the charges and expenses of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in such amount as the Treasury Board may, on the recommendations of the Ministers of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans and Health, determine.”

*Recommendation
(Pursuant to Standing Order 76(3))*

His Excellency the Governor General recommends to the House of Commons the appropriation of public revenue under the circumstances, in the manner and for the purposes set out in the following amendment to Bill C-60, An Act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and to repeal and amend other Acts as a consequence. That Bill C-60 be amended by adding before line 1 on page 10 the following:

“32.1 The provisions made by any Appropriation Act for the fiscal year in which this section comes into force or a subsequent fiscal year, based on the Estimates for that year, to defray the charges and expenses of the public service of Canada within the Departments of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans and Health in relation to any matter for which the Agency is responsible by virtue of Section 11 are deemed to be an amount appropriated for defraying the charges and expenses of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in such amount as the Treasury Board may, on the recommendations of the Ministers of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans and Health, determine.”

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 34. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are now on debate on the motions in Group No. 6. You may have notice that we proposed six amendments in this group: Amendments Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 36, which specifically concern clause 13 of Bill C-60.

I would like to take a few moments to read clause 13, since this is the crucial clause and the amendments the official opposition is presenting this afternoon are specifically aimed at improving Bill C-60.

If the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food thinks this is obstruction, he is mistaken. I will read clause 13, and there is not a single municipal council in the smallest municipality in Canada that would accept a clause like this one.

13. (1) The President has the authority to appoint the employees of the Agency.

I may recall that the president is appointed by the governor in council. And now the president, who will be a friend of the government, will appoint the agency's employees. This is a serious matter. When I was mayor of the municipality of Garthby, if I had appointed the municipal inspector and then told him to appoint all the employees of the town of Garthby, I would have been in an excellent position to get him to hire my brothers-in-law, my nephews and nieces, my friends or people who could be counted on to give generously to my campaign fund.

As the Prime Minister said so eloquently this week to people who were looking for work: “Good luck”. I could tell people who are looking for work: “Stick with the president of the Food Inspection Agency and with the Prime Minister's party, the Liberal Party”.

We also read in clause 13(2):

13.(2) The President may set the terms and conditions of employment for employees of the Agency and assign duties to them.

This is still the president. I will conclude with clause 13(3), the last part of clause 13:

13.(3) The President may designate any person or class of persons as inspectors, analysts, graders, veterinary inspectors or other officers for the enforcement or administration of any Act or provision that the Agency enforces or administers by virtue of section 11, in respect of any matter referred to in the designation.

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I may recall that, as I said earlier, for the time being the agency does not have to abide by the guidelines that usually apply to this type of agency or department when hiring employees. It does not have to abide by a principle that is currently recognized and that is effective in that it affords some protection against patronage.

Our amendments are clear and specific. For instance, our amendment should be read here in connection with the amendment concerning the Professional Institute of the Public Service. We proposed this amendment because, in its present form, the agency will be a separate employer in the meaning of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. As a result, many of its employees will lose their vested rights.

• (1640)

We must not forget that this new agency created by Bill C-60 will have a staff of 4,500 in full time positions across Canada.

These employees will come from pretty much everywhere, but, if they do not suit the president and are considered incapable of doing the job or do not want to leave Halifax to come and work at head office, which will be here in the national capital, they will be replaced by other people the president can simply appoint. The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada will not be respected. So, a number of employees will be penalized by C-60.

This sort of behaviour by the Liberal Party headed by the hon. Prime Minister and member for Saint-Maurice is despicable. Just this week, his comment to a woman from Saskatchewan, who has three university degrees—two bachelors and a masters degree—and is looking for work, was, simply: “Good luck”. It is disgusting.

So, to rule out any abuse or poor employee management and to make the hiring process transparent within the agency, which will have nearly 5,000 employees, we are calling for a detailed report on the hiring criteria used.

I would at this point like to return to this week's, in fact today's, oral question period. You no doubt followed the questions on the space agency in the region of Longueuil and Saint-Hubert. Mr. Evans is a personal friend of the Minister of Industry and was appointed by him. A fine example of patronage. Today, Mr. Evans is getting his minister into hot water up to his neck.

The amendments we proposed are aimed at protecting this party from potential abuse in the case of the food inspection agency. We are no longer talking about the space agency but about food inspection. Food is going to be inspected, and human health will be at stake.

The president and executive vice-president of this agency must be appointed not because they are friends of the Liberal Party, but because they are competent and able to do the job. Too often,

unfortunately, in partisan appointments, the individual who has contributed the most to party coffers is given huge responsibilities. But in this case, we are talking about your health, Mr. Speaker, and that of your children and your wife. This is serious.

The report will have to be sent to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food one year after the establishment of the agency. Here again, we are concerned by possible patronage abuses on the part of the government and we want to be able to monitor this process closely and openly.

Before turning to clause 93, we repeatedly suggested and recommended in a number of our amendments that the agency consult with the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food. The members opposite refused.

I can see them, and I also see them in committee. Just this week, in a committee of which I am a member, I nudged my colleague from the Reform Party and told him: “See how bored the Liberal members seem to be today with the committee on agriculture”.

• (1645)

Indeed, they seemed to be bored to death. Some did not seem to really understand the issue, others did not want to speak, fearing to drag things out even more, or to ask questions because they were not familiar with the issue.

My colleague from the Reform Party said: “Yes, unfortunately, it is not the top experts on agriculture they have sent to the committee”, with the exception of the member for Malpeque, who always has questions or solutions to propose.

This having been said, for the amendments in Group No. 6, the critical issue was clause 13 of Bill C-60. To conclude, I remind you again that the Liberal government is going to appoint the president and the first vice-president for an indeterminate period. We do not know. I asked whether it would be six months, six years or twelve months, but they would not tell me anything, claiming they did not know. So, for an indeterminate period, the chairman and vice-chairman will be free to appoint anyone they like. In other words, they are telling people to look for “jobs, jobs, jobs”, while the Prime Minister wishes them “good luck”.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to raise a point of order. Since it is only 4.45 p.m., I would like to get the unanimous consent of the House to speak for another five or six minutes so I can explain to my Liberal colleagues across the way why Bill C-60 should be improved.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time is up. Since he wishes to go on for five more minutes, does the House give unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I see that my colleagues from the government party want to know more about the benefits of our amendments aimed at improving Bill C-60.

Mrs. Gaffney: And that is why we allowed you to speak in debate too.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Thank you very much. I want to give special thanks to the member who convinced her colleagues to agree to my request.

