



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 134 • NUMBER 143 • 2nd SESSION • 35th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, March 12, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 12, 1997

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

The Speaker: Every Wednesday before the doors are opened it is our custom to sing the national anthem. Today we will be led by the hon. member for Cambridge.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

DNA DATA BANKING

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak on a very important issue, DNA data banking.

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting with members of the Canadian Police Association who expressed the importance of a national DNA data bank. The purpose of a DNA data bank is fundamental to investigations and prosecutions of the most serious crimes in Canada. A DNA data bank would act as a national information system for law enforcement.

I fully support the concept of DNA data banking and ask that my colleagues also defend its significance to society. I feel that bringing this legislation to the forefront is long overdue. Perhaps we should consider the motto that the Canadian Police Association so adamantly believes in: Register criminals before firearms. After all, it is our responsibility to ensure public safety.

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ALBERTA ELECTION

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the people of Alberta spoke and here is what they told us.

Their first and loudest message was that Albertans respect politicians who say what they mean and mean what they say. Albertans recognize that Ralph Klein kept his election promise to eliminate Alberta's deficit, and they rewarded him with 63 seats out of 83.

The people of Alberta told us that they expect politicians to be responsive and listen to their voters. Albertans appreciate that the Klein government listened to the people on such issues as health needs and budget surpluses.

Finally, the people of Alberta told us they will never again let the banks and the bond traders control the province's destiny. By an overwhelming majority, they rejected deficit spending in favour of fiscal stability and accountability.

I salute Ralph Klein and the people of Alberta for their courageous efforts of the past four years. Our reward? The lowest tax rates and the highest job creation of any province in Canada.

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[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader, who dared solicit the support of the Quebec Liberal delegates assembled at last weekend's convention by slipping provocative literature under their doors, was roundly condemned by both the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Immigration.

According to the Minister of Labour, the Conservative leader has gone too far. As for the Minister of Immigration, she said it was totally inappropriate.

Liberals are really not very thick-skinned. How would they have described the stealthy crusade of the own leader, a backstage skulker, during the night of the long knives in an Ottawa hotel in 1982?

These one-way democratic ministers hid their hats in their pockets at the time of their leader's incredibly despicable act during that night dedicated to quashing Quebec's legitimate demands.

Mr. Speaker, "Je me souviens" and I am not about to forget.

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[English]

RAILWAYS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand a letter from Mr. R. J. Fish, director of engineering, railway safety directorate to an official of the CPR in which the government official from the railway safety directorate says that

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he is quite interested in the possibility of the railway's contracting out the entire crossing improvement project.

"We would be very interested in hearing the railway's views on this and will be contacting you shortly to set up a meeting to discuss the above".

Many of the people in my riding and other ridings across the country who work for the signals department of the CPR and the CNR are very concerned that the government is encouraging the railways to contract out this kind of work.

It is bad enough that the companies they work for should be considering contracting out their work, but when the Liberal government is actively encouraging major private corporations to contract out work, to bust unions, to look for cheaper wages for people doing the same job, it ought to be absolutely ashamed of itself.

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HUNGARY

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.):

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Hungarian.]

[English]

First, Hungary will be celebrating its national day on March 15, marking the Hungarian revolution of 1848-1849. Being the longest and most heroic fight against feudalism in the 1848 "Spring of Peoples" movement in Europe, the Hungarian revolution became the symbol of the fight for freedom and human rights all over the world. Second, Hungary is becoming more important to Canadians because it is expected to be invited to join NATO in July of this year. We, the members of the House of Commons, will be asked to express our opinion on the enlargement of NATO membership for Hungary and its political and security alliances with Canada.

• (1405)

On these two occasions, let us keep in mind the small and newly democratic country in the heart of Europe whose people and government will soon be important contributors to European and world security.

Kusunom.

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ST. CATHARINES JAYCEES

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the St. Catharines Jaycees celebrated their 60th anniversary as a Jaycee Junior Chamber organization. The St. Catharines Jaycees serve the community by developing tomorrow's leaders through training programs and community involvement. Projects

include raising funds for the Niagara district airport, the Garden City Arena and two local swimming pools.

The Jaycees have also sponsored the soap box derby, the Easter egg hunt, the mayor's invitational grape stomp, Jaycee Garden Park and the development and dedication of the Kristen French Memorial in Jaycee Gardens. Three presidents of Canada's national Jaycees have come from St. Catharines and I had the honour and pleasure of serving Junior Chamber International in 1976.

I salute all present and former members of the St. Catharines Jaycees and extend every good wish for success in the years ahead. Congratulations and happy 60th anniversary.

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[Translation]

COMMONWEALTH DAY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Monday was Commonwealth Day.

[English]

This year's theme "Talking to One Another" is closely linked to modern day technology as we celebrate the countless ways we now have to communicate.

[Translation]

This high technology enables Commonwealth citizens to exchange ideas in various ways, including distance education and exchange programs.

[English]

Of course, having more ways of communicating does not automatically bring improvements. Talking to one another is not a one way process. We can explain our own points of view but we must also listen to the views of others, something that all parliamentarians should do, including myself.

[Translation]

Whatever the method of communication we choose, we must keep speaking and listening to one another so that Canada and the Commonwealth, and the whole planet of course can prosper.

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QUEBEC TEACHERS' COLLEGES

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's first teachers' colleges were inaugurated on March 12, 1857, when the Jacques-Cartier and McGill teachers' colleges opened their doors.

These institutions were established following a Quebec act designed to improve the quality of education. They had the mandate of preparing young people to work with children and teenagers.

Several generations of Quebecers, including myself, benefited from a training and apprenticeship experience that they would later pass on to those who followed in their footsteps.

Sister Simone Colpron, who is now almost 90, was a great educator who had a strong influence on me. Through her, I want to pay tribute to the men and women who paved the way to excellence, and who continue, to this day, to make Quebecers better educated and more qualified.

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[English]

RIGHTS OF VICTIMS

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this week Canadians have witnessed one of the sorriest episodes in the judicial history of Canada. Clifford Olson taunts the victims of crime, mocks the justice system, but the responsible minister dismisses any protest as just playing politics.

Shame on the minister for trying to dismiss attempts to give victims and their families a platform. The pain and suffering of innocent victims deserves a voice. It is about time the rights of victims take precedence over the rights of criminals. It is about time this country had a victims' bill of rights. This would give victims the right to much more information, the right to notification of significant events in the judicial process, the right to compensation from the offender and the right not to be harassed or intimidated by the perpetrator of a crime.

Why does the Liberal government continue to ignore the rights of victims of crime?

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HEALTH CARE

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 27, 1997, the legislature of the province of Ontario passed a resolution introduced by Sandra Pupatello, the provincial member for Windsor Sandwich. The resolution calls on the provincial government to "stop cutting base funding of hospitals and to allow communities to determine how to restructure their hospital services and find efficiency savings based on their needs".

Our local communities and hardworking doctors and nurses know the best way to reduce health care costs. Their expertise and priorities should be recognized. The federal government's priorities were clearly stated in the 1997 budget announcement that it would be reinvesting \$300 million in health care over the next three years by investing in a health transition fund, a Canada health information system and increasing support for children's health under two programs, the community action program for children and the Canada prenatal nutrition program.

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• (1410)

In recent weeks, the premier of Ontario and others have claimed the federal government cut transfers to Ontario by 40 per cent. This is not the case. The reductions in transfers was \$1.2 billion or 11.4 per cent. Next year Ontario will receive a total of \$9.1 billion in transfers.

The federal government has made health care a priority and it is time the Government of Ontario did also.

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NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is as a federalist member of Parliament from Quebec that I rise in the House today to denounce the strategy of the Conservative Party and its leader, the member of Parliament for Sherbrooke.

For some weeks now the leader of the Conservative Party has been travelling through the anglophone provinces promising that a Conservative government would resolve the issue of national unity and put an end to the separatist threat in Quebec.

In Quebec however, and again last Monday in his own riding of Sherbrooke, the Conservative leader has relentlessly attacked Quebec federalists and said almost nothing against the Bloc Quebecois and their separatist allies.

Canadians have not been fooled by this double talk in the past. The Conservative leader had better realize it soon, if he does not want to lose the two seats he has in the next election. He had better start talking the talk.

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[Translation]

FRENCH POSTAL SERVICE

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we sometimes see strange coincidences. At a time when the federal government is asking the Supreme Court to rule on Quebec's democratic right to achieve sovereignty, without the prior consent of Prince Edward Island, France is about to print a stamp commemorating General de Gaulle's visit to Montreal, in 1967, and particularly his famous "Vive le Québec libre".

The Prime Minister, who is a long-time stamp collector, hurriedly made a few suggestions to the French postal service, asking them, above all, not to show the general, the Quebec flags, or the city hall balcony. In other words, according to the Prime Minister, the best stamp to commemorate this page in history would be "no stamp at all".

Could it be that this knee-jerk reaction is dictated by a noble intention to protect young Quebecers' health?

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After regulating tobacco company sponsorship in such a fanatical way, the Prime Minister may have decided to go after this other major threat to our young people's health: French stamps.

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[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Derek Wells (South Shore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, concerns have been expressed over the last number of months regarding the harmonized sales tax about to go in place in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. It has been a major topic at my town hall meetings and my visits to businesses where consumers and businesses have expressed concerns.

Because of concerns expressed by both small business and consumers, tax included pricing is being delayed until provinces representing 51 per cent of the Canadian people agree to blend their sales taxes with the federal goods and services tax. This is a victory for us in Atlantic Canada.

There are major benefits to a harmonized sales tax with the elimination of \$700 million in hidden provincial sales taxes in the Atlantic, \$280 million of this in Nova Scotia alone, one sales tax regime, a reduction in tax from almost 19 per cent to 15 per cent on most items, and in Nova Scotia a lowering of the personal income tax rate by 3.4 points.

With the changes recently announced I am confident that we can now move forward on April 1 with the new harmonized sales tax which will benefit Atlantic Canada—

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[Translation]

BIOTECHNOLOGY CENTRES

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec now ranks tenth among biotechnology centres in North America.

In less than three years, Quebec went from 13th to 10th place among the most important centres in North America. The number of biotechnology companies has more than tripled, and revenues have increased tenfold, from \$25 million to \$280 million.

The federal government actively supports this industry in Quebec. In recent years, we have invested more than \$20 million in helping to create and maintain hundreds of specialized jobs.

Canadians have developed the skills and expertise that allow them to compete with the world's great economic powers, and our government is delighted to be a part of this development.

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in the event of an election this may be my last statement in this House. Therefore I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the House and all of the parliamentary staff.

I recognize the feelings of personal friendship that extend across political lines, et qui surmonte les lignes de langues.

• (1415)

It is in committee that we recognize the difference in methods but the common goal of most MPs is doing what is best for our country. As for members of my caucus they are terrific.

I thank my office staff Don, Inge, Lise and Mike, and volunteers like Gary and Marion. Hats off to the constituency association with Jim, Roy, Alex, Art the two Bettys, Bob, Don, James, John, Ken, Lavinia, Lois, Marion, Nora, Pat and Reed.

I am honoured to have served the taxpayers of Nanaimo—Cowichan and I thank the people across Canada who supported me in difficult times. My gratitude to every member of my family and old friends like Al, Charlie, Ken, Les, Sid and Wes who never wavered.

And, finally to my friend and wife Paula, I love you. Come along and grow old with me.

The Speaker: It is not often that I make a statement in the House but an incident occurred yesterday which I know touched many members because you have been contacting me. It touched me greatly also.

The background is this. A young Micmac girl who was here with the Forum for Young Canadians wanted to bring an eagle feather into the House of Commons yesterday and through a misunderstanding—actually a mistake—she was told she could not bring in the feather. Many of you are aware that my grandmother was an Ojibway Indian and my Dad being Metis. I know I have aboriginal blood in me.

To the young girl, Melissa Labrador, I extend the apologies of this House. Of course it is permissible for an aboriginal to bring an eagle feather into this House. It was a mistake. It will not happen again.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***THE DEFICIT**

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must say it is not easy to take aim at the government in this situation. In fact, they pulled a fast one on me.

Nevertheless, I will have to attack the Minister of Finance again today. Three weeks ago, the Minister of Finance made a budget speech in which his estimate of a \$19 billion deficit seemed rather high, considering the real figures he had at the time, figures which we now have and which will probably put the deficit at around \$10 or \$12 billion at the most. In fact, he was quite content to give us a forecast that was twice as high, a forecast that was off by 40 or 50 per cent.

My question is for the Prime Minister. In the private sector, and we often refer to the private sector, what would they do with an accountant who, three weeks before the end of the financial year, was out 50 per cent in his forecast? He would be fired. I want to ask the Prime Minister what he intends to do with his Minister of Finance who is incapable of forecasting a deficit more or less accurately?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before going any further, I may say that when shareholders have their meeting and the board announces a bigger profit than had been expected, generally the board is given a bonus.

• (1420)

We hope and in fact we believe, since we are ahead of the game with our forecast, that voters will give us a bonus.

Since this is the hon. member's last chance to ask me questions as Leader of the Opposition, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks. His departure will be no great loss for us but it will be a great loss for his party. Not for us. Because, although he can be aggressive, I must say I never felt I was being attacked personally. We can disagree on ideas, but he is not one to make personal attacks.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): We are almost neighbours, because when he goes home, he takes the road to La Tuque via Shawinigan.

I think he will be missed by his party and by the House as Leader of the Opposition. Fortunately, we stand to gain. I want to thank him for the work he has done and I wish him the best of luck.

Now he can come back again with a supplementary, and I can repeat that we are very proud of doing better than we expected, and I will certainly not scold the Minister of Finance for this.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister was always as friendly as he is today, question period would not be the same. Too bad this does not happen more often.

There is something dangerous in what the Prime Minister said, but seriously, I would like to get back to the substance of the question. The Minister of Finance made a mistake in his forecast, in other words, badly misinterpreted the indicators available to him at the Department of Finance, and the fact that the actual figures are far better, is of course wonderful, and of course everybody is pleased, but we must be careful. This same inability to interpret data could have produced the opposite result, unless the Minister of Finance knew what he was talking about and did so on purpose.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Please be patient with me, Mr. Speaker, this is my last question. Please bear with me.

Is this not a government strategy to put artificial pressure on provincial governments which were forced to go along with more than \$4 billion in cutbacks over the past two years?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the excellent results we now see followed decisions that were made very early on when we formed the government.

At the time we did not know exactly what the outcome would be so we developed a plan. The plan is working better than we thought, and everyone should be very pleased about this.

We should also consider the fact that when we formed the government, the Minister of Finance and I realized that the previous government's budget forecasts were always more optimistic by as much as 8, 9, 10 or 11 billion dollars than was actually the case.

The Minister of Finance decided to be more rigorous and is to be commended on the results we obtained. And the provinces, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, are much better off, because they pay far less interest on servicing their provincial debt thanks to this government's good management.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the Minister of Finance had these figures when he drafted his latest budget. What bothers us on this side of the House is the minister's interpretation of those figures.

Since the Prime Minister today refers to good management that has helped free up billions of dollars, is he not a little embarrassed when he sees the unemployed workers in the maritimes and Quebec who protested vehemently against the cuts in unemployment insurance? Does he not think it is somewhat immoral that a

Oral Questions

government that collects \$12 billion more than expected cut about \$1 billion annually in benefits for the unemployed, the poorest in our society? Is that not immoral?

• (1425)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, as the Leader of the Opposition knows perfectly well, when we made structural changes in programs like the employment insurance program, the main objective was not to reduce the deficit but to provide some impetus for job creation. The changes were necessary to update these programs.

Second, I will give you an example of what the Prime Minister just said. The previous government forecast a deficit of \$32 billion for 1993, and when we came to power, we found it was \$42 billion. As for the \$6 billion change last month, changes are always made at the end of the financial year. We have worked very hard to rebuild the government's credibility and that is why we did this.

Something else now. In his first question to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition hinted to the Prime Minister that he should give me a raise, and if he wants to make a habit of this, I wish he would stay.

* * *

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he certainly does not deserve a bonus for coming up with \$12 billion extra on the backs of the unemployed and the least fortunate members of our society. The unemployed are not getting any bonuses.

Let us talk about Canadian solidarity and equity, because that seems to be the new slogan of the Liberal propaganda machine on the eve of the election campaign, a slogan paid for with taxpayers' money and appearing in ads in several dailies this morning.

This is what my question to the Prime Minister is about. Is the Prime Minister going to put his own propaganda slogan "Canadian solidarity and equity" into practice by handing over the \$2 billion he owes the Quebec government for harmonizing the GST?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, as the member is well aware, when I set the forecasts for this year, there were three months to go, the last quarter. At that time, I said that this year's budget would not exceed \$19 billion. There is a possibility that it will be less than \$19 billion, as I pointed out. Where does the figure of \$12 billion come from? I do not know. I think it was plucked out of thin air.

As far as Quebec's claim is concerned, the member knows very well that Quebec has not lost any money. Under the formula, provinces that lost more than 5 per cent of their revenues were

entitled to compensation. Quebec did not lose more than 5 per cent. Quebec is in exactly the same position as Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our forecasts are based on figures from his own department, nowhere else. It is disgusting to hide the true size of the deficit in order to conceal one's failure to do anything about unemployment and the rise in poverty. That is the plain truth of it.

As for the GST, the Minister of Finance is the only one giving out this version. The reaction throughout Canada, and from the Premier of British Columbia in particular, whom I quote, is that: "The federal government must treat all provinces equally. If it compensates three Atlantic provinces, it must also compensate Quebec".

