



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 135 • NUMBER 027 • 1st SESSION • 36th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Adams (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 three petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations.

* * *

• (1010)

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-273, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (political activities by charities receiving public funds).

He said: Mr. Speaker, passage of this bill would ensure that charities that have charitable status and therefore are able to issue tax receipts would have their charitable status revoked if they use any of the money for political activities, since the act concerned with charitable status specifically prohibits those charities from so doing. It is time to put some teeth into the act.

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

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-274, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (electronic voting).

He said: Mr. Speaker, back in 1994 I ran an electronic referendum in my riding using electronic touch tone voting. It came in for a lot of criticism at the time. However, in 1996 the Harris government wrote electronic voting into the elections act for Ontario and subsequently the city of North York carried out an electronic referendum in March of this year in which 152,000 people voted by touch tone telephone in five languages.

The time has come to amend the Canada Elections Act to permit Elections Canada to carry out some experiments with electronic voting.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present to the House today.

The first one has to do with health warning labels. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems and that fetal alcohol syndrome and alcohol related birth defects are 100% preventable by avoiding alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to mandate the labelling of alcoholic products to warn expectant mothers and others of the risks associated with alcohol consumption.

THE FAMILY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with the family.

The petitioners would like to bring to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society and that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families who choose to provide care in the home to preschool children.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners, therefore, call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families who decide to provide care in the home for preschool children.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition has to do with everyday heroes, our police officers and firefighters on the front lines.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that police officers and firefighters are required to place their lives at risk on a daily basis and that the public mourns the loss when one of them loses his or her life in the line of duty.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to establish a public safety officers compensation fund for the benefit of families of public safety officers, our police officers and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 8 and 10.

[Text]

Question No. 8—**Mr. Chuck Strahl:**

With respect to Captain John MacKinnon of Chilliwack, B.C., (a) when will compensation be given to him in accordance with the recommendation of the summary investigation into alleged professional misconduct, (DND Document #1080-3TD 9307 dated November 29, 1993), and (b) when will the minister consider the alleged injustices of his inappropriate postings and final discharge from the military?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): The various complaints of Captain (Ret'd) Mackinnon are now before the courts. This matter is being reviewed by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian forces, and Captain (Ret'd) MacKinnon will be advised shortly through his lawyers of the position of the Canadian forces in respect of his most recent request.

Question No. 10—**Mr. Ted White:**

What percentage of those who claim to be self-employed did not pay any taxes, or declared losses, during the 1996 taxation year, and what percentage of those people who claim to be self-employed did not pay taxes, or declared losses, for every year from 1993 to 1995 inclusive?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Statistics for the 1996 taxation year are not yet available as processing of tax returns related to the 1996 taxation year is not yet complete. Shown below are the requested data for taxation years 1993 to 1995 inclusive for those individuals whose major source of income in the taxation year was self-employment:

Individuals with Major Source of Income from Self-employment

Taxation Year	Percentage with Losses	Percentage with no tax to pay
1993	13.75	35.80
1994	12.92	36.41
1995	13.04	35.15

Note: These two groups are not mutually exclusive. It is likely that a number of individuals are counted in both.

Source: Statistics Division; Revenue Canada; October 1, 1997

INDIVIDUALS WITH MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME FROM SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Major Source:	Business				Professional				Commissions						
	Total	Losses	No Taxes		Total	Losses	No Taxes		Total	Losses	No Taxes				
Tax Year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
1993	734,310	107,270	14.61	315,060	42.91	215,440	6,370	2.96	38,180	17.72	64,740	4,810	7.43	21,630	33.41
1994	783,450	108,020	13.79	331,940	42.37	212,770	5,540	2.60	37,810	17.77	65,060	4,000	6.15	22,870	35.15
1995	864,860	122,380	14.15	358,740	41.48	232,420	7,290	3.14	40,170	17.28	69,770	4,500	6.45	25,230	36.16