I want to address clause 93 of Bill C-60. It is also quite important, but it should be amended. I will read it for the benefit of the House:

This Act, or any provision of the Act, or any provision of any Act enacted or amended by this Act, comes into force on a day or days to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council.

This reminds me that I heard—listen up, this is both funny and serious, but mostly sad—that according to the government's plan, Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, was to come into force on April 1 next year.

I told you that the Governor in Council would appoint the president, the executive vice-president, and the advisory board. It would appear that they have already found a president, an executive vice-president, and that the advisory board is just about complete. Some democracy! But I am still introducing my amendments.

Under clause 93, our amendment provides that the act will not come into force as long as the Minister of Agriculture has not prepared a code of conduct and ethics to govern the appointment of employees by the agency. We want a code of ethics, but not like the one the Prime Minister wanted for his cabinet. Whenever we ask him to read from his code of ethics or to provide us with a copy, we are told it is still being printed.

I challenge you. If you had a code of ethics in your private company, you would be proud to show it to me, to boast about it, to praise it, or better yet, to improve it if at all possible.

• (1650)

When the Prime Minister is in hot water, as was the case this afternoon during question period, when his industry minister was questioned about the space agency, is his code of ethics any good? We know how Mr. Evans was appointed chairman of the space agency in St. Hubert.

This code must be developed in conjunction with the union or unions of the future agency and the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. The objective is to get rid once and for all of the patronage that might easily take roots within the food inspection agency. This is serious.

In the several months since we started examining Bill C-60 and I started raising these cases of patronage, I have received several calls from people supporting me. Unfortunately, when I ask them to testify before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, they are very reluctant because they fear retaliation from that party.

The Mulroney government did not go as far with patronage. Brian Mulroney, whom I consider to be among one of the greatest givers of patronage jobs, would never have created a new agency just to reward his friends. This is serious because there will be more than 4,500 jobs.

If the government votes against this amendment that we are proposing in clause 93, we will have to understand that it wants to control the agency, thus hurting the interests of the people it represents.

I doubt Canadians will have full confidence in this food inspection system that will be entrusted to an agency whose executives will not be appointed because of their capabilities, but because of their political allegiance and their past services to the Liberal Party.

I thank the Liberal members for giving me five more minutes.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise a second time this afternoon in the debate on Bill C-60 to establish the food inspection agency to point out not an anomaly, in my opinion, but rather a precedent.

At least it will represent a precedent in the federal public service. When I rose earlier, I said that, like my colleagues, I was against the minister having sole responsibility for appointing the members of the advisory board, because of an extremely high risk of patronage, which could discredit the advisory board and, consequently, any study submitted to this board and any opinion provided by the board to the minister.

Clause 12 of the bill, regarding human resources, states that:

The agency is a separate employer under the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

It says "separate", and each word is important because, normally, the legislator is not supposed to use a word or phrase that does not mean anything. When Parliament speaks, it is supposed to mean something.

• (1655)

If clause 12 states that the agency is a separate employer, that means that the agency will not be subject to the Public Service of Canada Act.

It states further, at clause 13, that "the president has the authority to appoint the employees of the agency". It is there in black and white. So, it is obvious that the president, as several members said—and the hon. member for Frontenac just did—who is appointed by the governor in Council, in other words by cabinet,

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with all the risks attached to such appointments, such as appointing partisan individuals whose only qualifications would be their membership in the Liberal Party, once this president has been appointed, carefully chosen because he is one of their own—so he will do exactly as told—, this president will be totally free to appoint whomever he wants as an employee of the agency. They are civil servants. We are talking about civil servants who will go everywhere, in restaurants, in businesses, to inspect the food quality, the cleanliness of the premises.

Those are the people referred to. The bill provides:

12. The Agency is a separate employer under the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

13. (1) The President has the authority to appoint the employees of the Agency.

(2) The President may set the terms and conditions of employment for employees of the Agency and assign duties to them.

This is really a first. I would like a member of the government to stand in the House and explain who, when a minister gets such legislation adopted, gives such extravagant powers to an individual who can be appointed on account of his political views.

This means that not only is the advisory committee mentioned previously—which could be essentially partisan—thus discredited, but that the agency as a whole can lose its credibility. This is very serious. This means that any individual, any business owner or institution could question the quality of these inspectors' work.

I am convinced that no union, no shop steward representing public servants was consulted about this clause, which exempts the food inspection agency from the application of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. In other words, these people will not be public servants. They will be employees of the agency and they will always be governed by its terms and conditions of employment. This is what clause 13, which reads as follows, provides:

13.(1) The President has the authority to appoint the employees of the Agency.

(2) The President may set the terms and conditions of employment

This is unprecedented. Such a clause must be condemned. This cannot be tolerated. We must have absolute confidence in the inspectors' work, given the importance of their role in our society, which is to ensure that the food consumed at home or in public places is of good quality, and that it is prepared in a clean and healthy environment.

The agency must not become a haven for patronage. We not let this happen, otherwise the work of all these people, the work of the whole agency will come into question. This would prove that Quebecers are right to demand—not merely ask—that this inspection work be done by inspectors accountable to the Government of Quebec. We experienced a similar situation of distrust in the seventies.

• (1700)

Some will remember the tainted meat scandal in Quebec. At the time, food inspections were not conducted properly, and hardly anything was checked. The situation was brought to light and it was found that organized crime had infiltrated the food inspection sector.

Following a commission of inquiry, the Quebec government took a number of measures to correct the situation, including the grouping of all inspectors under a single organization, and the implementation of strict measures to give credibility to this activity.

The most serious harm that has been done at the time is that, because of some laxness in food inspection, for many years and even still today, some people have doubts when they see the seal "Quebec approved".

After 10 or 15, I do not know how many years, people in some circles still hesitate to put their faith in inspections by the Quebec government. That is exactly what will happen once we have an agency run by the government's buddies, those who contribute to its slush fund. Moreover, inspectors will be selected by these people.

I do not have to tell you what will happen when the time comes to hire inspectors. The first card one will have to show is not the qualification card granted by some college, but a small red card with a maple leaf on. That is the one to be shown. That is the way things will work.

And then, they want the agency to have some credibility. They want inspectors to go do their inspections anywhere they please and would have us believe that, after the officer from the Liberal Party has visited their business, people will feel really secure. That is sheer nonsense.

I cannot think for a single moment that such provisions will be maintained. My colleague from the agriculture committee is right to criticize the way Liberal government is proceeding in that regard. The government seems intent not on dealing with problems but on creating a lot more. They think the solution lies in leaving any future decision making to people they alone have confidence in, that is Liberal hacks. That seems to be the solution.