The Minister of Finance is in an apparently indefensible political position. What is he waiting for to admit his error and pay Quebec \$2 billion so as to compensate it fairly and equitably as it is requesting?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a little trouble understanding how the member can tell me I am hiding figures, when he says his own figures come from my department.

That having been said, I do not know where he has come up with the amount of \$12 billion. He may have done some calculations, but unfortunately, as with other calculations, they were erroneous.

When we look at how Confederation is functioning, when we look, for example, at technological partnership, Quebec has received over 60 to 70 percent of the spinoffs to date. Quebec is now receiving 31 per cent of transfer payments, with only 24 per cent of the population, so we can see that Quebec is certainly receiving its fair share, if not more. It would be very detrimental to Quebec if the member were to continue in this vein. It is very clear that Quebec has made money by harmonizing, while the other provinces have lost more than 5 per cent.

* * *

• (1430)

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last month while the government was trotting out its budget, 38,000 full time jobs disappeared, 44,000 women lost either part time or full time employment, and our young people were dropping out of the workforce at a record not seen since the 1960s.

The so-called federal jobs strategy is an unmitigated disaster with 1.5 million people unemployed, 2 to 3 million underem-

ployed, 800,000 people working at two jobs to make ends meet, and 1 out of 4 workers afraid of losing their jobs.

Why does the Prime Minister not simply admit that the federal jobs strategy has been a disaster and start taking a new tack based on tax relief?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have had occasions to talk a lot about the economic policies of the government. We have been accused by the Bloc Québécois of being too successful in our fight against the deficit.

As a result of our policies, a situation has been created where at this moment we have the lowest interest rates in 35 years in Canada.

Anyone who reads the newspaper will realize that sales of durable goods are increasing very fast and housing sales are improving very fast. It is moving so fast that, I read in the *Toronto Star* yesterday, some people in Toronto are selling their homes for more money than the asking price.

This is a sign that the market is developing and the policy of low interest reduction of deficit is the best way to create jobs. This is why we have managed over the last three and a half years to create more jobs than Italy, Germany, France and Great Britain together.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister lists off the jobs that have been created in Canada by the private sector, he only tells half the story. He never tells about the jobs that have been killed by high government taxes.

The government has never said how many jobs it has killed through the \$2 billion increase in GST. How many jobs have been killed by the \$15 billion increase in personal income taxes? How many jobs will be killed by the \$10 billion increase in payroll taxes proposed by the government?

The 1.5 million unemployed Canadians would like to hear the other side of the story. If the Prime Minister wants to tell the whole story, will he tell the House how many jobs have been killed in Canada by his high tax policies?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have not increased any taxes since we formed the government. However, because growth has come back into the economy we have received more revenue.

It is very fascinating that the leader of the third party does not distinguish between tax levels and revenues. If we gained more revenue it is because people are working more. There is more economic activity which is bringing in revenues to the government. This is why the deficit is lower than predicted.

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This is also why short term interest rates in Canada are 2.5 per cent below short term interest rates in the United States. This is why interest rates in Canada have dropped by more 4 per cent in the last two years.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I lay before the House two irrefutable facts. First, the Liberal government is taxing Canadians more heavily than any federal government in history.

Second, we have the worst string of unemployment numbers since the depression, 77 consecutive months with the unemployment rate over 9 per cent.

• (1435)

There is a connection between these two facts. We are demanding, in the name of 1.5 million unemployed Canadians, that the government acknowledges the connection.

Will the Prime Minister finally acknowledge that taxes, taxes, taxes kill jobs, jobs, jobs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the leader of the Reform Party ought to know that when the Prime Minister refers to job creation he is referring to net job creation. Those are additional jobs in the economy.

Second, we should also be very clear that the debate is not over whether there should be tax cuts. The debate is what kind of tax cuts should we bring in. In the last budget we brought in over a three-year period more than \$2 billion in tax cuts for the physically disabled, students and low income Canadians.

If we want to understand the kind of tax cuts the Reform Party is talking about, under its program a single parent earning \$30,000 with two children will get a tax cut of \$175. Under the same program a one-earner couple earning \$250,000 with two children will get a tax cut of \$6,700.

This is not about giving Canadians a tax cut. It is about rewarding Reform's rich friends.

* * *

[Translation]

ORGANIZED CRIME

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, motorcycle gangs are running rampant in Quebec. We all know that our society is based on democratic values set out in the provincial and federal charters of rights, but these charters were not created to protect the likes of the Rock Machine and the Hell's Angels.

Can the Prime Minister make a personal commitment, on behalf of his government, to table a bill in this House as soon as possible, that will ban the Rock Machine and the Hell's Angels in Canada, as acknowledged groups of criminals and law-breakers?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the administration of justice within a province falls under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. I would like to tell the hon. member that the Quebec Minister of Public Security, Robert Perrault, has said that a bill such as the hon. member is calling for is not a magical solution.

In November 1995, former Quebec Minister of Public Security Serge Ménard made the following comment: "I remain convinced that what we lack to fight organized crime is not legislation but sustained law enforcement, and we have just taken a giant step in that direction". On September 26, the same minister said the following: "Quebec police authorities have all the means available to them to control the explosion of violence between rival motorcycle gangs. They do not need an anti-gang law to do so".

When the Quebec police authorities say they have all the legislation they need, and when this is something that falls under their jurisdiction, it surprises me that the person who may be leader of the Bloc Québécois next week is already starting to meddle in provincial affairs, whereas I respect the autonomy of Minister Perreault and his predecessor, Mr. Ménard.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I imagine the Prime Minister is aware that the Criminal Code is a federal matter. I would imagine that, after 33 years, he must at least know that. I imagine he does. And I did not make any reference to an anti-gang law.

The Prime Minister tells us that the police forces have everything they need when, in fact, those who have everything they need to sit back and laugh in our faces are groups such as the Rock Machine and the Hell's Angels.

• (1440)

I again ask the Prime Minister: Because the Criminal Code is under federal jurisdiction, is he going to use the notwithstanding clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to outlaw the Rock Machine and the Hell's Angels? The choice is clear. Is the Prime Minister going to protect the public, or the Rock Machine and Hell's Angels?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my response to the hon. member is that I myself have been Minister of Justice, and I am very proud to have been the one responsible for giving all Canadians a charter of rights and freedoms.

I take great pride in saying that, before making any changes to the Criminal Code, any good federal minister of justice consults and listens to those with the responsibility, such as the provincial attorneys-general and ministers responsible for police forces.

Even though the Quebec authorities are saying that they do not need an anti-gang law to deal with the problem, that what is required is proper co-ordination between the various levels of government, the various jurisdictions, the would-be leader of the Bloc Québécois is now asking me, a respecter of the Constitution, to become a big bad centralizer.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, taxes, taxes, taxes kill jobs, jobs, jobs, but the government has ignored the blindingly obvious and forever has trotted out all kinds of job creation schemes like the infrastructure program, job training programs, money for its wealthy friends at Bombardier, and none of it has worked. We have had 77 months in a row of unemployment at a rate of over 9 per cent, the worst job creation record since the Great Depression.

When is the millionaire finance minister going to get it through his head that taxes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask my hon. colleague to please put his question. A couple of adjectives might be left out, but I leave that to him.

Mr. Solberg: Mr. Speaker, when is the finance minister going to get it through his head that taxes are the number one killer of jobs, and that by refusing to lower taxes he is personally responsible for allowing one and a half million men and women to remain unemployed?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have now been in this House for a little over three years. We have heard Reform members stand up time and time again talking about the problems of the day.

After the first budget we said that we would have a balanced approach, that we would cut spending and deal with jobs. The Reform Party said do not deal with jobs, cut the deficit further. In the second and third budgets we said exactly the same thing.

What we have is a picture of the Reform Party swallowing itself whole. Reformers stand up and try to defend health care after attacking health care for three years. They stand up and attack the government's economic policy when they said they did not care about jobs.

The hon. member has a chance in his preamble. His leader said in Penticton that jobs were not a priority for the Reform Party. He said that if he brought in his program there would be fewer jobs today than there were three years ago. Does he deny it? Will he stand up in the House and deny what his leader said in Penticton? If

Oral Questions

he is not prepared to say that his leader said that, then he should sit down and let the country get on with the job.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is completely false and the finance minister knows it. The Reform Party is the only party that has offered a real alternative to the government's failed job creation policies in this country. Only the finance minister would call 1.5 million people unemployed a balanced approach to job creation. It is absolutely ridiculous.

• (1445)

This week in the Senate committee studying the BST the minister confessed that lower taxes would create jobs in Atlantic Canada. By extension, obviously if we had lower taxes across the country we would have lower unemployment across the country.

Why then is the finance minister continuously trotting out rinky-dink programs like his infrastructure programs and his recycled training programs when he admits that lower taxes are the best way to create jobs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rinky-dink, rinky-dink, the infrastructure program, tell that to every mayor and municipality in this country.

Let us keep going. Rinky-dink, the R and D program for every university and every teaching hospital. Tell that to the teaching hospitals. Tell it to the universities.

Rinky-dink, helping students go back to school, helping workers return to the job market. That is rinky-dink. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is value and we will put our values against Reform values any time.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

On Monday, in response to a question on the adjustments the minister had to make just two months after his bill's implementation, he said, and I quote: "Where unemployment is at 10 per cent, there is less likelihood of finding work that would give people longer weeks. The aim of our system is precisely to encourage people to accept as much work as possible".

If that was really the minister's objective, how can he justify the fact that the regions where unemployment is above 10 per cent for unemployment insurance purposes, like the Montérégie and Hull, and those that will exceed this figure are not included in the adjustments? How does he explain that?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we were committed to monitoring the transition of employment insurance very closely, and that is what we did.

The adjustments we made in the second month after its implementation were made precisely because we are an attentive government and do our work carefully.

We wanted to cover the 29 regions with unemployment above 10 per cent, because we felt the problem was greater there, as work is harder to find. So, where unemployment is at 10 per cent, we will have two solutions. One will enable workers to combine weeks or ignore weeks so that, at the end of 18 months, we can compare one system with another or evaluate the fact that we did not touch the system. We will be able to compare three elements.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister should understand that, from the time the provisions were on the table, we and others said that people would be discouraged from working, because they are penalized for working short weeks.

• (1450)

Will the minister acknowledge that these so called responsive measures were designed not to solve the real problem with his bill, but to calm the rumbling in the maritimes in an election period?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we must avoid the pitfall of political cynicism. From the moment we fix a problem, what we should do in the weeks and months that follow, what it is our duty to do, is continue to listen to the people of Canada, to the Atlantic provinces and to Quebec, which asked us to resolve this problem. We will do so with the sense of responsibility we want to demonstrate to Canadians.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on August 18, 1997 Clifford Olson will have his day in court courtesy of the Liberal governments of the past and present.

Exactly what does the Prime Minister have to say to the survivors of the heinous crimes that Olson has committed?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we empathize deeply with the concerns of the families of the victims of Olson. We feel very badly that they are in this situation which, in my view, was created largely by the Reform Party which has been playing into Olson's hands and feeding his sick desire for publicity.

Oral Questions

Reform Party members should excuse themselves and apologize to the families of the victims and to Canadians generally for helping Olson play out his sick fantasies.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is hog manure. It is this government with its legislation that has given Clifford Olson a platform, this government. That is not the only thing it has given Clifford Olson. He has an electronic typewriter, a colour TV, movie channels, subscriptions to pornographic magazines, free long distance phone calls, access to fax machines, all at taxpayer expense.

Why should Clifford Olson get all these perks when his victims get nothing, not even an apology, from the Liberal government?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could characterize, with a great deal of accuracy, my hon. friend's question by applying to it the same phrase which he used when he got up to ask his supplementary question. Only somebody whose mind works in a very strange way would think that a person like Clifford Olson was living in some kind of luxury.

I again say it is time the Reform Party apologized to the families of Olson's victims and to Canadians generally for helping Olson live out and pursue his sick fantasies. Why don't you get up and apologize? It is about time.

The Speaker: I remind colleagues to address your remarks to the Chair.

* * *

[Translation]

COPYRIGHT

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak to you.

Last December 11, the Canadian heritage committee reached an agreement to protect copyrights. The Liberal members proposed amendments demanded by the Bloc Québécois to seal off the gaping holes in copyright protection that were left in the original version of the legislation. Some people at Industry Canada, however, got all upset about the modifications, despite the fact that they were justified.

My question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. With the government's tabled amendments concerning copyright just hours old, can the minister assure artists that she has managed to convince her colleague at Industry Canada that their rights are more important than the egos of Industry Canada employees, and that they will be protected?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that the Minister of Industry and myself, who were jointly responsible for introducing the bill in question, unanimously agree on the value of copyright, which is why they will be included in the bill.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to confirm that 75 per cent of plays are unpublished and therefore unavailable in book stores. Does the minister not find it indecent to deprive authors of their rights on the pretext that their works are not available in book stores, when 50 per cent of them barely earn \$7,500 a year?

• (1455)

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the interventions of creators who appeared before the committee—I think there were some 90 briefs—and the people across Canada, we tabled amendments this afternoon that will continue to respect copyright provisions as examined by the committee.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiag, Lib.):

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.]

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Secretary of State for Training and Youth. In January 1996 Human Resources Development Canada signed three national framework agreements with aboriginal groups from across the country on the delivery of human resources programs and services provided by and for aboriginal people.

Can the secretary of state give the House an update on the further actions taken by this government to give First Nations people and the Inuit the tools to develop employment programs that meet their needs?

Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Training and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to the signing of the national framework agreements with the Inuit, Metis and the First Nations, out of a possible 41 regional bilateral agreements to date, we have signed 29. Tomorrow we will be signing three more with three Inuit groups, the Baffin Inuit Association, the Kivalliq Inuit Association and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

It goes a long way in showing the sensitivity we have toward empowering aboriginal people. I think that bothers the Reform Party but that is all right, we will continue on with our good work.

Oral Questions

Next year we will have expanded. When we sign all these agreements it will be a total of \$200 million. I know that all members in the House will congratulate us on our good work.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in a split decision today in the Federal Court of Appeal, Justices Linden and Henry decided that the Canadian standard for the issuance of a search of warrant was required to be satisfied before the justice minister submitted the letter of request to the Swiss authorities to search and seize Karlheinz Schriber's bank documents and records.

In laymen's terms, the Department of Justice was on a fishing expedition without a legal base to do so. This has resulted in an expenditure of millions of dollars of taxpayer money defending unjustified actions.

Is the Prime Minister going to waste more taxpayer dollars to appeal this case to the Supreme Court in an attempt to carry on the pretence that he and his government have a legal leg to stand on?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just heard of this judgment. I think that one would want to have it carefully reviewed by the law officers of the crown. The principles involved in my view are rather important and one should not reject categorically the possibility that this case should be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

CUSTOMS DUTIES

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

In December 1995, the Canadian government unilaterally eliminated customs duties on car parts manufactured outside the country, but assembled here. The companies that benefitted from this measure would now like the Liberal government to eliminate customs duties on finished vehicles.

Given that Canada has a substantial automobile industry employing over 500,000 people and generating billions of dollars in the economies of Quebec and Canada, will the minister commit today to not reduce or eliminate customs duties on imported vehicles?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will respond for the three of us. The matter is under consideration. We will make an announcement as soon as we are ready.

[English]

HERITAGE

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the public conflict of interest code states that friends of public office holders should receive no preferential treatment in relation to any official matter.

• (1500)

Joe Thornley is the chair of the Liberal Agency of Canada overseeing millions of dollars in contributions, making him one of the highest ranking Liberals in the country. He is also a friend of the heritage minister and was a senior member of her 1990 Liberal leadership bid. Only when the minister assumed her post as heritage minister did Thornley begin to receive heritage contracts.

Does the minister expect Canadians to believe he got no preferential treatment from her in her department?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member does not believe the statement I made in the House yesterday then I would like to quote a statement made about the contracts: "They were let in a proper manner".

That statement was made by the member for Kootenay East on March 11, 1997 outside the Chamber.

* * *

PARKS CANADA

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the department of heritage is apparently preparing to spend a lot of money to give the Parks Canada mascot a new image. At the same time people who work at the national parks and our historic sites are losing their jobs.

Could the minister justify the spending on this image makeover when the quality of service at our parks and national historic sites is deteriorating?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member is drawing his question from the article I read in the paper, it spoke about a beaver upgrade that was to modernize the symbol of the beaver.

It cost about \$30,000 over a period of about two and a half years. It predated my arrival in the department, but I can say that if the department is looking for a symbol Canadians will recognize from coast to coast to coast, without having to pay a penny, we have that symbol. That symbol is right over there. It is called the Canadian flag.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[Translation]***CANADA LABOUR CODE**

BILL C-66—NOTICE OF MOTION FOR TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Labour and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to third reading of Bill C-66, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (Part I) and the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

Some hon. members: It is a disgrace.

* * *

● (1505)

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]***PUBLIC GALLERY**

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of grave injustice that occurred yesterday in the public gallery of this place.

As you have pointed out, Mr. Speaker, a young Micmac woman, Melissa Labrador, who was visiting us as a participant in the Forum for Young Canadians, was refused entry to the public gallery while carrying a sacred eagle feather.

Traditionally an eagle feather represents courage, strength, wisdom, vision, and is sacred. It is the closest connection to the Creator. The presentation of an eagle feather is the highest honour a person can receive. The eagle flies highest and sees the farthest.

This morning I had the opportunity to offer my personal regret to Melissa Labrador for this unfortunate moment. However the hurt goes deeper. Melissa has asked for a public apology from the

government and I am prepared today, on behalf of the government, to extend an apology to all aboriginal people.