Major Source:	Farming				Fishing				Total						
	Total	Losses	No Taxes		Total	Losses	No Taxes		Total	Losses	No Taxes				
Tax Year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
1993	239,750	56,420	23.53	80,750	33.68	35,170	2,420	6.88	5,950	16.92	1,289,410	177,290	13.75	461,570	35.80
1994	230,360	51,780	22.48	83,890	36.42	30,130	1,370	4.55	4,810	15.96	1,321,770	170,710	12.92	481,320	36.41
1995	241,410	52,040	21.56	77,600	32.14	32,390	1,690	5.22	4,750	14.67	1,440,850	187,900	13.04	506,490	35.15

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[Translation]

Mr. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1015)

[Translation]

SAGUENAY—ST. LAWRENCE MARINE PARK ACT

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.) moved that Bill C-7, an Act to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting the bill to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park at second reading.

Everyone will agree that our parks and national historical monuments are viewed as treasures both here and abroad.

In fact, yesterday I attended a meeting of heritage ministers from across Canada in St. John's, Newfoundland, and we were in unanimous agreement, including the Government of Quebec, that Canada's heritage is a great treasure as far as tourism is concerned, and benefits our economy, as well as nature.

I would like to show you just how much of a collaborative effort this bill has been for the people of the Saguenay. Even MPs who were not from our party were involved in creating the idea of having the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park as the first marine park created by Canadians. The member for Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean himself was the one who conceived this idea and proposed it to the then Minister of the Environment, Lucien Bouchard.

That hon. member, André Harvey—my apologies, Mr. Speaker, I know we are not supposed to name MPs, but I feel this is important. Why? Because it shows that a Liberal member is now putting the finishing touches to a fantastic bill that started out with a Conservative minister and has the support of the Parti Québécois government in Quebec.

This shows how this country can function when we want it to, and how we can work together.

Why did this happen in the Saguenay? Why did we create the first marine park in Canada? We Canadians are often the first to do things. We were the first country to set up a parks department, which is now more than a century old.

We were the first in the world to sign an international treaty on the environment, the International Transboundary Waters Act, which dates, I believe, from 1909. We have worked with the Americans on major environmental matters. All Canadians in their heart feel a bond with the land they live in because of its size and because of its complexity.

[English]

We have how many time zones, how many climate zones? A small group of people spread out over a very vast territory, and what does that give us? It gives us a very unique feeling of how we and the land are partners together. That is why we were the first country in the world to establish a national parks agency, the first country in the world to establish a transboundary agreement on the environment back in 1909. Now today we have another first.

We are establishing the first marine park which started off more than 10 years ago. It was the dream of a member of Parliament who was not of my persuasion. He happened to be the local member of Parliament for the area. He proposed the idea to the then minister who happened to be a member of the Conservative Party but who subsequently joined another party. Now we see it all coming to fruition in a way that I hope and believe every Canadian can support.

• (1020)

[Translation]

I think we are justified in being proud of our efforts, generation after generation, in hanging on to the jewels of our natural and historical heritage. This is in fact the thrust of the resolution passed unanimously in Newfoundland yesterday, in which all the ministers, regardless of political party said "It is our responsibility to preserve our heritage and to improve it for our children".

This same vision and commitment has led us to establish parks and historical sites. Today, they underlie our efforts to create a new network of national parks and of marine conservation areas comprising 29 natural marine areas within Canada.

The federal government has a role, but it is really the people of Canada who are determined to establish legislation to protect this extraordinary and vital marine wealth.

[English]

Together we are fulfilling a vision for parks and marine areas that is truly pan-Canadian in nature.

In the past two years alone we have made tremendous progress with the signing of agreements to establish Wapusk and Tuktut Nogait national parks. We have also proceeded with the withdrawal of lands for future Canadian parks at Wager Bay and on Bathurst Island.

In total we have set aside a land mass of over 60,000 square kilometres, an area larger than the entire country of Switzerland, and we have done that in the past two years alone.

As we work toward completion of our Canadian parks system by the millennium we anticipate establishing new parks and conserva-

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tion areas on Baffin Island, in Lake Superior, in Bonavista Bay and hopefully in the Torngat Mountains, to name just a few.

[*Translation*]

The bill before us today is the result of a joint project and the fruit of a real partnership, proof that Canadians are quite capable of producing grand visions together, when they pool their efforts to achieve a common goal.

The Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park is a reality today because of co-operation between members of Parliament, various levels of government, the communities involved and the native peoples of the region, who played a very important role.

I would also like to point out the great diversity of individuals, organizations and governments involved in this great vision. The lesson learned was that nothing is impossible and anything is possible when people put politics aside and work together for the good of the planet.

[*English*]

This principle is what the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park is all about. It is about working together. It is about setting aside our political differences and uniting around a common goal, that of preserving the ecosystem. Of course it is what Canada and Canadians are all about, people working together in the spirit of shared vision and co-operation; people coming together as we did during the Saguenay and Red River floods with the spirit of co-operation and vision; people from diverse communities with various political backgrounds, different levels of government, different ideas and interests coming together to protect a unique marine environment, to establish a unique marine park and to preserve this magnificent part of Canada's national heritage.

Through today's legislation we are following through on our shared goal of protecting and preserving the natural environment contained in the park. Most significantly, we are ensuring better protection for the beluga whale, a threatened species that is native to this region.

The beluga whale grows up to six metres in length. With its distinctly white coloration, high rounded forehead and lack of a dorsal fin, it is one of the world's most extraordinary creatures. For years they have been known for their remarkably varied vocal repertoire. Canadians have listened to their voices calling out from the sea for marine protection.

More than 500 beluga whales live within the park's boundaries. The vast majority of Canadians have never seen a beluga whale, but they want to save the habitat for their children and for the children of the whales.

• (1025)

In creating this new marine park we are making sure that our efforts are working in harmony with our strategy for sustainable development and biodiversity. Together Canadians are moving toward that goal.

[*Translation*]

The Saguenay-St. Lawrence marine park will be a meeting place for Canadian and foreign tourists, as well as the main attraction of a region that is unique, given its incomparable natural beauty.

Over a five-year period, the marine park will result in over \$11 million being invested in the local, regional and national economy, and in the creation of 350 jobs in the region. So far, the federal government has invested more than \$15 million and we are planning to put in another \$15 million before the beginning of the new millennium. The purpose of this initiative is to increase the level of protection of the marine ecosystems and to promote public appreciation for the park.

Our natural heritage is an important element that distinguishes us as a people and a country. The establishment of the Saguenay-St. Lawrence marine park will allow us to reinforce Canada's identity and values, and to become even more responsible as regards nature and our common future.

The bill before us today has the support of environmental organizations, aboriginal people and local businesses, which have already contributed \$30 million toward the creation of the park. The park is a unique natural treasure in a prime location, not only in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence region, but in the hearts of all Canadians.

The park is also unique in that it is the first federal-provincial salt water park.

Canadians are proud to live in a beautiful, vast and very diversified country, with coasts that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

We can stop environmental degradation in this particular region of Canada and we can protect our natural heritage thanks to the efforts and the will of all concerned.

[*English*]

I had a privilege and a thrill this summer which probably most people would never have in a lifetime. I had the privilege of sailing a boat from Newfoundland to Boston. We started from Newfoundland and as we came out of the St. John's harbour, within a quarter of a mile of the harbour, I was able to pull the boat beside an iceberg which towered over us by about 300 feet. What you do not see is about 90% of the iceberg below.

Not only did we see this iceberg but as we sat beside it and marvelled at its intense beauty as a part of an ecosystem which has been there for 20,000 years, a whale jumped out.

Within the graph of a quarter of a mile of our land, we had mother nature of 20,000 years and mother nature in the form not of a beluga whale but a less endangered species of a whale.

There are times when the battles of the workforce in politics or otherwise can make you lose site of the bigger picture. When I was there in the boat watching the whales from the pod jump, I had to

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say this is the nature of the land which we have inherited from our ancestors.

It is the nature of a land that we have a responsibility to give to our children. That is why I was so proud last night when our prime minister in his address in Ottawa underscored the environmental challenges we face in the future. We cannot just think of today. We cannot just think of tomorrow. We have to think of future generations.