They could change the title of the bill and call it the Liberal Food Inspection Agency instead of calling it the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Then at least it would reflect a de facto situation and people dealing with those inspectors would know what is what. With the provisions as they are, there will be some doubts. People will wonder if the inspector is qualified, competent, if he took courses and was trained for the job, who hired him, and so forth.

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We cannot accept such a situation. That is why, unless the amendments put forward by my colleague are accepted, we will not be able to support such a decision.

[English]

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many things have been said today that need to be clarified and corrected to a great degree.

When the hon. member concluded his speech he suggested that the government would not ensure that qualified, well respected people will get the jobs. In fact, that is exactly what will happen. We will make certain that qualified well respected people are doing the inspection jobs for food.

• (1705)

It has not been by error or by mistake, or any other way but good, strategic planning that Canada is recognized around the world as one of the countries with the safest food supply in the world. The federal inspection agency has been and shall continue to be the best inspection agency that the country can possibly put forward.

We know that when problems have occurred in other countries, Canada has been on the side of extra caution. We shall remain on the side of extra caution.

We are not talking here about political, partisan appointments. We are talking about a lack of arguments by the opposition to bring forward criticism that is valid for this bill.

A very partisan approach has been taken in the House today. I am certain not one person from the government, not one person in the House, and I do not care on which side of the House they sit, would jeopardize the safety of the food supply, food source for Canadians or internationally. That is paramount. That must be stated now.

Amendments have been put forward. Those amendments are in some degree to Americanize our system. The suggestion that an agriculture committee start holding hearings on people who will be coming to certain boards, going into the detail of how our system operates is somewhat different from a parliamentary system.

The responsible person in all the inspection systems in Canada is the Prime Minister, going down to his cabinet and to the ministers who are appointed to carry out that responsibility.

This agency is not being formed on a whim. A tremendous amount of consultation has taken place across the country. Well over a year has been spent looking at different aspects of agriculture, health, fishing as well as the inspection agencies that exist at the present time.

I know very well that some of our officials have been on this case over two years, trying to make certain that all the steps that are being put forward are done in consultation with the industry, in consultation with all the inspection services in the country, in consultation with all the departments in government to make sure a good, positive, protective system that will make certain our food supply is the best in the world is established.

The agency will make certain consistency is there and one source can be responsible for the inspection systems in the country. There is no question that there is overlap when you have three separate departments functioning with one agency to do the inspections.

Certainly, if there are laboratories that are doing the same work, if there are facilities that we have in an area that could do both the agriculture, the fishing and the health inspections at one time that is the most efficient way to do.

By forming an agency under the minister of agriculture, we have formed a single inspection agency reporting to one minister and one group of people who can look at the system and come up with solutions that would better the delivery of inspections across the country.

That is what has happened. We feel it is extremely important to have the proper steps in place, the proper people doing the job. Quite frankly, it is not an area where we are looking at partisanship. We are looking at placing the best qualified people in those positions that we can get. I believe that is most important for all Canadians.

I would like to address a few of the motions put forward that I have not addressed to this point. One has to do with common service providers.

• (1710)

A series of motions were brought forward. The purpose of the government's proposal was to give the agency the opportunity to find a cost effective way to deliver services in the program. However, before proceeding, the agency must seek Treasury Board and council approval to pay for those costs as the business proceeds. This is an area with a cross-governmental implication and therefore the minister should require and seek concurrence of his colleagues.

It is important that we look very carefully at the human resources issue with regard to this bill. The intention of clause 12 is to provide the Canadian Food Inspection Agency with separate employer status and not to make changes to collective agreements which are a framework for the public service. With the addition of subsection 12(a), this proposed amendment would open all matters to the bargaining process that are now within the employer's responsibility in the public service. In other words, some of the

Government Orders

amendments are opening up doors to employee-employer problems which may come in the future.

Certainly the department has looked very carefully at how the bill should be structured in order to make certain that there is a harmonious, fair way flowing from the present inspection system to the new agency so that all employees will have a reasonable understanding of what is happening and will be able to move from their present jobs into the inspection agency if they so desire.

I was a bit astounded when the member for Richelieu stood today. I recall the member for Richelieu being a very staunch member of the Conservative Party when Mr. Mulroney was here. It is not proper for him to stand and criticize the present government for partisan appointments. It seems that no one was more partisan, more prone to be dictatorial and oppressive than the former prime minister. It is very unfair for a person who sat in his caucus to go after the government for the policies and the issues we have brought forward.

Clearly the direction of this bill is to have the best possible inspection agency in the most cost effective and efficient way we can. We are looking at cost controls when we put an inspection agency in place. I have heard from the agriculture community, the fishing community and from all others that it will be a very positive move if we can save money.

One of the greatest considerations the industry has had in the past several months is the PMRA. The question of the PMRA is a matter of the industry being very concerned about cost and cost effectiveness. If this agency is put in place with a savings of \$44 million, that will address cost savings and effectiveness not only for all Canadians but for the industry itself.

Although many criticisms have been brought forward, I believe unfairly, about some of the today's issues, the central focus of the government is on the efficient delivery of service and top quality service inspection. Food inspection is our number one priority. The people receiving that food inspection are the people who must be protected. It is important for this country to have the safest food inspection service in the world. We are here to deliver it.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate on motions in Group No. 6, according to the groupings made by the Chair with the co-operation of House leaders.

The more we move along in the point by point study of the amendments to this bill, the more we realize this is the greatest exercise in improvisation we have seen these last few weeks. If improvisation, carelessness and arrogance have always been the

trademark of this government over the last two years—almost three years, actually—instead of the openness all citizens are calling for, this bill really takes the cake.

It is unbelievable that they should simply brush off all our amendments. None of them is deemed acceptable, even though they could easily be accepted by anybody except this arrogant government.

We are simply looking for a better management of this food inspection agency. We are suggesting appointments should be made in consultation. But the government has done it again today: It has named a new lieutenant-governor without consulting in any way the government of Quebec, even if it could do it. This is a federal prerogative. I do not hold a grudge against the person who has been named, but against the office of lieutenant-governor and the way the government went about this nomination.

What we are seeing here, as discussed under other groups of motions, is that the government would like to appoint a dozen persons as administrators of this agency at the sole discretion of the minister. I can understand the shame members opposite feel when they see a minister grabbing the power to appoint. They know what kind of appointments will be made, patronage appointments, as always. The appointee will have to be a known Liberal. It could be profitable for the slush fund. After all, Liberals have always been at the service of the friends of their own party and never at the service of the people.