I am pleased that you, as Speaker of the House, as keeper of the conscience of the House, are ensuring that no such incident every occurs again in this place.

The Speaker: On a statement by ministers, if representatives of the two official parties wish to make a statement they have the same amount of time as the minister.

I put a question to the member for Lethbridge. Are you rising on the statement by this minister?

Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: And, you will respond for the Reform Party.

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party of Canada I would certainly like to support the action you have taken as Speaker of this assembly and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for the recognition and the apology extended to the young lady who was deterred from coming into our gallery. We certainly want to support that apology and recognize that quick action was taken.

It is very difficult for the security people under the variety of circumstances they face when different people come to the House of Commons.

I recall a somewhat similar situation in the Alberta legislature. A security person was asked to take very aggressive action and to be careful that no one arrived in the galleries who may do something that could harm someone sitting on the floor of the legislature.

In this case it was the House of Commons. I hope consideration will be given to the actions of the security person as well. I am sure the person applied the law as he thought fit at the moment. Maybe a misjudgement was made. We have rectified that at this time, but some concern should also be expressed from the House to the security personnel that have done an exceptional job under many circumstances for us as members of Parliament.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I join with the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs in recognizing that the government must extend an apology for the incident that occurred yesterday.

The Bloc Québécois and the people of Quebec have always had great respect for aboriginal people, as demonstrated time and time again in our long-standing relations with these people. We regret such an incident occurred. That is why, today, we want to make it clear that the respect the people of Quebec have for aboriginal people is always there.

Routine Proceedings

We feel that the apologies made today by the Minister were justified and in order, and we support his action.

• (1510)

[*English*]

The Speaker: When we have statements by ministers, the rules of the House set out that a member from the official opposition and a member from the Reform Party can intervene if they so desire.

However we have another rule that states whenever the House altogether wants to give unanimous consent to anything it can do so.

The hon. member for Churchill has approached the Chair and has asked me if he could intervene. If the House agrees I will give the floor to the member for Churchill.

Is there agreement for the hon. member for Churchill to address the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was going to rise on a point of order and ask for your guidance on this matter. It is indeed an honour to rise.

I would like to acknowledge, if it is appropriate, your quick decision on this matter as Speaker of the highest authority in the land. As we know, the Creator honours this place.

I would like to present you or arm you with an eagle feather so you can have it with you in this Chamber at all times.

The Speaker: I would consider it a great honour and I will accept it.

[*Editor's Note: Whereupon the hon. member for Churchill presented the Speaker with an eagle's feather.*]

The Speaker: Let it be understood that I accept this in the name of the Parliament of Canada and in the name of all of my colleagues.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources entitled "Think Rural", a study of rural economic development in Canada.

The committee heard evidence from a wide range of witnesses from across Canada and reports its recommendations calling on the government, the private sector and all Canadians to recognize the uniqueness of rural Canada, its separate economic base, its special challenges and its longstanding traditions, and to apply policies in a manner that addresses these differences and provides rural Canadians with access to all the country has to offer.

* * *

FINAL OFFER ARBITRATION IN RESPECT OF WEST COAST PORTS OPERATIONS ACT

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-383, an act to provide for the settlement of labour disputes affecting west coast ports by final offer arbitration.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the timing of the bill is quite relevant since we were talking about the labour code yesterday. The amendments that we as a party put forward to the labour code would have adopted final offer selection arbitration as a tool to be used in west coast work stoppages. It is ultimately important that we discuss the bill.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION ACT

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.) moved for leave to table Bill C-384, an act to amend the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table an act respecting the membership of the CRTC.

[*English*]

It is quite clear to me that the timing of the bill could not be any better given the decision today by the CRTC to go after consumers as it relates to various rates.

I am presenting a bill that will amend the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission Act to provide for representation of Canadian consumers on the executive board of the commission, to require reports of commission decisions to detail the way each commission member voted in respect to those decisions, and to ensure that the commission generally has regard to the cost effectiveness and the rights of Canada consumers, particularly as they relate to the cable production fund and the cable revolt of two years ago.

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

Routine Proceedings

● (1515)

PETITIONS

BILL C-205

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first contains approximately 325 signatures.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to enact Bill C-205, introduced by myself, at the earliest opportunity, to provide in Canadian law that no criminal profits from committing a crime by telling the story of their crime.

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has approximately 75 signatures from the Mississauga area primarily.

It calls on Parliament to amend the Divorce Act to include a provision which is similar to article 611 of the Quebec civil code to prevent a father or mother without legal cause to place obstacles between a child and its grandparents. It asks for greater accountability and rights for grandparents to allow access to their grandchildren.

[Translation]

SENATE ABOLITION

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition circulated by Albert Vachon, of Garthby, asking for the abolition of the Upper House, that is to say the Senate.

This would represent yearly savings of \$60 million, or \$5 million per month, for the federal government. Needless to say, the member for Frontenac supports this petition.

CREDIT CARDS

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table today a second petition like the one I tabled a few weeks ago on behalf of residents of my riding who are asking Parliament to pass legislation to set a ceiling on interest rates charged on credit cards issued to consumers by banks and major retailers, based on the Bank of Canada rate.

[English]

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table on behalf of my constituents a petition which asks that the Government of Canada co-operate with the provinces to make our highway systems better.

The operative clause reads: Therefore your petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provin-

cial governments to make the national highway system upgrading possible beginning in 1997.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing order 36, it is my pleasure to present two petitions. The first petition has about 250 names.

The petitioners believe there are profound inadequacies in the sentencing practices concerning individuals convicted of impaired driving charges. They request that Parliament proceed immediately with amendments to the Criminal Code that will ensure the sentence given to anyone convicted of driving while impaired or of causing injury or death while impaired reflects both the severity of the crime and zero tolerance toward this crime.

JUSTICE

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my second petition has 550 signatures and is from people not only in my constituency but is from a broader base.

The petitioners believe the current justice system continues to be lenient on criminals, allowing them to re-enter society without receiving sufficient punishment and without facing proper responsibility and accountability for their actions. The current methods of punishment are not acting as proper deterrents and are not producing the desired effects of lower crime rates and safer communities.

Therefore, they call on Parliament to amend the appropriate laws to include corporal punishment as an alternate method of punishment for those adults who are repeat offenders and who choose not to be governed by more conventional methods.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by 54 of my constituents, which I endorse.

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

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first calls on Parliament to not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline.

● (1520)

PAY EQUITY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, asks that the equal pay for work of equal value legislation take effect immediately and that workers be reimbursed at the rate recommended.

THE FAMILY

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition signed by constituents of Lambton—Middlesex pursuant to Standing Order 36, and duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petitioners request that Parliament amend section 7 of Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to recognize the fundamental right of individuals to pursue family life free from undue interference by the state, recognize the fundamental right and responsibility of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, and urge the legislative assembly of the province to do likewise.

[Translation]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver-Est, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of submitting a petition signed by over 100 residents of the greater Vancouver.

[English]

The petitioners ask Parliament to zero rate books, magazines and newspapers under the GST because education and literacy are critical to the development of our country.

TAXATION

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased on behalf of my constituents to table some petitions. The first petition calls on the government to lower the tax on gasoline, another calls on the government to eliminate the tax on reading materials.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from my constituents calling on the government to join with the provinces to work on establishing a national highways policy.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. We are doing a very good job of getting some air time today.

The petition deals with the subject of impaired driving. The petitioners from the Durham region call on the government to ensure that future penalties reflect the severity of the crime of impaired driving.

Routine Proceedings

POINTS OF ORDER

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the House for its unanimous consent to withdraw my private member's bill, Bill C-301, entitled an act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

In view of the passing by the government of Bill C-63 which improves the mechanisms for the administration of elections and to the extent that Bill C-63 encompasses many of my suggestions, such as the establishment of a permanent voter's list, and the fact that it has taken over a year to draw my bill, I ask that you, Mr. Speaker, support my request.

May I please have the consent of the House to withdraw my Bill C-301.

The Deputy Speaker: Does our hon. colleague have the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw his bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill withdrawn.)

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers also be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 5 minutes today.

[English]

Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ended March 26, 1997, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Supply

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—QUEBEC REGIONS

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ) moved:

That this House condemn the federal government which, because of its policies, is in large measure responsible for increasing poverty in the regions of Quebec, especially the loss of 10,000 jobs at Canada Post; the offloading of regional airports and ports without adequate financial compensation; the tightening of employment insurance eligibility criteria that has adversely affected seasonal workers, among others; the setting of fees for coast guard services; the significant reductions in fishing quotas in Quebec; the refusal to extend the framework agreement on regional economic development with the Quebec government; and, finally, increasing unilateral intervention in regional development matters without consideration of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Laurentides, who is the seconder of the motion.

With your permission, I will also read this opposition motion, for which we deserve to be congratulated. It is time that we, on this side of the House, take stock and condemn the government which is blissfully moving toward an election, as if things were going well, when in fact Quebec and Canada are in a deep slump.

The motion reads as follows:

That this House condemn the federal government which, because of its policies, is in large measure responsible for increasing poverty in the regions of Quebec, especially the loss of 10,000 jobs at Canada Post; the offloading of regional airports and ports without adequate financial compensation; the tightening of employment insurance eligibility criteria that has adversely affected seasonal workers, among others; the setting of fees for coast guard services; the significant reductions in fishing quotas in Quebec; the refusal to extend the framework agreement on regional economic development with the Quebec government; and, finally, increasing unilateral intervention in regional development matters without consideration of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

I will deal with certain issues mentioned in the motion, and leave it to my colleagues to discuss other ones. I should point out from the outset that, as regards regional development, a frame of reference called the Economic and Regional Development Agreement, the ERDA, has been in place since 1974, between the Quebec and federal governments, as the secretary of state probably knows.

The Liberal government opposite is increasingly circumventing this agreement, which has been in existence for over 20 years and which led to the harmonization of relations between the two levels of government with respect to regional development, which is

recognized as a primarily provincial, Quebec in this case, area of jurisdiction.

One needs to know that, in 1993, when the members across the way came to power, 62 per cent of funding for regional development came by way of the ERDA, while today, in 1996, we are receiving only 33 per cent in this manner. In other words, two thirds of these public funds are being used as the federal government sees fit, sometimes arbitrarily, supposedly in an attempt to promote regional development.

Why? So that the federal government can be more visible, score political points. So that the Secretary of State for the Federal Office of Regional Development for Quebec can visit the 53 CFDCs and score political points on behalf of his government, cut ribbons, smile nicely, hold press conferences and pretend that there is harmony between the Government of Quebec and the federal government and that there is a genuine intervention and consensus strategy, when in fact there is not.

What there really is, in the case of CFDCs, is competition with regional economic development corporations, which have been there for a long time and which were created by the Government of Quebec and come under its jurisdiction, coming under the department of industry and commerce for example.

In addition to this hit and miss approach, there is also the fact that it is being done through the federal office of regional development. They do this by circumventing and duplicating what is being done or what was already being done in Quebec. Recently they changed the mandate of FORD-Q. It was supposed to analyze submissions from small businesses seeking grants, and evaluate their projects. Funding was cut, so the mandate was changed. Instead of getting rid of this agency, they changed its mandate and turned its employees into advisers to small business, a role that was already being played by the Department of Industry and Trade.

• (1530)

They set up the Idée-PME program which is directly targeted to small businesses in Quebec and is in a way competing, at taxpayers' expense, with other public sector resources for small businesses, which tends to make the whole process of seeking financial assistance from the government unnecessarily complex.

Things are also changing at the Federal Business Development Bank. The name has been changed. It is now called, rather pretentiously, in my opinion, the Business Development Bank of Canada. The legislation authorizes the federal government to approach local and regional stakeholders under the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec. Arbitrarily, without prior consultation, the government decides to intervene in a jurisdiction that belongs to the Government of Quebec.

We can hardly call this co-operation. We can hardly call this strategy. Certainly not when we are talking about the so-called

co-operation between the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada, with taxpayers' money, not hand-outs as the Secretary of State for Regional Development sometimes seems to imply, as though it was federal money, not money paid by Quebecers through their taxes. We should not forget this.

On a macro-economic level, I think we should compare FORD-Q with its Canadian equivalents. There are two. In Eastern Canada we have ACOA, for the development of the maritime provinces and in Western Canada, the Western Economic Diversification Agency.

Suppose we stick to ACOA. Compared with what Quebec receives through FORD-Q, if we consider the number of unemployed workers concerned in Quebec and compare this with the number of unemployed workers in the maritimes, the latter receive four times as much for an equivalent number of unemployed, if we look at it on that basis. If we look at it on a per capita basis, it is five times as much. So this is the profitable federalism the secretary of state was talking about last week when I asked him a question about regional development.

Remember also that not only do the maritimes receive far more proportionally, but altogether, in terms of regional development, the maritimes receive five times as much money from Ottawa as Quebec does.

Furthermore, we have this very controversial decision, and Quebecers are becoming increasingly upset about this, the decision by the Government of Canada to give the maritimes \$1 billion in compensation for harmonizing the GST. Of this \$1 billion, part of which goes to New Brunswick, \$250 million comes from Quebec, and part of that will go to New Brunswick. Thanks to this money, the engaging Premier of New Brunswick will be able to use Quebec's tax money to recruit Quebec industrialists and bring them to New Brunswick, thus competing with the Government of Quebec and the Quebec economy. This is appalling. In fact, there is evidence that this was going on during the recent trip to China by Team Canada.

It also needs to be known that, where the GST is concerned, not only did the maritimes get \$1 billion but, as was pointed out during question period, using a cooked-up formula the Minister of Finance finds ever so pleasing, the Government of Canada is refusing to provide Quebec with the same amount, proportionally, which would be in the order of \$2 billion, compared to their \$1 billion. This offers a clear illustration of the cost-effective federalism the Secretary of State referred to last week.

• (1535)

Where a number of activities are concerned, the concept of regional development can be broad and vague on occasion. One of those activities is the coast guard, which was also referred to in the

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motion. The coast guard was inherited by Fisheries and Oceans from Transport Canada, with a mandate to manage the ports of Canada, including those along the St. Lawrence, and it was decided to charge users of the St. Lawrence.

This three-tier fee system involves charges for navigational aids, that is buoys, lighthouses and so forth, as well as charges for dredging the river and the waterways leading to the St. Lawrence ports and for icebreaking. The latter is the most significant, and would be the most painful, if ever the federal government sticks with its decision to set fees which would net the federal government \$160 million over the next three years leading up to the year 2000. All of this totally ignores any possible impact studies available. The actions taken in this area were the product of an amateurish approach by those concerned only about the costs of the coast guard, apparently without any concern for the major negative impacts that might result if this new fee scale is implemented as the government plans.

Seventy-five per cent of the witnesses, who knew what they were talking about, who knew how to do a case-by-case impact study, begged the federal government to reconsider, because of the threat this represented to the competitiveness of the St. Lawrence ports compared to their competitors on the U.S. east coast, the Canadian east coast, and even the Mississippi.

Since you are indicating to me that my time is up, I will conclude by saying that the way the federal government is going about this illustrates the ever more pressing necessity for Quebec to attain sovereignty so it can finally be in charge, and for the federal government to stop being involved, not in regional development, but in regional anti-development.

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will have the opportunity in a while to talk at length on the Canadian government's intervention strategy with respect to regional development and specifically in the Province of Quebec, my area of responsibility.

I would like to say right off that the government's strategy applies to the country as a whole and is aimed at bringing the government and the people closer together to enable the government to be sensitive to the needs of the people and to give the public the full benefit of its services.

I listened to the previous speaker, my colleague from Trois-Rivières, talking about the rural development agreement. In the light of what he was saying, I have a hard time understanding the fact that my colleague does not seem to realize that the regional development agreement has expired. My colleague seems not to understand either that the renewal of the regional development agreement was in doubt and that discussions were held between the Province of Quebec and the Government of Canada.

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I would ask him if he is aware of these discussions.

In closing, my colleague said that I spent my time giving press conferences and cutting ribbons. I have the impression that the ribbons I cut must be 24 carat gold because the official opposition is focusing on them on a day set aside for regional development. However, I can understand that it might hurt them too, because our government is particularly effective in the area of regional development.

• (1540)

In my colleague's riding of Trois-Rivières, for example, we have invested over \$7 million since 1993. If he asks the people there if they think we should leave, he will see what they have to say.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, with respect to these agreements, I will answer that we know, and the secretary of state is well aware, that this kind of agreement has been around since 1974. We are also very well aware that the last one was not renewed.

We know that it was not renewed because the federal government wants to have an increasingly large say in the management of these agreements. It wants to put pressure on the Government of Quebec, which is a constitutionally legitimate body, to call the shots on regional development. Either the federal government wants to circumvent the Government of Quebec, or it wants to get along with it. Increasing power is needed if regional development is to be carried out on the pan-Canadian scale he mentioned.

We, however, claim that we have our own way of doing things. In this regard, it would perhaps be a good opportunity for the secretary of state to give some meaning to the empty notions of distinct society the Prime Minister is so proud of saying he introduced, or tried to introduce, into the Constitution, when we know it is an empty shell. Perhaps the member for Outremont could make an effort to recognize that the people to which he belongs have a different way of doing things, instead of trying to get us to swallow a Canadian vision and logic, which is causing Quebec to lose out on regional development.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of the minister, and particularly of the member for Trois-Rivières.

Given that Quebec is receiving \$11 billion more than it contributes to the Canadian federation, given the importance of the role of governments in regional development, could the member explain to us where SDI stands? Where does Innovatech stand? Where do Quebec's provincial organizations stand in relation to regional development?