In the establishment of the first federal-provincial marine park in salt water, we are setting a framework to keep this park forever, into infinity, not just so we can sail, if we have the means—and not everybody does—but so generations of young Canadians in the future can see what it is that drew people inexorably to this fantastic country called Canada.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

When people like Radisson and Desgroseillers travelled through Hamilton on their trips to find furs, they experienced a feeling for their country that was shared with aboriginal people. We have somewhat forgotten the true nature of this country called Canada. This country is winter and winter is our country. I believe that with the small step we are taking today by establishing the first marine park, we are recreating—

[*English*]

A magnet brought people to this fantastic country, whether it was several hundred years ago, thousands of years ago over the Bering Strait, or as late as this year when thousands of people chose to call Canada home. I think the bill is one of the reasons we will continue to preserve a way of life that people around the world see as a magnet for their hopes and their aspirations.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Madam Speaker, this being my first formal speech in the House of Commons in this session, I wish to congratulate you on your position in the chair and the Speaker of the House on the democratic process that we went through a couple of weeks ago. I know all of you are working very hard to make sure that parliament is conducted in a way that we can have our political differences but at the same time in a way that all decisions by the Chair are fair.

Another thing I would like to do obviously is to thank the people of Kootenay—Columbia for vesting their confidence in me. I had a vote of 62% and certainly I thank those people for their vote, but I also feel a tremendous responsibility to the other 38% who chose to vote for someone else, that they would see me as representing them in the Kootenay—Columbia constituency and be worthy of the trust the people have given me.

I was very interested in the comments of the heritage minister about her personal experience on the Atlantic. Of all the divisions within the heritage department probably parks are closest to my own heart. I have been very fortunate. My wife and I have reared three children on a lake in the Rocky Mountains. It is not unusual on my way home either to see muskrat, elk or deer. We have white

swan. We have loons. We have everything constantly around us. I have a tremendous appreciation for nature.

Probably the difference—this is perhaps a personal difference and a political difference—is the vision I have of parks in Canada as creating more of a balance. There is a tension between the side of preservation of what we have in Canada and the access citizens and visitors to Canada should have to parks. Perhaps that is where we would end up with a difference of opinion.

Because of the time I have spent at my home and in our own area I have personally seen and smelled grizzly bear, seen the caribou and the moose.

About 15 years ago in the fall during the rut I was rather chagrined. I was driving a TransAm. That car rode very close to the road. As I was driving between two centres in my constituency a moose walked out very slowly. I had just finished passing a Greyhound bus and I slowed down to a stop. The moose was absolutely a gigantic, magnificent animal. He kind of looked at the front of the car with that great big thunderbird on it. I was wondering if he saw it as something he wanted to mangle or attack. I was particularly concerned about the bus coming up behind me, that somebody might honk the horn in which case this animal might do something unexpected.

That is the kind of country I come from and I am very proud to represent. I have a strong feeling about nature and what we have in Canada.

It is with that vision that I speak to the bill before us. My understanding is that this is federally enabling legislation for an agreement between Canada and Quebec, signed in 1990, to create a marine park at the confluence of the Saguenay fiord and the St. Lawrence estuary and to conserve and manage its marine resources. Bill C-7 does not involve any transfer of land. The Government of Quebec retains ownership of the seabed and subsoil resources. The Government of Canada continues to exercise its responsibility over navigation and fisheries. Existing laws remain applicable in the park.

• (1035)

The legislative process that we enter into in the House is very important. All steps in the process are very important. In this case the committee work will be a very valuable part of putting this important legislation in place.

There is collaboration in the involvement of local and regional organizations in protecting the site. It suggests that there is support for this 1,138 square kilometre protected zone.

It will be very important for the committee to hear from people about the issue so that we clearly understand we have representation from people and, if there are two sides to this issue, so that we clearly understand where the local people are coming from.

Funding was provided for in the February 1995 federal budget and the federal contributions toward development and operating

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costs totalled \$20.7 million over three years. Additional funding from the federal government has been \$6 million between 1989 and 1993 and \$4 million for green plan funding between 1993 and 1995.

I am a little confused with the funding. It will also be an important part of the job of the committee to take a look at the issue of funding. I have the numbers for 1989-90, 1990-91, and so on and so forth all the way up to 1996-97, where I see a total of \$16.3 million in federal money went into the park.