With its customary arrogance, the government wants the minister to appoint the 12 members of the board and rejects the very simple, concrete and sensible suggestion made by the hon. member for Frontenac, who said: "We would like the agency to be managed by people who have some experience in the agri-food area, so we would like the committee responsible for considering agricultural matters here, in the House of Commons, to invite people to send in their résumés. Then, with the assistance of the subcommittees and all the parties, we could screen candidates. Finally, we would make our recommendations to the minister, who, in turn, would be able to use his discretionary power to choose 12 members among a list of 20 candidates".

The minister could at least approve this solution. We think the committee should appoint the 12 members, but if the minister were to say: "Give me a list with 20 names on it and I will choose 12 members", that would be some type of compromise to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Frontenac, who is very efficiently overseeing this whole matter for the Bloc Québécois.

In the proposal he brought forward, the hon. member for Frontenac is, in fact, saying: Our amendment has three objectives. First, that the 12 members of the advisory board be appointed by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, after due consideration. Second, that beforehand the provinces and the

Government Orders

representatives of the agriculture industry be allowed to submit to the committee the names of candidates for appointment to the advisory board. That is not too much to ask of the minister.

• (1720)

Third, that the membership of the advisory board take into account the weight of each province within the federation.

The government brags about being a national party and providing equal representation for all citizens. The hon. member for Frontenac is giving the government the opportunity to prove it. He said: "If a province has 25 per cent of the Canadian population, then it should have three seats out of 12 on the advisory board". That does not mean that the board would be controlled by a region or another. We will have achieved the balance all Canadians are striving for.

When we consulted our people on this, they asked why we were consulting them about it, because it was obvious to them that the minister should receive suggestions from the provinces, the agri-food sector, political parties in general and people who could sit on the advisory board. But the minister was so arrogant enough that he turned down this suggestion, which seems absolutely fundamental to me.

I understand why there is not a single Liberal member today who wants to speak in favour of such a thing. They say nothing and hide. There they are, their heads bowed down. There are so many that they cannot be missed. What do they say? I can see an assistant to the minister who is nudging a member to get him to speak on this, but I do not blame the member for heading behind the curtain. There is no justification for speaking against such logical and simple amendments, which would just facilitate the workings of any agency that we want to be effective and relevant and to do the work that all the members of this House want it to do.

So, to be sure, we say that we must consult the people involved in the agri-food sector and the provinces, which also have a very important role to play. But no, the minister has told his members say nothing or else they will be expelled, as was the member from Ontario who now sits as an independent member because he dared to say to the Prime Minister: "Mr. Prime Minister, you promised to scrap the GST, do you not remember?" He was thrown out of his party because he dared to talk to the Prime Minister. This is democracy in the Liberal Party.

This is an arrogant party, the party most given to pork-barrelling and the most corrupt party in Canadian history. It thinks of nothing but helping its political friends instead of serving the interests of Canadians and Quebecers. And the person who best personifies this

corruption and pork-barrelling style of government is the Prime Minister himself. I am convinced that even the Minister of Agriculture received instructions to use such a dictatorial approach in appointing people.

The Prime Minister's list of party backers is a long one. The Liberals appointed 400 people last year to well paid positions. They will now appoint 500 or 600 more before the election and, particularly, before the holiday season. Since people will be busy partying, nobody will notice all these appointments, and there will be many of them.

The Prime Minister instructed the minister to set up the agency right away, to use his discretionary power to do so; he will be given the names of appointees later. There are still a few Liberal candidates who did not get a reward or a contract, and let us not forget that it is the wife of the former defense minister, Mrs. Collette, who makes suggestions. Members will recall that the defence minister himself granted contracts worth \$75,000 to one of his fund raisers to thank him and to ask him to organize his next election campaign.

This is what we are making a stand against today. I wonder why even Liberal members are hiding and refusing to acknowledge that what we are proposing is logical and that we should put an end to the arrogance they have been showing lately on every issue, especially on political appointments.

• (1725)

This is worse than the Mulroney years, because Mr. Mulroney took the time to consult the provinces even for the choice of senators, but the present Prime Minister's arrogance is obvious. Moreover, he admitted it publicly when he said: "I am the one who makes the appointments". He also told his minister of agriculture: "I will name them and I will give you the list".

The kind of patronage, so typical of the Trudeau years, is being reinstated and strengthened. But that is not what was said in the red book. The red book said that a Liberal government would give a greater role to members of Parliament to improve the democratic process in the House of Commons. Instead of that, we are going back to a dictatorship.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have another opportunity to speak to this bill because the purpose of this group of motions is to protect the interests of those who will manage this system. The government wants to deny public service employees their vested rights. The other aspect is the one that the member for Richelieu, with his extensive experience, just mentioned so eloquently. He has seen it all, so the government must really have gone too far for him to make this kind of comment.

As the member said, the government, at the end of the session—and that is what Canadians must pay attention to—just before Christmas or just before Saint-Jean-Baptiste day, tries to ram some bills through the House so they will not come up again after the holidays.

The member for Frontenac, with his initiative, and his colleagues in the agriculture committee did wonderful work, and I want to pay tribute to them. Even though they sometimes seem a little too insistent in caucus or in their personal contacts with us, they do make us aware of the reality. They tell us how important agriculture is. But that is of no interest to the members opposite, who are uncharacteristically silent on the subject of agriculture, not only today, but most of the time. This issue concerns not only thousands of Quebecers, but other Canadians as well. Coming from a rural area, even though I now live in a semi-urban area, I know how important agriculture is, as do most Quebecers.

The member for Richelieu is right. Why is it that members opposite do not rise more often to speak to agricultural issues? Would it be because the Liberal government wants to ram his bills through the House? Would it be that it does not want its members to put forward too many arguments because it is afraid of our reaction, so it is trying to avoid debate? But is this democracy? Are we setting a good example? Is that the kind of behaviour we want our young people to see, a government that is acting as if there were no opposition, as if things had to go its way while it is in office? That is almost like a monarchy.

I am surprised that the member for Gander—Grand Falls has not said a word. He usually speaks up when he sees such a flagrant lack of respect for democracy. Without breaking the party line, he usually rises in this House to point out such inappropriate behaviour. He did not do so today, which is rather unfortunate.

However, since we do not have much time left, Mr. Speaker, all members of the Bloc Québécois who are here today and myself wish to congratulate the member for Frontenac and his two colleagues, the members for Lotbinière and Champlain, for the wonderful work they do to support agriculture in Quebec. My thanks to the member for Frontenac.

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a point of order, but I can do it later on, when the government whip and the whip of the Reform Party are in the House.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion for second reading of Bill C-236, an act to prevent the importation of radioactive waste into Canada.