The federal government is investing, but a number of regional development projects are on hold because of the footdragging of the opposition and especially of the Government of Quebec.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, this illustrates perfectly the contempt these people have for the Government of Quebec and for Quebecers.

When we talk about a surplus of \$11 billion, it is because we are pleased to be receiving unemployment insurance, we are pleased to be poor. We are pleased to have no real economic development. We are pleased to have no strategy. We are pleased to be poor.

This is a Quebecer telling us this. It is hard to believe. When we talk about the SDI, the Caisse de dépôt, these are organizations that, with the Quebec Department of Industry and Commerce, are working daily to try to improve the situation as much as they can within a constitutional context that gives the Government of Quebec barely half the powers to try to organize its development year in and year out.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I rise today to speak to the motion of my colleague, the member for Trois-Rivières.

This motion condemns the federal government which, because of its disastrous policies, is in large measure responsible for increasing poverty in the regions of Quebec. My riding of Laurentides covers a large part of the Laurentides region, which is subdivided into the Hautes and the Basses-Laurentides. The Basses-Laurentides, closer to the Montreal area, have more heavy industry, while the Hautes-Laurentides further north, rely more on small business and tourism in particular.

My riding, which begins in the St-Jérôme area and ends over 100 kilometres further north, therefore depends for its livelihood on small business and tourism.

I will start off by looking at the tightening of employment insurance eligibility criteria, which will have a major impact on my riding, given the heavy reliance on tourism. Tourism is seasonal and implies seasonal workers.

The new criteria will mean that fewer workers will receive benefits and that the benefits for those who qualify will be reduced. For a riding like mine, where the unemployment rate is already higher than the average for Quebec, this means even less money for workers, even more workers forced to go on welfare. This shortfall in workers' income therefore means more poverty.

• (1545)

In regional economies with high unemployment and poverty, UI reform will make matters worse. The Liberal government is certainly not going to help the regions survive and develop by driving people into poverty. Let us not forget that the Liberals are

drawing money directly out of the UI fund, which consists of money paid by workers and by employers, over \$5 billion this year, in order to reduce its deficit. It is utterly shocking.

Another area that is of particular interest to regions in Quebec is that of highway transport. Everyone knows that our highway system in Quebec has deteriorated and is now in need of major investments to keep it in good condition.

Let us look at what the federal government is spending in this area, and what it has set aside for Quebec. Between 1952 and 1986, although Quebecers were paying the same federal gasoline taxes as other Canadians, Quebec received a measly 16.5 per cent of federal spending on roads. Between 1986 and 1988, this fell to 13 per cent. In 1991-92, Quebec received only 4.2 per cent of federal transfer payments to the provinces to help build, repair and upgrade roads. Yet federal fuel taxes in Quebec are close to \$1 billion. In return, the Quebec road system receives on average only \$30 million annually. Thirty million out of one billion: a windfall for the federal government but grossly unfair to Quebec.

This shortfall in revenue has a serious impact on regional development, since the highway system is an essential tool for development. People from the Outaouais and Ontario who go skiing at Mont-Tremblant in my riding know that the highway system is not good if they take the road north at Montebello. But they do not know that the federal government is not providing its share of funding for Quebec's highway system.

Another issue that directly concerns the people of Laurentides, one that has been in the headlines for several months, is Mirabel airport, a perfect example of the inefficiency and devastating impact of federal intervention in Quebec territory with respect to air transportation.

In 1969, without any consultation, the federal government unilaterally decided to proceed with the most extensive expropriation exercise ever seen in this country, involving 80,000 acres of farm land, to be used to build Mirabel international airport. Twenty-seven years later, we know that 5,000 acres would have been ample for the airport's needs.

The federal government estimated that 30 million passengers would be going through Mirabel by 1990. Today, Mirabel and Dorval together get only 8.3 million passengers annually. When Mirabel was under construction, the federal government said it wanted to make greater Montreal the port of entry for air traffic in eastern North America. A few years later, it awarded the seven largest European carriers the right to land in Toronto. This federal decision was to be the main reason why Montreal never became the port of entry for European traffic in eastern North America.

Add to this the federal government's refusal to proceed with phase II of the Mirabel master plan under which domestic traffic would gradually be transferred from Dorval to Mirabel. We now see the disastrous effects of having two airports side-by-side, with

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all the communications problems that entails. Twenty years ago, Montreal airport attracted almost as many passengers as Toronto, but in 1995, Montreal dropped to third place, with 8.3 million passengers annually, after Toronto with 20.9 million and Vancouver with 11.1 million.

Out of 53 countries which had access rights to Montreal, only 17 exercised those rights.

Always without public consultation, Aéroports de Montréal, ADM, created by the federal government to manage Mirabel and Dorval, announced in February 1996 that international flights would be transferred from Mirabel to Dorval. This decision is the latest in a series of ill-conceived decisions and mistakes by the federal government, as former Liberal minister André Ouellet was to comment.

During this time, irreparable damage has been done to the volume of air transportation in Montreal, hundreds of millions of taxpayer money has been wasted and more than 10,000 expropriated landowners have suffered.

• (1550)

The federal government's bungling, its lack of vision, and its contradictory decisions in particular, will have accomplished nothing more than to deprive Montreal of its role as air traffic hub, in favour of Toronto.

Other subjects concern the people of the Laurentians, a matter linked directly to the federal government: the federal wish to introduce measures to register, and set fees for, sailboats, rowboats, pedal boats, canoes, kayaks and so on. Ottawa would like to register all pleasure boats, to make their owners purchase licences which would cost from \$5 to \$35 yearly, to require minimum skill and knowledge levels of all persons operating these boats, and to set up a system of fines similar to those for motor vehicles. For the Laurentians, with their numerous lakes, such a measure would be a total catastrophe. This tax in disguise would be unacceptable, and the proposed monitoring measures unenforceable.

An idea like the one proposed by the Liberals is quite simply buffoonery. There are, I believe, more important things to be doing than going around putting licence stickers on pedal boats and making sure that those using them are pedalling forward, backward, or whatever.

Another thing: the federal decision to require Canada Post to withdraw from delivering ad mail, with the loss of 10,000 jobs. That is surely the biggest single job loss in the country. The government claims that the private sector can easily take over, but that is far from reality for regions with low population density. The costs of private distribution are far higher in these regions. Thus, the federal government's decision means the virtual disappearance of ad mail in many regions, and considerable job losses in those same regions.

Business of the House

Finally, for the farmers in my riding, the federal government keep on cutting back the budgets and services affecting them. In the latest budget, the federal government announced the total elimination of dairy subsidies. This will translate into a \$107 million loss for Quebec.

Since you are indicating that I have just one minute left, I will move on to my conclusion immediately.

The various matters I have addressed demonstrate clearly that the Liberals bear a large share of the responsibility for the impoverishment of the various regions of Quebec. Their decisions are unfair to Quebec, and they have the effect of pushing it even closer to the edge. The coming election will show the Liberals what their strategy to isolate and crush Quebec has really done. Quebecers are not blind; they are capable of judging the actions of the little guy from Shawinigan and his gang.

All of this shows Quebecers even more clearly that their future path is the one that leads to sovereignty. Not even Chrétien, Martin, Dion or Pettigrew can deter us from that path, which for us is a natural and a rational one.

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the other side of this House, they are talking about the federal government's bungling of regional development. I can tell you that, if the federal government bungled regional development, we would not be having an opposition day today. However, I will take the few minutes I have to talk to some of the issues raised by my colleague. First is the matter of unemployment insurance.

I was one of the Quebec spokespersons on this reform. I believed, I believe and I will always believe in this reform. This government had the backbone to carry out a reform that everyone wanted, that was indicated by all of the international organizations, starting with the OECD. The employment insurance reform will make the system fairer, will make more seasonal workers eligible for benefits, and will ensure greater stability of contributions.

We will recall that, in 1993, the Conservatives had predicted higher contributions. With our reform, we not only lowered them, but ensured their stability.

• (1555)

In addition, the program now has active measures to enable workers to be trained in order to quickly return to the labour market. This is what we have done.

Inappropriate remarks are also being made about the employment insurance surplus. Yes, there is a surplus at the moment. However, people always neglect to mention that, during the recession at the end of the 1980s and at the start of the 1990s, the

unemployment insurance—now the employment insurance—fund was at least \$5 billion in the hole.

Who looked after fixing the deficit? Who looked after paying the interest? The Government of Canada, which guaranteed Canadians continued benefits. That is what profitable Canadian federalism with a vision of security is all about.

Finally, I find it a bit odd, and I want to link up with my colleague for industry, that these people are becoming much more, in fact, overly centralizing. Now they are asking the Government of Canada to become involved in roads and highways, which are under provincial jurisdiction.

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by replying to the hon. member for Outremont.

The reason there is an opposition day on regional development is because there is a lot of bungling that we wanted to draw attention to.

When we speak about employment, or unemployment, insurance, I do not know whether the minister is very aware, and we see here the pressure brought to bear, the Minister of Human Resources Development was already forced to make changes to his bill because it does not work. Worse yet, with this bill, people are going to pay premiums and never be able to draw benefits.

Seasonal workers in an area of my riding where up to 75 per cent of workers are seasonal are going to pay premiums and never be able to draw UI because it is based on the number of hours now and because the system was not designed with them in mind. So he has nothing to teach us, because we are the ones who see these people in our riding offices and we are the ones who have to work with them.

I would also like to remind the minister, who is responsible for regional development, that it is very important that he pay more attention to the Mirabel situation, that he speak to his colleague in transport and bring pressure to bear to get things moving, so that my region no longer has to pay the price because of an error made by this government that he is perpetuating.

So make a decision and do something for the people of our areas who have been suffering for years because of a decision made by this government.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe that you will find consent for the following order. I move:

That any recorded division requested with regard to private members' business M-31 later this day, March 12, 1997, be deferred to the conclusion of Government

Orders on April 7, 1997 and that any recorded division requested with regard to business pursuant to Standing Order 78 on March 13, 1997 be deferred until the conclusion of Government Orders on March 17, 1997.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—QUEBEC REGIONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity today to speak to the motion presented by the official opposition. This will give me a chance to expand on the role played by the Canadian government in regional development and also to set the record straight.

Before I start my speech, I would like to make the following points.

• (1600)

The Canadian government plays a fundamental role in regional development, not only in Quebec but throughout Canada. And if the official opposition wants to try and get the Canadian government out of its regional development role, I simply want to point out that as long as I have my current responsibilities, I will ensure that the interests of all Quebecers are served—

Mr. Bellehumeur: We saw that with Bill C-71. We saw that with the Montreal Grand Prix.

Mr. Cauchon: —and ensure that people wherever they happen to be in the province of Quebec have access to the services of the Canadian government.

Listen to them shouting. They are shouting because this goes against their purely partisan dogma.

Mr. Speaker, let us consider the motion for a moment. It says:

That this House condemn federal government which, because of its policies, is in large measure responsible for increasing poverty in the regions of Quebec—

I will not qualify the motion as far-fetched, because this would be unparliamentary, but I certainly do not agree with it.

Let us recall the fundamental role played by this government since 1993. We took over a government that was in trouble. The Prime Minister asked for a number of reforms, which were judged and considered major reforms. Today, these reforms have started to bear fruit to the benefit of all Canadians, which means that in the regions people are already enjoying the obvious benefits of these reforms.

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Consider for instance the issue of public finance. Thanks to the work done by my colleague, the Minister of Finance and by all Canadians—because everyone did his share so that we can all turn the situation around—thanks to all this, today we have the lowest interest rates we have had in 35 years.

Members opposite refuse to point out the positive effects, the positive results that the government has achieved. Take for instance a small business in one of the regions, which wants to borrow \$1 million over ten years. The annual savings due to lower interest rates amount to \$33,400. That is tremendous.

And take a private citizen anywhere in Canada who wants to borrow \$15,000 to buy a car. In terms of the interest he would otherwise have to pay he will save about \$483 annually.

From the outset, the reform of our public finances has produced incredible results for all Canadians, so that today we can look to the future with optimism. And we also see the economy is picking up.

Another reform I would like to mention briefly is of course program review, a fundamental reform that allows us to better target our programs and rethink the way we do things. This reform has also produced tremendous results for the regions.

As far as the Federal Office of Regional Development is concerned, there used to be some 45 programs, but now there is just the one, called IDEE-PME, a sensible and accessible program. This program is based on the enhanced contribution potential of the Canadian government. It is well focussed, essentially on small and medium businesses in the regions, and thus impacts on the driving force of economic development. It is a program with a number of focal points: R & D innovation, market development, exports in particular, all focussed on enhancement. This involves fostering entrepreneurship. That, essentially, is the basis of the program

• (1605)

The other side says that the Canadian government has no reason to exist. Just look at the IDEE-PME program. Who can deny that the Canadian government has competency, knowledge, expertise, where international market development is concerned? What about Team Canada and its success, what about the embassies and consulates throughout the world?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Cauchon: Who can deny the competency, knowledge and expertise of the Canadian government where research and development are concerned? The more I have to say, the clearer and more striking the truth becomes, and the more they holler—which is perfectly normal.

Who can deny that the Canadian government knows what it is doing when it speaks of the new economy? We are heading toward

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a knowledge-based economy. We have to create centres of knowledge, something the Canadian government has had a hand in for some years already. We have been able to create a network of institutes or research centres in Quebec that are the envy of many in other parts of the world. To mention but a few: the IRB or biotechnology research institute, the INO or national optics institute, the Institut national de recherche scientifique, the National Research Council.

I imagine it does not suit my colleague to admit this, but in the riding of Trois-Rivières there is an institute that owes its existence to the Canadian government: the hydrogen research institute. This is our vision within the context of the new economy: to work in partnership to create tools that will enable all regions to structure themselves and to develop economies which will enable them to be competitive nationally and internationally.

In terms of innovation, not only are we undeniably competent, but, in the last budget, we announced the creation of the Canadian foundation for innovation with a budget of \$850 million. This foundation is based on a partnership. It could have a future budget of \$2 billion. This initial investment should be followed by investments by the private sector or various interested provincial governments. The foundation will enable us to intervene in areas like health, the environment, the sciences and engineering.

The federal government aims to support the public through these various development activities and ensure that we can act where we really have the skills and the know-how.

We can talk now more specifically about our projects in the Province of Quebec. Let us look at some examples. In terms of market development, and the export market in particular, we have set up with the Business Development Bank of Canada and the Departments of Industry and Foreign Affairs a program called NEXPRO designed to help new exporters. It is providing 1,000 future exporters with information now through the NEXPRO program that will ensure they have the tools they need to penetrate markets and face the competition when they reach the point where they want to or are able to export.

We provided some 30 sessions in Quebec under this program and invested over \$3 million. In this area as well, we can talk of an investment of \$150,000 in Estrie international 2007, an export commission, already producing interesting results for the region.

There is also Chaudière Appalaches, an international marketing plan for the tourist industry. This project is supported by over 50 companies. I could also mention the \$50 million in the last budget allocated to the Business Development Bank of Canada to help out companies in the tourist business.

• (1610)

As for the other area of activity, namely innovation, research and development, I could give you the example of the regions of Laval, Laurentides and Lanaudière, where \$300,000 was provided to the Conseil des bio-industries du Québec. This goes to show that we are focusing on biotechnology and providing assistance in that area. In Abitibi-Témiscamingue, we have helped the Société de technologie de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

In fact, in every region of Quebec, the FORD has made representations to five financial institutions to make nearly \$150 million available to help businesses adapt to the new economy, all that in Quebec alone. All this was done through the Federal Office for Regional Development to make loans available, while letting the banking industry develop a new culture, a new philosophy.

On entrepreneurship, we have focused on young people. We have worked both together with my colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development, and through partnerships, helping set up student clubs in colleges and universities and supporting these young people so that they can develop the entrepreneurial spirit and fibre we will need at the turn of the next century.

These investments, and I mentioned only a few, represent only a small portion of what we are doing for the public in terms of providing a simple yet remarkable structure for regional development. There are 13 regional offices across Quebec, 55 CDICs and 8 CDECs on the island of Montreal. This is a very simple and very flexible structure easy to understand for everyone.

We want to ensure that our services are readily available and that we, the Government of Canada, can keep in touch with the people's needs and reality. That is how we were able to act in the Gaspé—Lower St. Lawrence—Magdalen Islands region with the coastal Quebec program for the North Shore, a \$13.5 million program. That is how we were able to develop the Montreal strategy and help the people in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

In fact, apart from all this, there is our vision as well as our ability and desire to act through various agencies, first the FORD-Q but also the CDICs. In addition to all this, we also provide quality service. We provide very competent advisers to the public. I have worked with the federal office staff for over a year now, and I can tell you these people are doing a remarkable job. They are dedicated, they care about regional development, and they want entrepreneurs to succeed in the regions. This is why the Canadian government is proud to be involved and to work with people to promote regional development.

Members opposite often complain about government interference and unilateral action. However, the examples I just mentioned

are unequivocally based on a consultation of the communities concerned, and on a partnership.

When the opposition claims that we go over the head of the Quebec government to consult directly with the organizations and the people who are familiar with regional development, it is not insulting my government but, rather, Quebecers who are involved in economic development.

It is like indirectly telling these people that they are not very responsible and that they should be monitored by the Quebec government. Let me tell you that the people with whom I work in Quebec to promote economic development are very competent. They have a vision and the federal government will continue to work with them.

• (1615)

The Canada-Quebec agreement was also mentioned. I find it really extraordinary to hear the hon. member saying that we refused to renew the agreement, that we do not want to proceed with an agreement.