Private Members' Business

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

RADIOACTIVE WASTE IMPORTATION ACT

The House resumed from December 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-236, an act to prevent the importation of radioactive waste into Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1750)

Before the taking of the vote:

The Deputy Speaker: As is the practice, we will be doing it row by row. Starting with the mover, all those on my left in favour of the motion will please rise.

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

(*Division No. 203*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Bélisle
Benoit	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bridgman	Brien
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Daviault
de Savoye	Debien
Deshaies	Dubé
Duceppe	Epp
Fillion	Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)	Godin
Grey (Beaver River)	Guay
Guimond	Harris
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Jacob	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Laurin	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Ménard
Mercier	Meredith
Nunez	Nunziata
Paré	Plamondon
Ramsay	Ringma
Speaker	Strahl
Taylor	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)—53	

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Arseneault
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Bruslett
Bryden	Byrne
Calder	Campbell
Catterall	Chan
Cohen	Collins

Routine Proceedings

Copps	Cowling
Culbert	Cullen
DeVillers	Duhamel
Easter	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Frazer	Gaffney
Galloway	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Grose	Harb
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)	Harper (Churchill)
Hickey	Hopkins
Irwin	Jackson
Jordan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Knutson
Lastewka	Lee
Lincoln	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marleau	Massé
McCormick	McKinnon
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Minna
Mitchell	Morrison
Murphy	Murray
Nault	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Patry
Payne	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Pillitteri
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Rideout	Ringuette-Maltais
Robichaud	Schmidt
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Sheridan
Silye	Simmons
Speller	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Szabo
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Verran
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Wells
Whelan	Young
Zed—115	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Asselin
Bachand	Barnes
Bélair	Bellehumeur
Bonin	Boudria
Canuel	Caron
Cauchon	Dromisky
Dumas	Dupuy
Eggleton	English
Graham	Kirkby
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Marchand
Marchi	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Picard (Drummond)	Pomerleau
Rocheleau	Rock
Sauvageau	Venne

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

BILL C-234

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on Motion No. 3 standing in the name of Mr. Ramsay.

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

(*Division No. 204*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Bélisle
Benoit	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bridgman	Brien
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Cummins
Dalphonf-Guiral	Daviault
de Savoye	Debien
Deshaies	Dubé
Duceppe	Epp
Fillion	Forseth
Frazer	Gagnon (Québec)
Godin	Grey (Beaver River)
Guay	Guimond
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)	Harris
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoeppner
Jacob	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Laurin	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Ménard
Mercier	Meredith
Morrison	Nunez
Nunziata	Paré
Plamondon	Ramsay
Ringma	Schmidt
Silye	Speaker
Strahl	Taylor
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)—58

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Arseneault
Augustine	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)
Baker	Bakopanos
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Byrne
Calder	Campbell
Catterall	Chan
Cohen	Collins
Copps	Cowling
Culbert	Cullen
DeVillers	Duhamel
Easter	Finestone
Flis	Fontana
Gaffney	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Harb	Harper (Churchill)

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

Hickey
Irwin
Jordan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Lastewka
Lincoln
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Marleau
McCormick
McTeague
Mifflin
Mitchell
Murray
Pagtakhan
Patri
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette-Maltais
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Simmons
Steckle
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Vanciel
Volpe
Wappel
Whelan
Zed—107

Hopkins
Jackson
Keyes
Knutson
Lee
MacDonald
Malhi
Manley
Massé
McKinnon
McWhinney
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Parrish
Payne
Peters
Pettigrew
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Robichaud
Sheridan
Speller
Stewart (Brant)
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Valeri
Verran
Walker
Wells
Young

[*Translation*]**ACT TO CHANGE THE NAMES OF CERTAIN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS**

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ) moved that the Senate amendments to Bill C-347, an act to change the names of certain electoral districts, be read the second time and concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have a simple explanation. When we passed Bill C-347 at third reading in the House, 19 ridings were concerned. The Senate kept these 19 and made three amendments to add ridings whose names will be changed.

Thus, in the province of Ontario, the riding of Vaughan—Aurora will see its name changed to Vaughan—King—Aurora. In the province of Saskatchewan, the riding of Regina—Arm River will see its name changed to Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, and in the province of New Brunswick, the riding of Beauséjour will see its name changed to Beauséjour—Petitcodiac.

It is on a non-partisan basis that I move that the Senate's amendments be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, amendments read the second time and concurred in.)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

NATIONAL ORGAN DONOR DAY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-202, an act respecting a national organ donor day in Canada, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are three motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill 202.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 1 and 3 will be grouped together for debate. The vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2 and 3.

I shall now put Motions No. 1, 2 and 3 to the House.

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson
Bachand
Bélair
Bonin
Canuel
Cauchon
Dumas
Eggleton
Graham
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Marchi
Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau
Sauvageau

Asselin
Barnes
Bellehumeur
Boudria
Caron
Dromisky
Dupuy
English
Kirkby
Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Pomerleau
Rock
Venne

• (1805)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

(Motion negated.)

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, we received this afternoon the Senate's amendments to Bill C-347, an act to change the names of certain electoral districts. I believe that, if you sought it, you would find unanimous consent to move immediately to consideration of these amendments.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Private Members' Business

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That the long title of Bill C-202 be replaced with the following:

“An Act respecting a National Organ Donor Month in Canada”

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-202, in Clause 1, be amended by replacing line 10 on page 1 with the following:

“Organ Donor Month Act.”

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-202, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing lines 11 to 13 on page 1 with the following:

“2. Throughout Canada, in each and every year, the month of April shall be known under the name of “National Organ Donor Month”.”

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased to speak today to Bill C-202, and therefore on the amendments I tabled with a view to instituting a national organ donor month.

When I spoke in April, I told you a story from real life. I feel it would be extremely appropriate to repeat it here, for I believe it offers an exceptional illustration of how reality has changed in the past 30 years.

We are back in 1959, when you were far younger, Mr. Speaker, and I was younger too, but a little older than you. I was about to graduate from nursing school. Pierrette was a patient of mine. She was 15 years old and had been sick since about the age of three or four. She was suffering from kidney failure.

In those days, there was no question of hemodialysis and kidney transplants. They were not even considered yet. Pierrette, at 15, was dying. All she wanted was to sleep but, one night, she went to sleep, never to wake up again.

In those days, medical science threw up its hands in cases like Pierrette's. All of us felt this was terribly unfair. Science has made giant strides since.

Over the course of almost 30 years of professional life entirely dedicated to paediatric care, I finally saw hope rekindled in the hearts and minds—

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I would like you to call the House to order. Those who are not interested in the debate can withdraw. I am having difficulty hearing my colleague, and I am close by.