First of all, the agreement on regional economic development with the Quebec government had expired. However, the population of Quebec must know that my colleague, the finance minister, who was my predecessor as minister responsible for the federal office, did approach the Quebec government several times to renew the expired agreement. Of course, they do not mention this, but people should know about it.

In 1995, my colleague approached the Quebec government not once, not twice, but four times. We have approached the Quebec government four times to sign a harmonization agreement, first on January 12, 1995, and then on April 5, July 5 and August 11, 1995.

Of course, Quebecers will have understood that that request from the Canadian government was refused, even turned down, and they will have understood why. A referendum was coming, and since those people do not have the best interests of the population at heart but only their political interests, there was no way they would help show that federalism was working.

Therefore, as a responsible government wanting to provide good services to the population, we went ahead and reshaped our programs. Today, our programs are centred around elements based on our services and skills. But I would add that I do think a harmonization agreement is not really necessary, since we are acting in partnership and this is under our own jurisdiction according to the new programming.

However, a meeting was organized. Maybe my friends do not know it yet because, in view of the motion, I am under the impression that they do not know what is happening at their head office, but a meeting was held on February 19, 1997, with the

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representatives of the Federal Office of Regional Development, and there are some discussions and exchanges concerning a possible agreement. But it is much too soon to say what we think of it, since we do not even know what the Quebec government wants.

When we do know what they want as a government, we will be able to make a decision. Actually, we do not really know with whom we should be dealing in that government. Should it be Mr. Chevrette, Mrs. Harel or Mr. Trudel? Perhaps my colleague, who is familiar with the workings of the head office, could try knocking on their doors to find a solution or somebody we could deal with.

This is essentially what directs our action, and I think it is important that we as the Canadian government be dedicated to help the regions. Our action is based on the effectiveness of our services. It is also based on a deep respect for what the local population wants and needs, and for what the situation is locally.

To conclude, I think we should first ask my colleague on the other side to consult with the head office and ask it to clean up its own act as far as regional development is concerned. In fact, a white paper will be published soon.

What saddens me is this: what the Bloc Québécois wants to do today is not so much to criticize the Canadian government for its regional development policies as to try to prevent it from taking further action in this area, because what action it is taking is right on target. The federal government's action does respond to the population's expectations and does serve the population well. It will stay the course.

Mr. Yves Rochelleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to listen to the Secretary of State talk about the involvement of the Quebec government with such snobbishness.

You have to realize that the Government of Quebec has to deal with the entire problem. It has to deal with the whole issue of regional development. That is why there can be some tension and adjustment problems between Minister Chevrette and Mrs. Harel.

• (1620)

The government of Quebec is not just playing around with the issue of regional development. It is not pretending to deal with it. It does not interfere with the CFDC, the 55 CFDC. The main objective of the federal government is to go strut its stuff in the regions and get chummy with some of the local elite to get them on side.

The Province of Quebec is concerned about economic development, technological development and exports. It is the Canadian government's responsibility to deal with foreign affairs. Once we become sovereign, we too will be concerned about international trade, just as the Government of Canada is today.

Supply

Let us stop the cuts to transfer payments to the provinces, and especially to the Province of Quebec. The Government of Quebec has some good technological development programs, which it will be able to improve.

I have a simple question for the Secretary of State. Where does the anti-sponsorship policy of the Minister of Health fit into the regional development strategy? There is some concern about that, as we saw in the media. Where was the Secretary of State when we addressed the sponsorship issue that affects every region in Quebec, as well as the Montreal Grand Prix, the Trois-Rivières Grand Prix and the Jazz Festival? We know he was not comfortable with this issue, just like the President of the Treasury Board and even the Prime Minister and the two hot shots from the Montreal area. Where does this fit in with their willingness to really—

The Speaker: Before turning the floor over to the hon. member, I would ask my colleagues to address their remarks to the Speaker.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, you see the approach they are taking with the people of Quebec. When Quebecers do business with the Canadian government, suddenly they are no longer Quebecers, they are now local elites because they are doing business with the Canadian government. Let me tell you that what you are calling a local elite is far—

The Deputy Chairman: Please address the Speaker.

Mr. Cauchon: I would be pleased to do so. When they speak of these local elites, allow me to tell you that these people they are busy looking down on today are trying to serve the public well. They have established a partnership with the Canadian government because we have set up programs that meet their expectations, their interests, and their needs and that allow them to structure their region's economic development in terms of the realities of the 21st century.

As far as the tobacco bill is concerned—

Mr. Bellehumeur: We would like to hear you.

Mr. Cauchon: I would not call my colleague's remarks irresponsible, for that would be unparliamentary. The health minister's bill was what the public wanted and called for. It was a bill that people wanted. It is a question of public health. My colleague managed to strike a balance between going ahead with the bill and the various interests in the Montreal region—

Mr. Bellehumeur: Why did you disappear, Martin?

Mr. Cauchon: —by extending the deadline until 1998. Sponsors realize they now have two summers to make the adjustment. I must also point out that this bill does not ban sponsorships; it regulates them. Obviously, the opposition has been going around saying all kinds of things.

Mr. Godin: Tell the truth.

Mr. Cauchon: Strictly speaking, it will have no impact on economic development. When we talk about the economic development of Montreal, the one government that has been present, that had a vision, was the Canadian government.

The Deputy Chairman: I split question period between the parties. I did not see the other colleague. The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of the junior minister responsible for regional development in Quebec, FORD-Q, a contradiction that appears to be in the funding for regional development.

In the 1995 budget speech, to great fanfare, the finance minister announced a refocusing of regional development programs and agencies in Canada. He bragged about how streamlining would save taxpayers millions of dollars. The 1995 budget estimated the expenditures would be cut by about half over a period of time and would save taxpayers over \$500 million.

In the 1997 budget we noticed that regional development was conspicuously absent from the budget speech.

I wonder if the hon. junior minister would explain the contradiction. It now appears that the funds being spent on regional development, including FORD-Q, will actually increase.

The latest numbers that we were able to discern is that FORD-Q's budget is going to increase by about 11 per cent to over \$400 million in fiscal year 1997-98. How can that contradiction exist with the cuts that were announced in the 1995 budget?

I know he is going to try to say it is because of the extension of the infrastructure program. However, clearly the 1995 budget was supposed to allocate funds for the extension of the infrastructure program. It was supposed to be factored in.

I wonder if the junior minister could explain how the taxpayers are supposed to be experiencing cuts and savings in dollars being expended on regional development, not only in Quebec but across Canada, when now we are seeing an actual increase in funding? I wonder if he could tell us what the actual numbers are that the government intends to spend over the next fiscal year on regional development.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting. Through that question we can see the philosophy of Reformers. They talk on that side of the House about spending. They see regional development as an expenditure. On the government side we see regional development as an investment. It is a very important investment.

Supply

The Reform Party would like to see a free market without any government intervention. Reformers would like us to be in a society where there are only rich people. But it appears that in our society there are some regions which have to be helped out by the Canadian government.

A major role is played by regional agencies across Canada. We are playing a major role not only with the offices of FORD-Q but with Industry Canada and the community futures program.

When they talk about the contradiction in the budget, it appears they may be quite weak on the other side of the House. It seems that the budget has been affected a bit because we will manage, as we have in the past, the infrastructure program. It was included in this year's budget and last year's budget. If they need any further details they can go to public accounts and they will see that the budget is a public matter.

• (1630)

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on the Bloc motion.

While I agree with the opening of the motion, I cannot agree with much else. Unfortunately I cannot support the motion. The motion states:

That this House condemn the federal government which, because of its policies, is in large measure responsible for increasing poverty in the regions—

The motion goes on to talk about Quebec. As a matter of fact the motion mentions Quebec four times. As the Bloc is the official opposition I would have hoped, as all Canadians would hope, that its members would have taken a Canada-wide view of the government's incompetence and what it has done to address poverty in the country.

Before I get into my remarks I have to make reference to the secretary of state's reference to low interest rates. I have heard more about low interest rates in the House as if they are the answer to job creation and to our future. Low interest rates cut two ways. Not everybody benefits. There are retired Canadians who count on decent interest rates. To say that low interest rates are the solution to Canada's problems is not true. It is certainly not going to get the economy moving or create the jobs I keep hearing about from the other side.

A survey was done by the Chamber of Commerce in my community on what the federal government needs to do to encourage, expand and create jobs. Ten items are listed in the survey: the elimination of the deficit; elimination of the debt; reducing business regulatory burden; making tax levels competitive; fixing workmen's compensation; fixing labour relations; reforming education; abolishing interprovincial trade barriers; improving the infrastructure program, and promotion of environmental sustainability.

Of the 10 items listed I do not see any mention of lower interest rates. Lower interest rates appeal to those who know about borrowing. We should not be encouraging borrowing, we should be encouraging businesses and, indeed Canadians, to pay their way. The cart is before the horse. Businesses are not looking to borrow more so they can put off their bankruptcy. To suggest that lower interest rates is the answer in a period of record bankruptcies is not going to work. Members can continue to talk about low interest rates but the unemployment figures continue to show that low interest rates are not creating employment.

The Bloc member for Laurentides talked about the mess the Liberal government has made of Mirabel. It brought to mind the mess the Liberal government has made of Pearson airport. Mixing Liberals and aviation is like mixing alcohol and gasoline, it is a bad combination for the taxpayers of Canada. Mirabel has cost Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and Pearson airport will cost Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

When the government talks about regional development, how concerned it is and how important it is, just think about Pearson airport. That airport means jobs and regional development all across Canada and the government decided to cancel it on the basis of a quickie 30 day report. Pearson airport continues to deteriorate, costing jobs not just in rebuilding that airport but in development all across Canada.

The motion before us is a little like a garage sale. Everything is in there except the kitchen sink. I am not too sure, it might be in there too, and of course it would be sink from Quebec.

The problem is that all of Canada is hurting. It is not just poverty in Quebec. Poverty certainly is there, unemployment is there but it applies from coast to coast. It is the result of the failed policies and the lack of vision of this Liberal government.

• (1635)

Speaking about vision, I saw in the media last week the Prime Minister has now realized that vision is important. He was talking about the fact that going from day to day or week to week is not the answer, that governments have to have a vision for the future. It is encouraging to hear after three and a half years that the government has discovered the need to have a vision, to have a plan that is longer than two years if the country is to be successful.

The Liberal government's failure to address the most serious problem of the country is the reason for such high levels of unemployment, the reason for the poverty, the reason for the crushing tax burden that we are all under and the reason for the deteriorating social programs. The government has failed to deal with the deficit and the debt. It has failed to deal with it quickly and decisively.

Supply

The government has the deficit turned around and it is coming down, but it is coming down far too slowly. It is not fast enough to stimulate the economy and it is slow enough that it is increasing the debt and the payments that are made on that debt.

The government has been in power for three and half years and the unemployment numbers are almost the same today as they were when it was elected. There are 1.4 million Canadians unemployed, two million to three million Canadians under employed and one in four Canadians worried about their jobs. They have no confidence.

The debt is \$600 billion, or will be shortly, and \$50 billion in interest payments on that debt. One-third of every tax dollar goes to pay the interest costs on that debt. It does not create one job. It does not do anything for poverty. It does not do anything for our social programs but it certainly is the reason our taxes are so high.

The answer to the motion that the Bloc has put forward today is to reduce the size of government and be able to offer tax relief, put more dollars in the hands of consumers and get off the backs and out of the pockets of industries, the entrepreneurs who really create the jobs.

Unfortunately the Bloc motion suggests that more government spending is the answer. Reformers disagree with that. You cannot buy your way to prosperity. That just cannot be done. It cannot be done in our home, it cannot be done in business.

Reformers are saying we have to reduce and rescue. We have to reduce spending and rescue those programs, rescue our social programs, rescue the initiative and the drive that our entrepreneurs have. Or we have to pare and preserve: cut back so that we can save those jobs and save our social programs, versus what we have been doing for the last 25 years which is tax and terminate. We have been going down that same road now for 25 to 30 years, ever increasing taxes, never doing anything about unemployment and the threatened social programs.

It never ceases to amaze me that someone does not stop and say: "What we have been doing is not working. There has to be a better way. We have got to look at an alternative". Even Mr. Bouchard, now that he is the leader in Quebec, realizes the importance of tackling the deficit. He wants to get the finances of Quebec in order because he knows that is important to the economic strength and job creation in the province of Quebec.

Look at what two cost cutting premiers have done. I am thinking of Premiers Klein and Harris. Premier Klein has eliminated the deficit and is creating jobs. He has just been rewarded for the job he has done with a resounding endorsement by the people of the province of Alberta. He has been true to his word. He has eliminated the deficit and Alberta is creating jobs. The debate that

they are going to have in Alberta now is about what to do about the surplus. Should they be spending it on social programs, health and education. What a pleasant debate that would be to have.

Premier Harris is doing the same thing in the province of Ontario. He is doing what he said he would do and he is going to create jobs. He is going to get the economy moving again. The best social program people can have is a job.

● (1640)

I will quickly review the Bloc motion which includes Canada Post, regional ports and airports, the coast guard, fishing quotas and the EI changes. I will comment first on the 10,000 jobs lost at Canada Post. It was part time employees whose jobs were lost because of the elimination of unaddressed ad mail being delivered by Canada Post. The private sector will probably pick up those jobs. A lot of people objected to the fact that Canada Post delivered some of that unaddressed ad mail, to which some of them took exception.

The federal government had to do something about ports and airports because they were not viable. They have been losing money for years and have only been able to carry on because of huge subsidies from the federal government. The federal government cannot continue that. The reality is if they cannot be profitable then they should not be subsidized and supported by the taxpayer.

Coast guard fees are now set for each region. There are different costs in different parts of the country so the government has taken the position that those costs should be reflected. Where there is ice-breaking in one port but not in another, the fees should reflect that additional cost. One region should not be supporting another.

Concerning the fishing quotas, fish are like tax dollars. There is not an unlimited supply. Former governments overspent which has put us into the problem we are in today with the \$600 billion debt. Fishermen were doing the same thing. They were overfishing with the belief that there was no bottom, that they could keep doing it. Unfortunately the reality is that there was a bottom, they could not continue to fish.

Reformers believe politics should be removed from the determination of quotas, that quotas must be established if this valuable resource is to be rebuilt. The government should remove the politics from the setting of quotas and hopefully that will see the fishing industry survive and grow again.

As a party we have always been very clear on what to do with employment insurance. We would like to see it returned to what it was originally intended to be, an insurance program to help those who through no fault of their own find themselves unemployed. It

should be a temporary bridge until people are able to find work again.

We do not believe that regional eligibility is the way to go. We believe that eligibility should be determined on a national basis rather than on a regional basis in order to be fair to all Canadians.

I have touched briefly on some of the things that are mentioned in the motion. We agree with the Bloc that the government is the problem but we disagree with the Bloc on the solution to the problem. We can fix the problem.

I would like to look at the record of the government that has put us in the position we are in today. It is a record that has disappointed all Canadians, particularly the 1.4 million who are currently unemployed.

We have had 77 months of unemployment at a rate above the 9 per cent level. This is on the record of the government and former governments. Two to three million Canadians are underemployed and one in four Canadians are worried about holding their jobs. The federal debt is increasing to over \$600 billion with interest payments approaching \$50 billion which is more than is spent on old age security or the seniors' benefit, employment insurance and health care combined.

Because of the government's go slow approach to reducing the deficit, which should have been addressed far more quickly, it has added to the debt and it has added about \$10 billion to the servicing the cost of the debt.

• (1645)

In Quebec and right across Canada the income of the average Canadian family has been reduced by some \$3,000. There is less income because of fixed wages over those years. At the same time the government has brought in some 36 indirect tax increases. Therefore Canadians have seen their disposable income eliminated. The last tax increase will be the increase in CPP premiums which will represent about a \$10 billion tax grab.

That is a killer of jobs. Earlier the finance minister acknowledged that payroll taxes were a killer of jobs. At a time when we need jobs the government introduces a plan that will hurt job creation.

The finance minister said the CPP premium increase was not a payroll tax, that it was an investment. I would like him to convince hard working Canadians who are deeper in debt than they have ever been and are having difficult times making ends meet that this is an investment. Canadians are not looking for investments. They are looking for tax relief so they can start meeting the bills that come due weekly.

Supply

We have record debt and record bankruptcies, and the Liberals are talking about lower interest rates. The savings of Canadians have been diminished. A report from an economist stated that the real problem in Canada today, aside from the fact that 1.5 million Canadians are unemployed, is that 13 million Canadians have lost their purchasing power. They have no ability to buy and get our internal economy moving. They are struggling under a tax load. They are not looking for investment. They are looking for tax relief, which is the answer to job creation.

The Prime Minister said he would run in the upcoming election on his job creation performance. We as a party look forward to that because in the 3.5 years he has been in power those jobs have not been created. The reliance on low interest rates will not create the jobs Canadians are looking for.

The latest numbers on unemployment are still 9.6 per cent and 9.7 per cent. The finance minister admitted his frustration but he certainly did not think there was any real problem. He continues to hope that somewhere down the road it will turn around.

He did not blame business, but the problem is that the finance minister and the government are not listening to business. This is not the route businesses have been asking the government to take. The Chamber of Commerce and the CFIB have been saying that the best thing the government could do to create jobs is to reduce the deficit and get the books in balance as quickly as possible. The business community is saying that is the way to create jobs in Canada. A letter from the president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce said very clearly that eliminating the deficit quickly was critical to job creation.

Unbelievably in the budget the government talked about another infrastructure program. The government's \$6 billion infrastructure program created about 10,000 jobs. That is a pretty expensive job creation program. It was one that was criticized by the auditor general. If that \$6 billion had been given to Canadians in the form of tax cuts, by the year 2000 it would have resulted in the creation of the 162,000 jobs. The auditor general indicated that many infrastructure programs would have gone ahead without that \$6 billion of borrowed money. It was not money the government had.

Unbelievably the Liberals have another infrastructure program, although they are being a little cautious this time. I do not think they are talking about canoe museums, bocce courts or hockey arenas. This time they will stick to what they said in the red book about sewers and roads, which can really be described as infrastructure.

• (1650)

The finance minister spoke about how great the infrastructure program was and how it was supported. The infrastructure program is a shell game. It is a two for one deal with our own dollars. There

Supply

is one taxpayer in the country and that infrastructure program was buying their votes with their own tax dollars. The answer is to pay our way, not to go deeper and deeper into debt.

I talked about Pearson airport because it was mentioned by the Bloc member for Laurentides. What greater piece of infrastructure did we have in Canada than Pearson airport, and it continues to decline.

The government has failed to deal with interprovincial trade barriers which affect jobs across Canada. Those barriers are costing hundreds of thousands of jobs. The Canadian Manufacturers Association said they were costing Canadian taxpayers \$6 billion. Yet government members travel all around the world talking about exports but not doing anything about enhancing trade in Canada, which would do something about creating jobs in Canada.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion today. I suggest to members of the Bloc who introduced the motion that the best thing they could do for poverty and job creation in Canada is to get off their separatist agenda and go after the government to do something about its out of control spending.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to make a few comments to my colleague from the Reform Party on the general plan he outlined earlier. I would tend to agree with the Liberal Party on this. We are still talking about federalism.

And speaking of federalism, I have to make a few comments to the member across the way, the member for Outremont, who spoke earlier. He said: "We contributed; we did this, and we did that". I would like to remind my colleague across the way that when he talks about this money, we pay for that, it is our money. So, when Quebec becomes sovereign, we will have the same power to do these things, except that we will be far more competent.

Mr. Gagnon: With less money.

Mr. Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the member across the way is saying that we will have less money. I regret, but we pay our taxes and we will be able to do directly what we want with that money.

I find always it fascinating to see that federalists want to hang on to their jurisdiction. When I hear them say that they have the expertise, I wonder what kind of expertise they are talking about. This reminds me a national conference that was held last fall and at which young people and older people came from all over Canada to talk about problems facing young people. Whether it is about young people or something else, we are always told, to my astonishment, that Quebec is always asking for something. Let me remind you that Quebec is not the only province demanding some kind of decentralization. Everybody wants it.

We were told from coast to coast that the problems are at the regional level, and problems vary from region to region. Why, then, should we keep a whole bunch of public servants in Ottawa to develop programs to solve regional problems, when those problems are so utterly different.

What I am saying, really, is that regions are in a much better position to come up with programs that will solve regional problems. That is the real answer. When Quebec is sovereign, we will know our problems better, and federalism will not stand in our way.

I have to admit I am discouraged, but I will roll up my sleeves. My region of the Saguenay and Lac Saint-Jean has a very high unemployment rate. Now that I am a member of Parliament, I might be tempted to expect something from the federal system. I have given up on federalism, and that is why I will roll up my sleeves.

• (1655)

In the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, people are starting to undertake regional initiatives. Mention has been made of the networking operation under way in the Lac-Saint-Jean region, and when I say networking, I am referring to a regional initiative that meets a regional need.

I think the Bloc Québécois agrees that most jobs being created today are certainly not being created by the federal government but by small businesses. We know that to start up a small business often takes people who have business sense, a bright idea, a person with the entrepreneurial potential to develop that idea and in fact there are not many people in the community who have that potential. Of course it also takes money.

Often people are looking for partners to start a business, and that is what led me to set up the networking operation in my riding, which serves to seek out people with different skills that might be combined for the purpose of setting up the joint project.

Let me explain. If a person has an idea but not necessarily the entrepreneurial potential to put it into practice, there might be someone else who feels like starting a project but does not really have either an idea or the money. If money is the problem, then we look for someone else who has money.

This local initiative has yet to produce results, but it is well on its way, I can assure you. Local initiatives like these will help us deal with employment problems. This example is one of many.

Canadian federalism is certainly not the answer to our problems. When I hear my Reform Party colleague or the hon. member opposite say that federalism is there to save us and create jobs, I am very sceptical indeed.

Supply

[English]

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, I feel I was left out of that exchange but I am pleased to have an opportunity to respond.

The member touched on the plight of young people when we talk about the unemployed. The rate for young people is much higher than the 9.7 per cent. It is probably closer to 15 per cent and 16 per cent. Unfortunately in times like these employers will sometimes go for experience rather than enthusiasm, and young people are hurting.

The member also alluded to the fact that small businesses are creating jobs. He is absolutely right, but we need to help those small businesses create the jobs.

When I spoke earlier I referred to the results of a survey of small business in my riding. The member might be interested in doing a survey of the small businesses in his riding. The results showed that businesses were looking for tax relief. They are looking for the government to act in a fiscally responsible way. They are looking for the government to get its books in balance. They are looking for the government to get out of their pockets and off their backs and then they will create jobs.

Nowhere in my survey were they talking about low interest rates being the answer to job creation, which is what the government keeps talking about. The government is not listening to business. It is not listening to the real creators of jobs in Quebec, Ontario or right across Canada.

The government has to put the fiscal house in order, get the books in balance and then offer tax relief. That will create the jobs Canadians are looking for and will certainly go a long way to saving the social programs the people of Quebec are as concerned about as all other Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have been following this debate with great interest and I can see that the Reform Party is almost as much in the dark as the Bloc Québécois is about what regional economic development is all about.

It is even surprising to hear them say that and dare put federalism on trial. I listened to the hon. member for Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean denigrate the benefits of federalism, when we know that the federal government has spent \$800 million to help his own region get back on its feet.

• (1700)

I remember that, last summer, when even members of the opposition, people from the West were welcomed with open arms by the people in Lac-Saint-Jean; when families from other provinces sent food to the people of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, when

the Canadian government sent its experts, the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canadian Coast Guard, the people in that region could not thank me enough.

We can easily see that the 80 per cent paid by the federal government, by all Canadians, is a source of embarrassment for the opposition because this is a benefit of federalism. In a way, this is the true spirit of federalism, because we are well aware that we can count on all Canadians to invest in the regions, not when times are easy, but especially when times are tough.

We could also put the Bloc on trial, because the members of the Bloc Québécois do nothing in the area of regional economic development.

Have the Bloc members ever come up with an economic development program for Quebec's regions? Never. I had to come up with an additional \$5 million to help out the Gaspé fishers. I had to act on behalf of those who are not properly represented.

The next campaign will not be on a motion by the Bloc, it will be the trial of the Bloc. We will explain to Quebecers that federalism works for Quebecers, particularly those in the regions.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The hon. member for Simcoe Centre has 20 seconds.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Madam Speaker, in 20 seconds I just want to say that the government is on trial and its day is coming. It is just weeks away. I look forward to the trial and I look forward to the government's standing up and defending its record on jobs, jobs, jobs, the elimination of the GST, the crushing taxes that we are under and deteriorating social programs.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Madam Speaker, in Quebec, there is an expression which goes something like this: Since we are in a mess anyway, why not go all the way. This is unbelievable.

During the debate on the issue before us today, I heard the member for Outremont sing the praises of regional development as if there had been no regional development until he came along. I would like to remind him of three very important facts.

First, the Quebec government has been concerned with regional development for more than 30 years. The Quebec government has long demanded of the Government of Canada that it be the only one involved in its own regional development.

Let us not forget that when we came here in 1993, the Office of Federal Economic Development and the Business Development Bank of Canada already existed in Quebec and the economic development agreements had already been in existence for two decades.

Supply

The Office of Federal Economic Development was merely a division of the Department of Industry. There was no parent legislation governing it, as is the case for western economic diversification and ACOA in the maritimes, or even for FedNor in northern Ontario.

What did we do when we got here? In 1993, we immediately tried to determine who was responsible for regional development. It was a certain minister of Finance. In this House, even if we asked the government about its regional development activities, there was absolutely no decision making, no dialogue with Quebec and no answers to Quebec's very simple requests concerning regional development.

Quebec has always said to the federal government: "Just transfer the money and tax points, because regional development is our concern".

• (1705)

Having been asked for a while, but to no avail, who was responsible for regional development, the federal government was suddenly inspired and decided to change the focus of the industry legislation. I remember. It was Bill C-46.

This change of focus also changed all of FORD's objectives, which became directly related to the Department of Industry. For the first time, we had a real minister in charge of development. Who was it? None other than the Minister of Industry, who comes from Ontario. This confirmed that Ontario had been made responsible for regional development in Quebec.

We were slightly embarrassed by that situation naturally, so at the next cabinet shuffle, our colleague, the member for Outremont, was called upon to help the Liberals save face. Our colleague from Outremont could be seen in the windows of the 13 regional development offices, handing out Canadian flags along with the cheques attesting to the federal government's involvement in regional development. But all this was very much out of line with Quebec's traditional demands.

On this point, I would like to bring back to your attention one provision of Bill C-46. When the Department of Industry was restructured, they said it would have the authority to design, recommend, co-ordinate, manage, promote and implement programs and activities associated with regional economic development in Quebec. The Ontario minister was given the power to interfere directly in Quebec's regional development. Not only could he do so directly, but bills like those concerning the Department of Industry, the Federal Office of Regional Development and the Federal Bank contained provisions giving him the right to bypass Quebec and deal directly with stakeholders, even at the level of school boards and municipalities.

I would like to know where our colleague, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, was when Quebec underwent a major decentralization as the result of a political choice. Let me

remind him of the extensive consultations undertaken so that all the regions could participate in the development of strategic plans. In Quebec, each region has prepared strategic plans for its regional development, that way we can be certain that all regions actually do develop.

Why? Because traditionally the regional development coming from Ottawa had a tendency to be focused on the central regions. In the last decade of the ERDA, over 40 per cent of the money was invested in the Montreal and Quebec City areas, that is to say in the central regions, the reasoning being that if these regions developed, the others would benefit also. But the reverse happened. Development left the regions for the central areas.

It was always that way, because in the minds of regional development officials in Ottawa, a province is a region, it is as simple as that. In Quebec, however, we know full well, in the area of regional development, that we have five administrative regions and 95 regional county municipalities working together to channel development according to social, economic and cultural priorities. This government has always refused to acknowledge the expertise that Quebec acquired in the area of regional development.

• (1710)

How can the government say it has a regional development strategy when it refuses to even consider the strategies developed by the various regions of Quebec in their strategic plans.

It is not we who pushed the idea all the way to the regional secretariat, it was Minister Picotte himself, then in the Liberal Bourassa government, who said: "The regional partnership structure will extend to strategic plans, to ensure that all government departments that inject money into the regions do so in accordance with regional development plans". That is what development partnership is all about, but the federal government refused to listen.

As evidence of this, I just want to point out something, because I heard my colleague from Outremont, who deals with regional development, say that Quebec refused to sign some agreements. Speaking of agreements, I would like to remind him—I just want to relate this little anecdote because it is priceless—that we signed a regional development agreement in the summer of 1994, but that the federal government refused to sign it, using the political context as an excuse and arguing that it had just signed during that same week an agreement in another area of jurisdiction. It said that two agreements were too much.

When my colleague from Outremont says that Quebec did not want to sign, it did so according to some very clear directions. I recall very clearly that Minister Chevrette, who was responsible for regional development, and his colleague, Louise Beaudoin, of Intergovernmental Affairs, had told the government that they wanted to sign the agreement providing its implementation were

deferred by one year. They wanted all regional development policies in this agreement to fit in with regional development, regional secretariats and regional development agreements.

At that time, the finance minister and his officials rejected the agreement. If it is not signed today, it is simply because the federal government does not want to recognize Quebec's jurisdiction and continues to clearly demonstrate its determination to centralize and to subject Quebec's regional development to national standards as part of a national blueprint that does not take into account Quebec's strategic plans and the prime objectives of regional development.

That is what this government is doing in terms of regional development. All federal legislation uses this wording that gives the minister the right to bypass the regions and the Quebec government and deal directly with stakeholders.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is: the hon. member for Frontenac—food inspection.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have a comment and then I will ask a question of the hon. Bloc member with respect to the motion before us today as presented by the Bloc.

I take exception to the first sentence which condemns the federal government because of its reprehensible policies which in large measure are responsible for increasing poverty in the province of Quebec. What increases poverty in any province? What increases the lack of opportunity and the lack of growth in any province? It always starts with the people who live there. It starts with the municipal level of government, then the provincial and then the federal government comes into play.

With the exception of the Canada health and social transfer, the CHST, which the federal government has reduced and which Bloc members could argue is the reason there has been less money going to Quebec in that program, other than that everything else that is happening in the province of Quebec that is going downhill is the responsibility of two parties, the PQ and the BQ.

• (1715)

When I came here three years ago the PQ was running a deficit of about \$4 billion. Within a 5 per cent margin, even under Bouchard it is still running a deficit of \$4 billion. When every other province and every other level of government are reducing deficits, that provincial government did not make substantial reductions in

Supply

its deficit. It was not in the billions of dollars. Maybe it was in the hundreds of millions.

Now the premier has to negotiate with the unions to get them to agree that there will be a balanced budget by the year 2000. It is all to come. It is all promises. Nothing is actual. Nothing is factual. He is in real trouble.

The BQ has done nothing in the House to admit that fact. It said it was coming here for one term and not running again. Now it is running again. It came here to say let's separate. The majority of people in Quebec voted no to separation. They voted no to getting out of the union. They want to stay in Canada, yet there will be a third referendum.

The BQ is responsible for the poverty in the province of Quebec. Because of the uncertainty, because of the unstable economic climate, a number of companies have moved from the city of Montreal which used to be a great city.

I grew up just outside Ottawa. I used to be proud to visit the big city of Montreal. I thought at that time that it was so much bigger than Ottawa, so much more beautiful than Ottawa. It is still a beautiful city but unfortunately when I go down streets now I see barricades in front of office buildings. I see graffiti written on the walls of office buildings in downtown Montreal off rue Sainte-Catherine. It is embarrassing.

I am a proud Canadian. I love the province of Quebec. I saw it every day of my life when I was growing up by looking across the river. Here we have a party that will not admit the fight is over. It came here. It had its shot and lost.

Bloc members say they believe in democracy. They say they believe in the will of the people. Why do they not accept the will of Quebecers who say they want to stay in Canada?

That uncertainty is creating instability. That political blindness is hurting a province that could do a lot better by getting its economic house in order and not crying for regional development funds that only go more or less into high risk ventures, which would mean subsidizing failure. I say to the hon. member across the way in the Liberal Party that is why I do not believe in regional development programs. They do not go into infrastructure. They go into failed high risk ventures.

It is the member's party and the PQ that are responsible for the poverty in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): How much time do I have left to answer, Madam Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): You have 30 seconds remaining.

Supply

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to invite the hon. member to travel not only to Montreal, but also to other, more remote and typical, regions of Quebec. But it is hard to get a feel for the situation from a distance.

I think that, by coming to Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois has been able to make all English Canadians from the other provinces aware of what is really going on in Quebec. The democratic will of the people was expressed in the last referendum, and might I remind you 49.4 per cent voted yes. That is not insignificant. It is almost a tie. I think, therefore, that many Quebecers have exercised their democratic right to express their opinion.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, we were initially supposed to complete this debate at 5.20 p.m. but, because of the ministerial statement, I would like to ask the consent of the House to go to 5.25 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Yes.

Mr. Crête: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on regional development during this opposition day, because I represent a region which has been a testing ground for the ineffectiveness of Canadian federalism.

In eastern Quebec, people are sovereignist because they are francophone and they believe in the future of Quebec's francophone population, but they are also sovereignist because they believe that, to ensure our development, we must have control over our future.

• (1720)

We had a taste of every possible federalist recipe. We went from the eastern plan, to the Quebec planning bureau, to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, to ad hoc activities, and now to the Federal Office of Regional Development, whose officials are doing their best. Under the Conservatives, the FORD was used, to some extent, to divert activities from the Department of Industry.

Once the Liberals came to office, they kept the FORD, but they did not give it any money. And then they came up with IDÉE-PME. It is a bit like a telephone booth: it gives an opportunity to access other federal departments. People working in the regions do their best with what they have. Every public servant does his best.

The problem with regional development is not related to individuals, but to the architecture. Regional development is one area where Canada's architectural problems are truly noticeable, and we are not talking minor problems. Since we, Bloc members, arrived here in Ottawa, we have also noticed that there are some very

important sectors related to regional development, including the transportation sector.

For a long time, it was believed in Quebec that the transportation sector only dealt with highways. People were not very familiar with air, marine and railway transportation. For a long time, people thought of railways as rather quaint. Since we, in the Bloc Québécois, have been here, we have told Quebecers how important these areas are, how we should have control over them in order to ensure appropriate regional development.

When you go over all the areas where Quebecers were let down in terms of regional development, you think about the 10,000 Canada Post jobs that were lost and the dumping of some regional harbours and airports. Quebecers have been saying for at least 20 years that if the federal does not want to maintain the harbours it should transfer them to us. It took one year to develop a policy and for the last year the department has been trying to revise it in order to give something to someone.

We have yet to reach an agreement. However, regional authorities have not remained idle. For instance, the Cacouna port authorities have made some strong representations and they have kept at it. They want results, but the federal government is too slow. With the economic situation changing ever so quickly, we cannot have governments unable to react rapidly.