The Deputy Speaker: I fully agree with my hon. colleague. Would the hon. member in the corner, without naming him, either step outside or listen to the hon. member.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, I get the impression that you are a miracle worker.

Over the course of almost 30 years of professional life entirely dedicated to paediatric care, I finally saw hope rekindled in the hearts and minds of parents and children. Organ and tissue transplants now make it possible to save lives.

Today, increasingly sophisticated technologies make heart, liver, lung and pancreas transplants possible. What was a virtually impossible feat in 1960 has become, today more than ever, an everyday reality.

In 1995, in Quebec alone, 375 people received the invaluable gift of life because 117 healthy people like you and me agreed to donate their organs after death. Yet, there are still over 500 people in Quebec waiting for organ transplants; in Canada, only 40 percent of people with the same need receive the gift of life.

Despite the progress of science, the main obstacle remains the insufficient number of donors. So, the more donors there are, the more people will benefit from long awaited organ transplants that will improve their quality of life.

• (1815)

Last April, I was able to speak at the second reading stage of this bill introduced by the hon. member for Ontario. I was also at that time joint chairman of an organ donation awareness campaign. Incidentally—and this is something I am extremely proud of—for the last four years in Laval, the second most populous city in Quebec and a thriving community in many areas, April has been declared organ donation month. So I know such a campaign can motivate people to sign organ donation cards.

It is in this spirit that I introduced these amendments proposing that the bill provides for a full month of awareness instead of only one day. At the request of agencies that are very concerned about all aspects of organ donations, I wish to present a number of amendments today, and I earnestly hope that my colleagues on the government benches and those in the third party in this House will give their unanimous support to this request.

It is important to inform the public and raise public awareness of the importance of organ donations. We never know when we or one of our loved ones might need this gift of life.

According to a working paper on donation and distribution of organs and tissues in Canada, produced by the federal-provincial-territorial advisory committee on health services in 1996, there is a critical shortage of organs in Canada.

In a society like ours that takes pride in having the best health care system there is, because it is available to every one, can we tolerate not having enough organs to give to the people that need

them? The only way to change this is to make the entire population aware of the problem.

As we near the year 2000, we have truly exceptional means of communication at our disposal. What we can do in a month is incredible. What is needed is political will, and I believe the Parliament of Canada, of which I am a member, is prepared to make this decision.

In Canada, and I think this will surprise you, the number of organ donations per million people is one of the lowest among industrialized countries. In 1993, for instance, it was 13.9 per million; in Austria, it was 25.2; in Spain, not a very rich country, 21.7; in Belgium, 19; in the United States, 17.7; in France, 17 and in the United Kingdom, 15.5.

In addition to having one of the lowest organ donation rates, we are seeing an increase in the number of people in Canada who are waiting for organ donations. It is clear that progress in medicine is widely reported and that people know what they are entitled to and what they can benefit from. A way must be found, therefore, to meet their needs.

In 1995 in Canada, 2,500 people were awaiting a transplant, an increase of 15.5 per cent over 1994. Everyone will agree that it is a significant increase and that it clearly signals a need for public information.

Obviously, a Canada wide public information campaign is called for. A month long information campaign, in April, when nature revives and life breathes anew, is needed, I think, to let people know the importance of the situation and our responsibility as individuals, because too many things still stand in the way of organ donations.

According to a 1994 survey undertaken by Mutual Life, whose excellent efforts toward public awareness I am proud to honour, 77 per cent of Canadians said they were prepared to donate their organs, although only 58 per cent of them said they had signed a donor card.

• (1820)

There is many a slip from the cup to the lip and I think we can change that if Parliament unanimously supports these amendments.

The gap between attitudes and behaviour can probably be explained by the fact that we do not know how other family members feel about this. There are also the fears, the bias and the lack of trust in the operations.

Therefore, I believe that the great shortage of organs and the importance of this cause are worth a month of effort to inform the public. I want to thank my colleague, the member for Ontario, for this extraordinary idea he had to ask that one day, April 21, be devoted to that cause and I am sure he will agree with me that this day should be the culminating point of a whole month dedicated to raising awareness of organ donations.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak on this bill today, at the report stage.

This bill has a story. It started about two years ago.

[English]

It is a bill which unites the House of Commons in a common front that puts aside politics and the ideological differences which we have. It is an issue which allows us to consider that perhaps the greatest gift we can give to other people in passing away is the gift of life.

The genesis, the origin of this bill was made possible by the sacrifice which was made by one young individual, a very young Canadian, a former constituent of mine, Stuart Herriot, better known among those who knew him as Stu Buddy.

This bill has received the accolade of the Stu Buddy bill. That is for good reason. Today in the gallery we welcome Tim Herriot, the father of Stuart Herriot, and his aunt, Linda Rumble, who spear-headed this bill. On behalf of the House I congratulate them on their efforts.

As the hon. member for Laval Centre indicated, in Canada we need to address the fact that nearly 1,100 people die every year waiting for the gift of life. Fortunately, in 1994-95 four people, who are alive and very healthy today, received the gift of life compliments of the sacrifice that Stuart made when he was tragically killed on April 21.

I do not know if it is divine intervention or just fate, but whatever the case may be, it turns out that the week which has customarily been named to honour organ donation has been the third week of April. It is ironic and perhaps tragic, but also, in a very strange sense, positive that April 21, the day on which Stuart died, is also the week that would allow the House of Commons to consider not only a national organ day, but perhaps, as the hon. member from the Bloc has said, a national organ donor month.

I do not want to play politics with this bill. The intent is to make sure that the bill, which received unanimous consent at second reading and went through committee without amendment—certainly there were no objections from the government, the Bloc or Reform—perhaps by way of compromise, provide a national organ donor week.

• (1825)

I want to speak on that for just a brief moment because we are now dealing with lives and lives no know boundaries. They do not know a jurisdiction between Canada and the United States or between various regions or various cities of the country. It just so happens that the U.S. congress has already recognized the third week of April as being its national organ donor week. In a mood of harmonization I think the ultimate goal, the higher goal which transcends again the politics and political barriers, I would hope

Private Members' Business

that we could perhaps as a Parliament at the very least consider this week.

I understand the hon. member has suggested the month as she said so very eloquently, but I think we have to try to do what we can here today. I am pleased to have had an opportunity to work with her on this bill. I know she has met many people, as so many of us have, young people and older people who have given away that part of themselves in dying with the understanding and the knowledge that they may give life to other people.

The importance of this bill should not be forgotten in terms of what it is trying to accomplish: awareness and education. Without those two elements, despite having the means to provide more transplants, we will still wind up in deficit situation of nearly 1,100 people dying every year because they do not or cannot wait to receive the gift of life.