Since we are part of NAFTA, we have to ensure that our regions can quickly export their goods and that we have the appropriate transportation means to do so. We cannot wait 10 or 15 years, these things must be done very quickly. Will someone on the government side address the issue of regional development, since they have undertaken the most harmful reform for the regions we have ever seen, the employment-insurance reform?

We know that this reform required two years of consultation and that, two months after its implementation on January 1, 1997, the government has already made changes because it realized that the arguments invoked by the opposition throughout the reform period were valid.

It was true that people who had accumulated five or six hours in a week would be penalized if no way could be found to ensure that this did not reduce the number of weeks of benefits. There will be other such changes in the months and years to come. For example, asking young workers to accumulate 910 hours adversely affects regional development because those who cannot do so will simply move elsewhere. And once they settle elsewhere, it is unlikely they will move back home, which is not good for regional development.

The people in government are not worse than their predecessors. The problem with regional development in Canada is not caused by individuals. All governments try to do their best. But they try to be good plumbers when architects are what is really needed.

If there is a sector that will help us to convince people that sovereignty is the solution for Quebec, it is regional development. I challenge any of the government members in the next election to try and convince us that the actions of the federal government helped in any way to reduce the gap between the unemployment rates in Quebec and those in the rest of Canada.

You can rest assured, especially in eastern Quebec, where we lost a seat because of the inaction of the member for Bonaventure—

An hon. member: Exactly.

Mr. Crête: —that they will learn their lesson next time, when there will be only four ridings in eastern Quebec, but these four ridings will vote for the Bloc Québécois.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): It being 5.25 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Is the house ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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): Call in the members.

• (1755)

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

(Division No. 257)

YEAS

Members

Asselin
Bélisle
Brien
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
Dubé
Dumas
Gagnon (Québec)
Guimond
Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)

Bachand
Bellehumeur
Canuel
Crête
de Savoye
Deshaies
Duceppe
Fillion
Godin
Jacob
Laurin
Lebel
Leroux (Shefford)

Supply

Loubier
Ménard
Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Marchand
Nunez
Pomerleau
Sauvageau
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Wayne—38

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Arseneault
Beaumier
Belanger
Benoit
Bethel
Bhaduria
Bodnar
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden
Calder
Cannis
Chamberlain
Clancy
Collenette
Comuzzi
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Duhamel
Dupuy
Eggleton
Epp
Flis
Forseth
Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gilmour
Grose
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Harvard
Hickey
Hopkins
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Kirky
Lastewka
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maloney
Marleau
Massé
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McWhinney
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murphy
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Robichaud
Scott (Skeena)
Shepherd
Solberg
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Terrana
Thompson
Ur
Vanclief
Ablonczy
Alcock
Assad
Bélair
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Bonin
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brushett
Byrne
Campbell
Catterall
Chatters
Cohen
Collins
Crawford
DeVillers
Dromisky
Duncan
Easter
English
Fewchuk
Fontana
Frazer
Gaffney
Galloway
Graham
Grubel
Harb
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Irwin
Johnston
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Lee
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
Mayfield
McCormick
McKinnon
McTeague
Mifflin
Minna
Morrison
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peters
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Ringma
Robillard
Serré
Silye
Speaker
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Strahl
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Torsney
Valeri
Verran

Supply

Volpe
Wappel
Whelan
Wood
Zed—155

Walker
Wells
White (North Vancouver)
Young

Bryden
Calder
Cannis
Chamberlain
Cohen
Collins
Crawford
DeVillers
Dromisky
Dupuy
Eggleton
Fewchuk
Fontana
Gaffney
Galloway
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hopkins
Jackson
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Lee
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McKinnon
McTeague
Mifflin
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peters
Phinney
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Robichaud
Serré
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Terrana
Torsney
Valeri
Verran
Walker
Wayne
Whelan
Young

Byrne
Campbell
Catterall
Clancy
Collenette
Comuzzi
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Duhamel
Easter
English
Fiis
Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Graham
Guarnieri
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Irwin
Jordan
Keyes
Kirkby
Lastewka
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maloney
Marleau
Massé
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McWhinney
Minna
Murphy
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Rideout
Robillard
Shepherd
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Ur
Vanclief
Volpe
Wappel
Wells
Wood
Zed—126

PAIRED MEMBERS

Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Cauchon
Daviault	Finestone
Gagliano	Gauthier
Godfrey	Goodale
Guay	Lalonde
Langlois	Lefebvre
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Mercier
Paré	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Szabo	Venne

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I declare the motion lost.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.) moved:

That Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 1997, be concurred in.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Madam Speaker, the members of the official opposition will vote no.

[*English*]

Mr. Strahl: Madam Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, NDP members will vote no on this motion.

Mrs. Wayne: Madam Speaker, I will be voting no.

Mr. Bhaduria: Madam Speaker, I will support the motion.

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

(*Division No. 258*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Arseneault	Assad
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bethel
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett

Abbott
Asselin
Bélisle
Benoit
Blaikie
Brien
Chatters
Crête
de Savoye
Deshaies
Duceppe
Duncan
Fillion
Frazer
Gilmour
Grubel
Harper (Simcoe Centre)

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Bachand
Bellehumeur
Bhaduria
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
Dubé
Dumas
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Guimond
Hermanson

Supply

Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Jacob
Johnston	Landry
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Marchand	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)	Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Nunez	Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau	Ringma
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Scott (Skeena)	Silye
Solberg	Speaker
Strahl	Taylor
Thompson	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
White (North Vancouver)—67	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre/Sud-Centre)	Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Cauchon
Daviault	Finestone
Gagliano	Gauthier
Godfrey	Goodale
Guay	Lalonde
Langlois	Lefebvre
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Mercier
Paré	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Szabo	Venne

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1800)

Mr. Massé moved that Bill C-87, an act for granting Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997, be read the first time.

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

Mr. Massé moved that Bill C-87, an act for granting Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997, be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

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

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, I think that you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote on this motion, the Liberal members voting yes.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Madam Speaker, the members of the official opposition will vote no.

[English]

Mr. Strahl: Madam Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, NDP members present will vote no.

Mr. Wayne: Madam Speaker, I will be voting no.

Mr. Bhaduria: Madam Speaker, I will be voting yes.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 258.]

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I declare the motion carried. Therefore, the bill is referred to committee of the whole.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais in the chair.)

[English]

Mr. Gilmour: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I rise to seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move:

That the Senate estimates vote 1(b) be reduced by \$2 million which is the increase being provided in the supplementary estimates to the unelected, unaccountable patronage heaven.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Abbott: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I rise to seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move:

That the Canadian Heritage estimates vote 5(b) be reduced by \$60,000 which is the amount of the contracts received by the heritage minister's senior advisor in her failed leadership bid.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

The Acting Deputy Chairman (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Order, please. House in committee of the whole on Bill C-87, an act for granting Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997.

On clause 2

Mr. Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board if the bill is absolutely identical to those we adopted in the previous years.

Mr. Massé: Madam Speaker, this bill is absolutely identical to bills adopted in the past.

(Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.)

(Appendix agreed to.)

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

(Preamble agreed to.)

• (1805)

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill reported.)

Supply

Mr. Massé moved that Bill C-87, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997, be concurred in at report stage (without amendments).

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

[English]

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, if the House would agree, I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: The members of the official opposition will be voting no, Madam Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Strahl: Madam Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, NDP members present vote no.

Mrs. Wayne: Madam Speaker, I will be voting no.

Mr. Bhaduria: Madam Speaker, I will be voting yes on the motion.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 258.]

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): When shall the bill be read the third time? Now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, if you were to seek it I believe you would find unanimous consent to apply the vote taken on the previous motion to the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, I believe there would be a consent to apply the results of the previous vote to the following: the supply bill motion for third reading; concurrence in interim supply for the year ending March 31, 1998 and for the supply bill motion for second reading and reference to committee of the whole.

Mr. Massé moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 258.]

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

* * *

INTERIM SUPPLY

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.) moved:

That the House concur in Interim Supply as follows:

That a sum not exceeding \$33,194,135,278.35 being composed of:

(1) nine-twelfths (\$25,397,186,592.00) of the total of the amounts of the items set forth in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998 which were laid upon the Table Thursday, February 20, 1997, and except for those items below:

(2) eleven-twelfths of the total of the amount of Canadian Heritage Vote 35, Environment Vote 5, Finance Votes 15 and 20, Fisheries and Oceans Vote 10, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Vote 5, Human Resources Development Votes 5 and 35, Industry Votes 30 and 35, Justice Vote 1, National Defence Vote 10, Natural Resources Vote L15, Public Works and Government Services Votes 20 and 25, Transport Votes 1 and 20, and Treasury Board Votes 5 and 10 (Schedule A) of the said Estimates, \$2,423,142,384.68;

(3) ten-twelfths of the total of the amount of Environment Votes 1 and 10, Human Resources Development Vote 10, Indian Affairs and Northern Development Votes 15 and 40, Industry Vote 40, Justice Vote 5, Parliament Vote 1, Public Works and Government Services Vote 15, and Transport Vote 35 (Schedule B) of the said Estimates, \$5,373,806,301.67;

be granted to Her Majesty on account of the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 258.]

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

APPROPRIATION ACT NO. 1, 1997-98

Mr. Massé moved that Bill 88, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1998, be read the first time.

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

Mr. Massé moved that Bill C-88, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1998, be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 258.]

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais in the chair.)

• (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. House in committee of the whole on Bill C-88, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1998.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Madam Chairman, I rise on a point of order. The main estimates were tabled on Thursday, February 20. Supplementary estimates (B) were tabled on Monday, March 3.

In 1968, the House adopted the McGrath report on procedural reforms. The spirit of the reforms to the business of supply was to give all members an opportunity to examine the main estimates thoroughly so that they would be well informed when they voted.

We will be voting tonight on \$33 billion for interim supply which we have had only eight sitting days to examine. Supplementary estimates (B) contain \$806 million worth of expenditures which we have only had six days to examine.

I wonder why the government is rushing to pass these supply motions when the opposition could have at least until March 30, 1997 to further examine both sets of estimates.

[Translation]

On clause 2

Mr. Duceppe: Madam Speaker, once again, I would ask the President of the Treasury Board to tell me if this bill is in every respect consistent with the one concurred in a few minutes ago.

Mr. Massé: Madam Speaker, the proportions requested in the bill are for all essential needs of the federal public service until the second period for the authorization of expenditures in 1997-98.

The bill does not release the full amount of any of the items. The bill is in the usual form of interim supply bills. Concurring in this bill will in no way prejudice the rights or privileges of members to criticize items in the Estimates when these are examined in committee.

The usual undertaking is hereby given that these rights and privileges will be respected and that they will be neither abolished nor restricted in any way through concurring in this bill.

(Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.)

(Schedules A and B agreed to.)

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

(Preamble agreed to.)

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill deemed reported.)

[English]

Mr. Epp: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask, when the maximum volume for nos exceeded that of the yeas, you assumed those motions were all passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Adopted on division.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.) moved that Bill C-88 be concurred in.

[English]

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, if the House would agree I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House with Liberal members voting yea.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Madam Speaker, official opposition members will be voting no.

[English]

Mr. Strahl: Madam Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no.

• (1815)

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, NDP members present vote no.

Mrs. Wayne: Madam Speaker, I will be voting no.

Mr. Bhaduria: Madam Speaker, I will be voting for the motion.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division no. 258.]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Massé moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to apply the results of the vote just taken to the third reading stage of the bill.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Editor's Note: See list under Division No. 258]

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

PEACEKEEPING OR PEACE ENFORCEMENT COMMITMENTS

The House resumed from December 10, 1996 consideration of the motion and the amendment.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Kilger: Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the order that was adopted earlier today with respect to Private Members' Business Motion No. 31, I believe you will find consent that at the conclusion of the debate on Motion No. 31 today, a recorded division be deemed requested and deemed deferred until Monday, April 7, 1997 at the conclusion of the time provided for Government Orders.

• (1820)

[Translation]

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Madam Speaker, I would like to point out that we will have an amendment to Motion M-31 and that we agree that the vote be deferred to April 7.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak the motion by my colleague from Red Deer which would allow all proposed peacekeeping or peace enforcement commitments involving more than 100 Canadian personnel to be put to a free vote in the House for approval or for rejection. I believe that is a very reasonable request in a democratic fashion, something that this party over here has a difficult time understanding. We certainly saw an example of it a few minutes ago.

Peacekeeping has become one of the most important aspects of our foreign policy. It has allowed Parliament some influence on foreign conflicts. The problem over the years is that modern day peacekeeping has become both dangerous and extremely costly. Therefore it is important for Parliament to choose wisely which missions it will participate in. The risks and the costs should be evaluated. The mandate and the rules of engagement should be known and the chances of success should be examined.

Motion No. 31 would allow these points to be raised in parliamentary debate followed by a vote when all members could represent their constituents and let their vote count.

When the soldiers from Wild Rose are ordered to put their lives on the line, I would like to think that I would be able to say to them Parliament looked at all the facts and made the best decision in their interest.

The problem with this Liberal government is that there is always too little too late with decisions being made in a rush behind closed doors. Currently troops are already on a plane on their way to a mission before we are even asked if they should be sent. Then they question whether we have the resources in place for this mission.

This was seen most recently in February when the Canadian government again decided to keep our peacemakers in Haiti for

another five years. Canadian taxpayers had already paid over \$430 million for this mission and now we find there is no end in sight. However, the government did not consult with Parliament before making this expensive and irresponsible decision; nor has it offered any long term solutions or plans.

If ever there was a need for elected representatives to have a voice, it is in these situations. The Canadian people expect Parliament to face up to the responsibility of sending our troops on these missions. When our soldiers go it should be a Canadian decision endorsed by the House of Commons. We have to be accountable to the people and give them concrete reasons why Canadian soldiers have gone on peacekeeping missions with their tax dollars.

Canadians want accountability for a change, which only a full parliamentary debate and a free vote can provide.

It has recently been reported that the Canadian people are starting to question why the Canadian government is always quick to volunteer our troops for every mission. The repercussions of this are being felt by our troops both physically and emotionally. Some Canadian soldiers served four tours of duty in the former Yugoslavia in a three year time period. This created tremendous hardship and family stress for them.

As reported in Monday's *Ottawa Citizen*: "Peacekeeping has produced hundreds of psychological casualties. At least six soldiers have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, the result of witnessing the horrors of war on a daily basis. They live in almost constant depression. Hundreds of others, as many as 20 per cent of all peacekeepers, could be suffering from various forms of stress according to defence officials".

• (1825)

The problem is the average Canadian does not know what a peacekeeper must endure today. Since 1994 there have been about 2,000 Canadian soldiers overseas every year. So far 16 Canadians have died during these missions, 3 from battle wounds and the other 13 from accidents or disease. More than 115 Canadians have been wounded, most in the wars that have raged in the former Yugoslavia.

To commit our forces to the atrocities going on in today's world is not a decision to be taken lightly. Peacekeepers today are plunged into the middle of civil wars. This is why a full debate of the matter is imperative. We have an obligation to stand up for our troops at every turn, to discuss the lives of our young people and the place our country has in the world.

Parliament should develop criteria in order for the decision to be made in a thorough manner. In other words, we must know every aspect, from the cost of the mission to the exact mandate to how long we are going to stay. It is clear that Canadians are willing to aid

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the international community for humanitarian and security tasks, but we can no longer be the world's 911 number.

To date Canada's approach to peacekeeping has placed serious strains on the armed forces. Problems with equipment such as shortages of helmets, communications equipment and obsolete armoured personnel carriers have plagued operations. Fewer soldiers with fewer resources have been required to participate in more missions. Tension and burnout have been evident from too many tours too often.

These factors have to be considered for every mission. As well, we have to learn from the experience of past peacekeeping missions. The events in Rwanda and Bosnia are evidence of this.

The Minister of National Defence was kind enough to provide each member of Parliament with a chart outlining peacekeeping and humanitarian operation cost estimates. This chart clearly shows four missions that will be ending throughout 1997. With these dates clearly outlined there should be more than enough time to debate and vote on whether these operations should be continued.

This is why Motion No. 31 is so timely. It would allow each member of Parliament an opportunity to raise any issue related to these missions on behalf of their constituents and make their vote count as such. I would encourage all members to vote in favour of Motion No. 31 in order to empower Parliament to stand up for our troops.

There have been too many times that decisions are made behind closed doors. Then we use party politics and the power of we will punish you if you do not vote the way we tell you to vote. Decisions are made behind closed doors even before a debate begins. When that happens that makes this place a farce. To start a debate on a Monday when a decision has already been made on the past Thursday behind closed doors, with government members being told how to vote and that they must vote that way or be punished, is a sham, a shame and a disgrace to democracy.

I have made these kinds of statements before in the House and recently on the Internet someone made a comment regarding my comments about backroom decisions, closed door decisions. I would like to read it. It is from an individual who is a political hack from the old days and from the old way of doing things. Let me quote, showing the attitude and the way they look at how we should operate. This person has been in politics for years: "As for backroom deals, that is the nature of politics. That is how you get things done. If the government was truly above politics then things would never work right. For example, without the heavily attacked patronage system, important positions would go to people of questionable loyalty who may work to subvert the government and to undermine its efforts. Again, having no experience with government, Reform would have little or no understanding of this principle. Politics is a dirty business. No, you would want the best politicians in there who could cut those backroom deals, make those backroom decisions and keep things running well".

• (1830)

A person who has been in politics in this land for a number of years told me that was the way to run the country. In other words, the Canadian public or the Canadian taxpayer should not be involved in all these decisions. We should simply go behind closed doors because the average Canadian and the normal taxpayer are too stupid to make good decisions. I am sick and tired of that kind of democracy. It must end and this is a good chance to demonstrate that we can do it.

Mr. McWhinney: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member. Accepting the thrust of his speech, would he not recollect the debate on several occasions in the House on Canadian contributions to UN peacekeeping missions and the consensus that developed in which the minister of defence at the time indicated that wherever possible issues of this sort would be referred back to Parliament?

Would he not consider—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): It seems the hon. member is asking a question or making a comment and this is not the time for that. This is the time for debate.

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is an important motion and this is an important issue. All members of the House are concerned about the handling of information about the way our peacekeepers are deployed and the way authorization is given for that deployment. Above all, we want to ensure that it is a transparent process so that all may know the consequences of what we are doing.

The motion proposes very little in the way of changes to make Canada's peacekeeping policy process more transparent. The simple reason is that the process is already extremely open.

The suggestions that unilateral decisions are being made behind closed doors have ignored the facts. Such assertions have no basis whatsoever in reality. The process, as it now exists, is one of the most open in the world. How many other countries have established Internet sites and conducted surveys to determine public support for involvement in peacekeeping missions?

I argue that such countries are few in number, yet our hon. colleagues insist the existing Canadian system is opaque and in need of reform. These statements are difficult to accept.

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, the principle underlying such a motion supports the thrust of government policy. It has been and will always be our policy to put to this House directly or through its Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade all issues

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involving peacekeeping. When it has been possible and necessary to do so, that is what the government did.

We recognize the importance of thoroughly and freely debating all proposals to deploy Canadian forces personnel and we attach considerable importance to the opinion expressed in this House. For these reasons, the government is working to ensure that Canada's peacekeeping commitments are debated each time the occasion arises.

[English]

Furthermore, the minister and the government have indicated a willingness to adopt new and interesting procedures to enable this to take place.

The mover of the motion, the hon. member for Red Deer, knows very well that we have had the occasion in the foreign affairs and international trade committee to examine the deployment of troops in Haiti. On an extensive basis we were able to hear witnesses. We were able to have a frank, open debate in circumstances which were, I would submit, preferable to an exchange of views in the House which often tends to be adversarial in nature. We should be looking at that way of dealing with it. That is how we will deal with issues raised by the member for Wild Rose. He said that these were very costly and dangerous and must be evaluated. We are able to do that in committee in many ways far better than we are able to do it in the House.

• (1835)

I urge members of the House who are concerned about this matter and about the way Canadians feel about peacekeeping to examine some simple figures. In 1995, in spite of what the member for Wild Rose said, the results of a study documenting Canadian opinions on foreign and defence policies found that 79 per cent of those polled considered peacekeeping important for Canada.

A February 1996 study showed that 75 per cent of Canadians wanted our current commitment to peacekeeping to be maintained or increased. A similar percentage of respondents indicated that they believed peacekeeping to be a very positive source of Canada's international reputation. It is obvious the Canadian public recognizes the importance of peacekeeping to Canada internationally. Furthermore, Canadians firmly support our involvement in peacekeeping.

[Translation]

The high level of support shown leads us to wonder about the real value of this motion. The argument that the issue must be put to a parliamentary vote so electors may have their say simply does not hold water. They have already had it, in a much more significant way than they have for years. The same is true for the members of this House. Cabinet has not acted unilaterally behind closed doors in considering peacekeeping commitments. This House has had many opportunities to debate the issue, and the government has considered members' opinions.

[English]

What is quite concerning about the motion is the possible detrimental affect it could have on Canada's ability to effectively participate in international peacekeeping efforts.

For the last 40 years Canada has been an open international leader in peacekeeping. Our unparalleled reputation has resulted from our willingness to act in difficult circumstances and on short notice. These characteristics have become even more important in recent years. Gone are the days when peacekeeping was turned to only after a superpower had brokered a ceasefire between two states. Now the international community finds itself having to respond to internal conflicts causing humanitarian disasters of unprecedented magnitude.

[Translation]

Given the nature of those crises the international community is often confronted with, it has become obvious that the UN and its members do not have sufficient capability to react quickly. Canada has been a leader, making suggestions and looking for ways to develop mechanisms to increase the capability of the international community to react quickly to complex emergency situations.

A Canadian report entitled "Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations" has been an important contribution in this exercise. The UN has implemented a number of recommendations in this report, including the establishment of permanent headquarters for the rapid deployment of peace missions that will give the UN a whole new capability.

[English]

Nationally the Canadian Armed Forces has developed the disaster assistance response team or DART to respond quickly to international humanitarian disasters. Canada has also come forward in actual times of crisis showing the leadership for which we are renowned. During the recent crisis in eastern Zaire, Canada stepped forward to lead the international community to action.

What a terrible irony it would be for Canada, one of the most ardent international supporters of rapid reaction, to take measures to make its own system cumbersome, in fact in some cases virtually useless.

[Translation]

That will be the likely outcome of this motion. Making Canada's peacekeeping commitments dependent on a vote in Parliament would be detrimental to Canada's leadership and effective contribution to international security.

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The amended motion demanding that all proposals for peacekeeping or peace enforcement commitments be put to a vote in Parliament would considerably reduce our ability to make a timely contribution to international efforts. Whether it is the commitment of a unit the size of a battalion or just a couple of military observers, the difficulty would be the same. Obviously, we could not keep the leading role we now have in international peacekeeping if our participation were subject to such constraints.

• (1840)

[English]

Therefore the motion has implications not only for our international reputation but also for the lives of those people we are seeking to assist. It has become increasingly clear in recent years that without a rapid response from the international community countless lives which might have been saved will indeed be lost.

Canadians such as generals Dallaire and Baril know this all too well. The imposition of additional constraints on our ability to act nationally would fly in the face of all that we have tried so hard to achieve in the international arena.

[Translation]

In moving this motion, the hon. member neglected several highly significant realities about the world of today. First and foremost, it must be realized that events develop quickly, often with tragic outcomes. To insist that Canadian peacekeepers be reduced to doing nothing until the House can meet and debate the issue, while innocent people are suffering as the result of a conflict or a humanitarian disaster, is foreign to the interests and values Canadians hold dear.

The international community has learned one thing from the tragic events of recent years: we must act promptly when we are called upon. The motion in question could totally prevent us from doing what we have demanded of other members of the international community: providing a rapid response.

[English]

The hon. member also seems to ignore an even more immediate reality. As I have said, the government has consistently endeavoured to bring matters related to Canadian peacekeeping commitments before the House or before the appropriate committee for debate and informed discussion.

Furthermore, it has provided the Canadian people with a direct means to express their views concerning their country's peacekeeping policy. The Canadian public has expressed its opinion. It firmly believes in and supports Canada's role in international peacekeeping.

[Translation]

The Canadian government and the Canadian public are proud of the lead peacekeeping role Canada has assumed in the world. Our role in this area is important for Canadians, for Canada, and for the world.

We cannot support this rather unwise motion, which can only serve to diminish Canada's role in the noble enterprise of peacekeeping.

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to conclude the debate on my Motion No. 31.

The motion is designed to try to allow Parliament to have more control, more discussion and more open debate on the sending of our troops on peacekeeping missions. It is not intended to be against peacekeepers, to say that we do not do a good job, or to say that Canadians are not behind it. This is a motion simply to provide accountability for decisions that are made.

Even though peacekeeping is one of the most important aspects of our foreign policy, the Prime Minister and the other elites in the government do not want Parliament to truly participate in the making of decisions. They want to have sham debates or no debate at all. They refuse to allow parliamentarians access to crucial mission information until the dye is cast. They refuse to allow members a vote on whether the peacekeeping mission is in the interest of our country or the interest of our troops.

A perfect example of this disregard for Parliament occurred just a few weeks ago when the government leaked to the press the fact that we would be staying in Haiti for the next five years. There was no consultation. There was no mention of cost. There was no mention of the best interest of our troops.

It was just another unilateral decision by the government. Even though the Minister of Foreign Affairs promised to consult he broke his promise. Even though the minister assured Canadians "when Haitian President Préval was here, he indicated a very strong interest in having the international presence of the UN force and the Canadian force end as soon as possible", guess what. He did not mean that either. Even though Canadian taxpayers have already paid over \$430 million for this mission, we now find out there is no end in sight. No wonder the federal debt is \$600 billion.

• (1845)

It is not true that committee has the opportunity make the decisions and debate the issues. I use as an example the mission to Zaire which was decided on a weekend. In fact, the member for Rosedale and I heard from a news reporter that the decision had been made for the Zaire mission. We were not consulted. There was no opportunity for Parliament to make a decision.

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To say that we need 24 hour decision making, I again use the example of Bosnia. The situation there has gone on for hundreds of years. There was no panic to make a decision.

The situation in Haiti of the dictatorship has gone on forever. I was in Rwanda in 1985 and I knew there was a problem. There was lots of time for Parliament to debate it, two years to make a decision. I mentioned Zaire. That problem did not just pop up overnight. Very seldom will that argument hold any water. If it did there would be ways to deal with it by way of an amendment to the motion.

The issue of peacekeeping goes far beyond the issue of money. It goes to the lives of our Canadian troops, their parents and the lives which could be lost or shattered by crippling injuries. When we send our soldiers abroad we are asking young men and women to take a serious risk for the country. They could be shot, taken hostage, blown up by land mines. There are numerous examples of this.

For the sake of these soldiers, we in Parliament must ensure that the government is not being irresponsible in its decisions to participate in these missions. It cannot be because the Prime Minister watched CNN and made a decision on a weekend. We must not let the government rubber stamp missions where lives will be lost. We must accept responsibility as legislators and demand a full debate will all the information on the table.

Only after the debate, when we know the risks, the mandate, the rules of engagement, the duration and the cost, can we decide if the mission should go forward.

Then we must hold a free vote. A free vote is critical because it forces individual members to assume responsibility for the safety of our soldiers. When young men and women from our ridings are going to a war zone or a country where government has broken down, we owe it to them to find out the facts for ourselves. The lives of Canadians are more important than pride, the party or the government.

In conclusion, when we vote on the motion each of us will make a choice for which we should be held accountable. Our choices will show Canadians what we think is most important, the lives of our soldiers or what the party brass says.

I will end here and let the vote speak for itself so that Canadians from coast to coast can see where their members stand when it comes to the lives of our soldiers.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have had in this particular area of United Nations peacekeeping missions and Canadian contributions to them a very high level of debate in recent years. It is a debate to which members on both sides of the House have contributed significantly.

As the member for Rosedale rightly reminded us, Canadians have a special interest in UN peacekeeping. The concept is a Canadian creation. It was the brain child of our then foreign minister and later Prime Minister Lester Pearson. He recognized that there is a period in a conflict in which in a certain sense the parties have exhausted themselves emotionally and physically and where the interposition of a third force may allow them to retreat without intolerable loss of face. It is in this context that Mr. Pearson proposed a UN peacekeeping force for the resolution of the Suez crisis.

● (1850)

It worked perfectly and it has become known as the special Canadian contribution to the United Nations international organization. He was later recognized for his work with the award of the Nobel peace prize.

This was an area, if one considers the participants in this particular difference—Great Britain, France, Israel and Egypt—in which there was special Canadian interests apart from the idea of a foreign minister who was a UN man par excellence.

Similarly, I would have said with the Congo in 1960, which was the next big exercise in a UN peacekeeping operation to which Canadians contributed, there is a special Canadian interest in every issue where the presence of a French speaking force is crucial and one with openings to the English speaking world and recognizing the American interest in all these things. The Canadian mission becomes logical, sensible and almost inevitable.

The lesson from our debates in the House in recent years and in the present Parliament has been that we need to redefine our roles in missions, that we have to be more selective in the allocation of our energies, our forces, our contributions to missions and that we should, as far as possible, husband our scarce resources and apply those to situations where there is a Canadian special interest.

I would have thought, and I would agree with people on both sides of the House on this, as to some of the more recent missions, the Somalia mission, I would have thought by most tests, it was not a good case for Canadian involvement at the very beginning. There is something to be said for the thought echoed by the hon. member opposite that when the telephone rings at five in the morning and somebody says that they need our help, maybe the correct response is to say: "George, why do you not go back to sleep and call at regular hours?"

Somalia was a case where the special expertise in terms of the language, in terms of the significant Canadian ethnic community with links to the territory, in terms of knowledge of the culture of the region, the special problems of language and religion, and also the historical divisions within the country was absent. These were outside our knowledge. In some senses it was a tragedy waiting to

happen when we sent over, in essence, a regiment trained more or less for anti-terrorist activities.

I would have said that Bosnia was possibly an issue of which we should have been more cautious although there were special pressures on us by members of Canadian communities with roots in the homelands of the former Yugoslavia. On that we can leave the question open.

However, the main issue is that the pragmatic consensus which has developed in the debates in the House over the past several years is that Parliament should be involved. I remember the Minister of National Defence making this view known to the House during the course of the debate. Sensibly any administration, recognizing the political aspects of these operations and the dangers of misconception or misconstruction of a mission, should be very sensitive to parliamentary opinion. I believe these undertakings were given sufficiently at that time.

The problem we have with this motion is that we recognize the spirit. We believe the spirit has essentially been accepted on both sides of the House, but it does introduce, with its too narrow limits, too specific limits, a limitation that frankly could be extremely troublesome in a period of international crisis solving where urgent action is required.

On that basis, I believe we could say to the party opposite moving this issue that the spirit is there. I think the spirit is accepted and understood on both sides of the House in a responsible way. However, our suggestion to the members opposite is that the tethering limits of the motion create serious impediments to situations in which Canadian interests and Canadian special knowledge and competence suggest an intervention.

Looking at the situation in Somalia, the United States was involved.

• (1855)

The U.S. admiral advising the United Nations in that situation simply did not understand that American federal conditions could not be replicated in a country that was more similar in its social political organization to, for example, Great Britain in the 13th century. I am speaking in terms of the confrontational situation of feuding feudal barons. In Bosnia largely the exercise in policy making had been made in a few key European foreign ministries and not necessarily along lines that were sufficiently broad in their conception to yield a lasting solution.

On that basis I thank members of the third party for their contribution. It adds to the thoughtful contributions of earlier debates made in particular by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands and the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan. These sentiments are understood and appreciated on this side of the House.

It is in this spirit I repeat the thoughts of the member for Rosedale. We think the limitation is too tethering. We think it could be a serious impediment in a crisis situation. In any case the

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pragmatic understanding on both sides of the House is enough to achieve the spirit of what has been contributed to this thoughtful debate.

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 the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): All those in favour of the amendment 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): Pursuant to order made earlier this day the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, April 7, 1997, at the conclusion of the time provided for Government Orders.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

FOOD INSPECTION

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, QB): Madam Speaker, I urge you to keep an eye on the government. It is about to pull another fast one on us. This time, it is food inspection.

This is the problem. I asked the Minister of Agriculture last week about his plan to withdraw from the inspection of processed meat, poultry, fruits and vegetables.

When you go grocery shopping, you buy pâté made by La Belle Fermière or cretons or tête fromagée made with pig's heads, fruit juice, fruit cocktail or other processed food, and now the federal government wants to withdraw from inspecting this type of processed food.

There would be implications for recipes and labelling. When you buy pâté, there are certain ingredients in this product, and at the

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present time, federal inspectors go to small processing plants to check whether the labelling reflects exactly what is in the product. Now the government wants to withdraw from this type of inspection.

These inspections have been done in Canada since 1959—almost 40 years—and done very well. The industry is happy and takes them in its stride. Industries have in fact asked the federal government to continue to provide the inspection service, for which they would be prepared to pay a fair price. The federal government asked its officials to do a study, which shows that the quality could drop in this sort of product. The health of our fellow Canadians could ultimately be affected.

Last week, I was listening to the Prime Minister talk about tobacco as he eliminated cigarette sponsorship of sports and cultural events; he said it was bad for the health of our children.

In this case, although the industry is prepared to pay a fair price, the government is considering withdrawing from this sector.

I think the department of agriculture should ask cabinet and the minister to take a step backward, give the people what they already have today and continue to provide the same service.

In order to save a few million dollars, the government would run the risk of imperiling a significant element in the processing of meats, poultry, fruits and vegetables—industries, as usual, found primarily in Quebec. It would seem that every time things go well in Quebec the government tries to throw a wrench in the works to show that things are not going so well.

I see that the parliamentary secretary will be responding, as the minister is in Japan at the moment. I hope he takes that into consideration and encourages his minister to go back on this decision to stop food processing inspections.

[*English*]

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, current

regulations require mandatory prior approval and registration of labels, processes and formulations for domestically produced and processed vegetables, fruit and products as well as domestic and imported processed meat products.

All other food products regulated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are marked without a mandatory review and industry is solely responsible for label compliance. While the service provides some value from an inspection point of view, the service could be provided by the same private sector that currently supports non-mandatory areas.

During the business alignment plan discussions relating to possible areas of cost reduction some industry representatives indicated that the service was neither necessary nor wanted. However there was not consensus among the various industry organizations. With the government's desire to provide more uniform treatment of food products and to encourage industry to be more self-reliant, the existing program was reviewed.

Several options including termination of the service have been developed. A working group involving industry and consumer organizations and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff has been formed to produce a consensus report by late April 1997.

The goal is to implement this consensus during the second half of the 1997-98 fiscal year. In the interim delivery of the present service will be continued. The final result of these consultations will reflect the fact that the health and safety of Canadians continues to be the major priority of our department.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to be adopted. The House therefore stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.04 p.m.)

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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