I hope we are not in a position where we forget the sacrifices being made by those and other people who tonight at this very time are either on dialysis machines or awaiting in the various hospitals around this country for the gift of life.

It is my belief that this House from time to time may be criticized for getting mired down in politics, of getting mired down in the day to day distractions based on ideologies and what not. This bill brings a common sense of purpose and a common sense of unity to the posterity of our own species, of our own society and of mankind.

In recognizing that the hon. member has made these motions and in the interest of perhaps getting this bill passed as soon as possible, and honouring the sacrifice made by young Stu Buddy I ask if it might be possible that we make an amendment to the motions that have been put forward, in the interest of getting this done before Christmas in the context of giving.

I move:

That the amendment be amended by replacing the word "month" with the word "week".

I submit this now.

The Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member indicate by his amendment if he is changing the word in each of the motions?

Mr. McTeague: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate.

An hon. member: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. member has a question or anything else, with the unanimous consent of the House and in the

spirit of Christmas, I think we should let the hon. member for Laval Centre speak first.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we get what we can get. I would really like the House to vote on the amendment that I tabled. I continue to think that, maybe, a majority of members will vote in favour of a national organ donor "month".

• (1830)

If the amendment that I tabled on behalf of Quebecers is rejected, I will, of course, vote for a national organ donor week, since it is better than nothing.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, I clearly asked that my amendment be voted on. If the amendment is rejected—

Mr. Arseneault: It is impossible.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: It is impossible. I understand. I will vote in favour of one week, but I want one month. Mr. Speaker, does this mean my amendment will be dropped, or are we still going to vote on it?

If the amendment to the amendment deals with the amendment, the amendment per se has to be rejected first, right?

The Deputy Speaker: For better or worse, the House must vote on the amendment tabled by the hon. member. If it is negated, the hon. member will be allowed to then submit her amendment. You do not agree?

Mr. Volpe: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: I must follow the rules of this House. The hon. member for Laval Centre has the floor.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, you will certainly understand that I would never question your judgment, so I will oblige with pleasure since it is almost Christmas.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment to the amendment. All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

An hon. member: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is carried on division.

(Amendment to the amendment agreed to.)

*Adjournment Debate***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS***[Translation]*

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on Motion No. 1 as amended.

[English]

All those in favour of Motion No. 1 will please say yea.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is that the amendment as just amended by the subamendment?

The Deputy Speaker: It is the motion, as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1835)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. I declare Motions Nos. 2 and 3 carried unanimously.

(Motions No. 1 to 3 inclusive, as amended, agreed to.)

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. McTeague moved that the bill, as amended, be read the third time and passed.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, may I make a comment? There are quite a lot of members in the House on this Thursday night, and I would like to ask all my colleagues if they have signed their organ donor card.

If they have done so, I ask them to take the opportunity, during the holiday season, to encourage their relatives, their friends and their constituents to do so as well and, above all, to tell people that it can be done.

[English]

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

Mr. McTeague: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is not very often that I am found without words. There is one person who should be smiling here apart from every member of Parliament and to whom I have to give so much thanks.

[Translation]

—especially members opposite and members on this side of the House.

[English]

If Stu Buddy is somewhere in the sky, he has a big smile on his face and he would want us to have champagne, so let's enjoy this. Congratulations everybody. Congratulations, Linda and congratulations, Tim.

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 28 I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development a question. I asked if in his discussions with the provinces regarding the transfer of labour market training from the federal to the provincial governments, he had taken steps to ensure that the principles of the Official Languages Act will continue to apply. In other words, will francophones outside Quebec continue to get training in French and anglophones in Quebec to get their training in English. There has been great concern over this matter because there were too many cases in the past when provincial governments denied services to their language minorities.

Recently, the Quebec government had bilingual signs removed from the Sherbrooke hospital and in the Ontario legislature, a government member insulted an opposition member for speaking French.

For matters coming under the federal government, services are now given in English and French throughout the country where there is significant demand. These rights should not be lost when training programs are transferred to provincial governments.

When airports were transferred to local authorities and when Air Canada was privatized, there were provisions in the legislation to protect these language rights.

• (1840)

I asked my question on November 28 and the government concluded the first formal transfer agreement with Alberta on December 10. In this agreement the following is stated: "In areas of significant demand, Alberta will provide access to the benefits and measures and national employment assistance service functions in both official languages".

These words are similar to section 22 of the Official Languages Act which reads in part as follows: "Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that any member of the public can communicate with and obtain available services in either official language in Canada or elsewhere where there is significant demand for communications with and services from that office in that language".

It is essential that the term "significant demand" is defined and interpreted in the same way as it is for the Official Languages Act.

In his answer on November 28 the minister said that the new Employment Insurance Act provided for service in either official language where there was significant demand. I looked through the

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act very thoroughly and I was not able to find that article. I would ask the parliamentary secretary to identify the article in question.

I also want assurance from the government this evening that all the other agreements, including the one from my province of Quebec, have provisions similar to that of Alberta or even better, that they contain provisions to guarantee training in both official languages.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, I am happy to give the government's response.

[*English*]

The Government of Canada strongly believes that minority official language communities are entitled to receive services in the official language of their choice. That is why under the Official Languages Act the Government of Canada as a whole is firmly committed to ensuring that any member of the public can communicate with the federal institutions and receive available services from these institutions in either official language.

The Government of Canada is also committed to ensuring that services provided on behalf of federal institutions are provided in either official language.

[*Translation*]

Since the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of this basic right, Part II of the Employment Insurance Act was amended to ensure that access is provided to benefits and measures in both official languages in areas of significant demand.

Since minority and community organizations are concerned about how they will be affected by federal-provincial negotiations on labour market agreements, I would like to reiterate that this question is part of negotiations and that any agreement will contain clauses guaranteeing that services will be provided in both official languages.

[*English*]

I asked all Human Resources Development Canada officials to translate this commitment toward respecting the rights of minority groups with respect to official languages into their day to day activities as well as to ensure that adequate and equitable resources are made available to serve these communities.

I hope this information helps to convince the member of the Government of Canada's commitment to ensuring the vitality of

anglophone and francophone minorities and of our support for their economic, cultural and social development.

Our actions also reaffirm this government's desire to work closely with communities to ensure that the rights of minorities are respected throughout Canada.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on November 27 1996 I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration a question regarding the abuse by immigration officers of Algerian nationals seeking refugee status, including excessively long detentions, intimidation, harassment and other arbitrary practices.

Just hours before I asked this question of the Minister, I had attended a press conference with representatives of the coalition for the respect of human rights to condemn this unacceptable situation which is unworthy of a democratic country such as Canada.

• (1845)

This coalition is made up of the Refugee Assistance Committee, the Office des droits des détenus, the Ligue antifasciste mondiale, the Canadian Council for Refugees, the Table de concertation de Montréal pour les réfugiés and the Civil Liberties Union.

The minister said she was surprised to learn about this press conference. She said she had never been informed of these "very serious allegations", which is not true since I had told her myself, in this House, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois. Immediately after I got her answer, I sent her a copy of the comments I made on last May 27 in this regard, here in this House.

Moreover, according to the coalition, the minister had been told about these abuses as early as last April and May, but she never followed through with these complaints.

The Bloc Québécois has asked the minister on many occasions to stay the deportation of refugees to Algeria where violence is still prevalent. If returned, they face huge dangers. These nationals have every right to fear for their lives and safety.

I am heartened by the fact that as of yesterday the federal government has decided to put off for a week carrying out orders expelling people to Zaire. This country has now become a high risk country. Hopefully it will postpone doing so indefinitely.

At the present time, only Burundi, Rwanda and Afghanistan are considered high risk countries. I hope Algeria is included, for there have been some damning reports on human rights abuses in that country.

I am seriously concerned about the behaviour of the immigration officers accused by the coalition. Among the actions listed are: excessive use of detention, the use of false information, denial of

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the right to a lawyer during deportation procedures and rejection out of hand of any claims relating to the risks of returning.

In response to my question, the minister promised to act on this matter. I am asking her, once again, to immediately put an end to these odious, discriminatory and arbitrary practices by her immigration officers, and to order a thorough investigation into this matter. The officials responsible for these acts ought to be dealt with appropriately.

In closing, I would like to wish a Merry Christmas, and all the best for 1997, to all immigrants and refugees in Canada and in Quebec, and to all my colleagues in this House.

[English]

Ms. Maria Minna (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Bourassa has spoken of allegations of illegal or improper behaviour by immigration officials. These are grave accusations which the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration takes very seriously.

This government firmly believes that the immigration enforcement program must be carried out with the highest level of professionalism and respect for individuals. It must also operate within the law. CIC is committed to maintaining and defending the integrity of Canada's immigration and refugee determination system.

Let me make it perfectly clear to the hon. member that any substantiated allegation of improper behaviour is investigated and acted upon by CIC, and I say substantiated. There is an effective mechanism in place whereby instances of wrongdoing can be reported and are addressed.

We have repeatedly invited anyone with documented knowledge or substantiated allegations of incidents of abuse of authority by our officials to come forward.

The minister has asked departmental officials to meet with members of the coalition in order to obtain further details of their allegations.

With regard to the hon. member's other assertions that we do not offer adequate protection to refugees fleeing civil wars, I can only say that we have a good refugee determination system in place which is universally recognized as among the very best in the world. We are the only country to be awarded the Nansen medal for our commitment to helping people in need. Just a few weeks ago the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees sent a letter congratulating Canadians on the 10th anniversary of the awarding of the medal. Our proud tradition of humanitarianism continues today.

Let me assure the hon. member that when we deal with difficult refugee cases, we look at each file very closely before any decisions are made.

• (1850)

TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 28 I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage about the raising of \$200,000 in water lot licence fees along the Trent-Severn waterway. There is a great concern that marinas will be liable to millions of dollars in municipal taxes if these fees are levied. I asked the minister what was going to be done to help the Trent-Severn operators in this matter.

A group of marina operators, many of them from my riding of Peterborough, worked all summer to find a fair way of raising these moneys. Just when they were close to an agreement, they were given a legal opinion that this method of levying the fees puts them at risk in the future for additional municipal taxes. Before commenting on this situation further, I would like to discuss the merits of the Trent-Severn waterway.

This waterway is a series of natural and artificial water bodies which links the upper and lower Great Lakes. It was completed almost 100 years ago following a route used for thousands of years by aboriginal peoples. It is part of our national heritage. That is one of the reasons that Parks Canada manages the waterway on behalf of all Canadians.

The waterway is also the centrepiece of a corridor of tourism, recreation and other economic and social activities. The presence of the system helps generate tens of millions of dollars in that corridor. The Trent-Severn waterway is also an elaborate system of water, including flood control.

The waterway is much more than a canal. Its worth cannot be estimated simply in terms of its cost effectiveness as a route for boats. Yet in a recent auditor general's report, that is how the waterway was treated.

The auditor general said that it would save money if some locks were closed. This would destroy the waterway as a system. It would take away from its heritage role and it would have serious economic impacts on all communities and for all residents in the corridor around it.

I was delighted that in response to the auditor general's report the Minister of Canadian Heritage publicly stated her support of the Trent-Severn waterway as a complete system from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay.

In times when governments are all downsizing, there is a great danger that the federal government will give up or neglect powers and obligations that it has in policy areas which affect the lives of all Canadians, Canadians alive today and Canadians yet to be born. This is one of those areas.

Taking all this into consideration, is it any wonder that marina operators as well as the entire Trent-Severn community are concerned about the proposed water lot licences and their impact. Most

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operators recognize that they have to help support this wonderful waterway but the method of payment must be fair and equitable.

I trust that the parliamentary secretary will have some encouraging and reassuring words this evening.

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last March in response to commercial water lot operators' concerns that insufficient consultation had occurred regarding the new rates, the Rideau and Trent-Severn canals were instructed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to undertake further consultations with commercial operators.

Over the summer, canal staff gathered input on the proposal from operators by visiting all known commercial operations. The minister stated at that time that revised rates would be made public only after those consultations.

[*Translation*]

The minister shares the member's concerns. That is why discussion groups were formed for each canal. Their mandate was to determine fair rental rates that will allow canals to reach their revenue objectives.

Staff gathered comments from all known operators over the summer.

[*English*]

The groups proposed and recommended a rental structure that would set new rental rates for primary water lots at twice the old formula plus a base fee of \$150 annually. The rental rate for secondary water lots would remain at the old water lot rate. The formula developed received general support throughout the business community.

The application of municipal property taxes to water lots on federal property became a very important issue, particularly on the Trent-Severn waterway. To assist in resolving a municipal taxation issue, canals staff have sought clarification from the appraisal branch of Ontario for a provincial interpretation of the Assessment Act with regard to commercial water lot licences on the canals.

Now that the consultations with the marine operators have been completed, it is the intent of the government to announce new commercial water lot rental rates effective April 1, 1997 in the very near future.

The Deputy Speaker: A motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 6.55 p.m.)

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