I have two figures in front of me that I find a little confusing, \$20.7 million and \$30.7 million. I heard the minister in her speech talk about the figure of \$30.7 million. I am trying to portray the issue of the dollars and cents.

The Reform Party is noted for looking after the financial affairs of Canada and calling the government to account for the way it spends its dollars. The dollars that have been spent to this point do not appear to have been exorbitant or out of line. However there does seem to be some confusion about them. I would look to the committee to examine expenditures.

Parliament must approve all new parks and all changes to existing parks. This should ensure some accountability to parliament and ultimately to the public. Our national parks are owned by all Canadians and purportedly managed on their behalf. The legislation attempts to put in place a federal-provincial management regime that is already operational.

I also had the good fortune, as the minister just indicated, to visit Newfoundland this summer. I was on the opposite side of the island. I was at Gros Morne National Park. I cite this by way of example of the kind of work we must do in committee. I cite Gros Morne as a template. If we take a look at it we should be able to see the kinds of questions we should be asking in committee.

Gros Morne is 20 to 25 years old. It is still in the formation stages and is working under an agreement between the federal and provincial governments. The applicable laws and their enforcement come under the provincial government because enabling legislation has not been brought through the House to bring it under Parks Canada.

One of the good things I saw in Gros Morne Park was the relationship of the services being provided either to the park or to the visitors of the park. They were very simple.

In Jasper National Park, Banff, or Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba people constantly run into conflict between commercial interests providing services to the park and its visitors because of an overlay, duplication, and many years of trying to jig and redo leases.

• (1040)

The beauty of Gros Morne is that the leases that have been negotiated have been done on the basis of a percentage of gross revenue. That is something we could take a look at for any leases in the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Park. We should be looking at simplifying leases, particularly for people who provide boat services and things of that nature.

Another very good thing about Gros Morne is that the towns, although geographically within the park, are nonetheless not contained within the actual park boundary. This has tremendously simplified the relationship of the towns to the park and to the park administration.

This is something we could learn about, for example, when we take a look at the conflict we are currently undergoing in the town of Banff. Jasper certainly is not far behind, as are the other towns within park boundaries.

We have a very interesting situation in Gros Morne. We are talking about the moose and land animals there. They do relate to Beluga whales and to the marine life in this marine park. The problem with moose in Gros Morne is that they are literally eating the park to death. I can see a situation forthcoming where there may even have to be a cull of moose because the park could actually be killed by the overgrazing of moose.

One interesting thing about moose in Newfoundland is that they are not actually natural to Newfoundland. They were imported at the turn of the century. I believe the year was 1906. As a consequence they have adapted to an absolutely ideal territory but unfortunately are eating the park to death.

Another interesting point is that we can learn from the Gros Morne template relative to this act and what happened with respect to the agreement on snowmobiles in Gros Morne. When the agreement was negotiated some 20 years ago there was no vision, nor could we have had a vision, of how the capability and capacity of snowmobiles could be increased to extreme heights in terms of speed and carrying people.

As a result the agreement negotiated with the people in the area at the time is now called into question. With access to the high plateau areas in Gros Morne Park there is actually what I call shoulder season problems. In other words, if the snowmobiles are out too soon, or particularly in the spring when the snowmobiles are out too late, they are actually causing damage.

That is why I am suggesting to the House and to the committee that we must take a look at flexibility in anything to do with the legislation so that we do not end up finding ourselves in a box with respect to people who are running boats in this area.

We cannot possibly foresee the technological capacity of boats that will be in this area. As a consequence we must ensure we have flexibility within any legislation and within regulations so that we do not end up with the same kind of problems with boats at Saguenay that we are currently experiencing with snowmobiles at Gros Morne.

As I indicated at the outset of my comments, I believe that the majority of people in the Reform Party and I have a different vision of Parks Canada than the minister and certainly the Liberal government. We see parks as being areas that must be properly confined and protected for the benefit of our children and our grandchildren and for the benefit of all people in the world, which is why Banff is designated a heritage site. We understand that. However, we have a lot of difficulty when we try to apply preservation techniques and policies on an area where people are already coming into the parks.

• (1045)

I believe there has to be a better balance and a better approach to parks and preserves. My vision of this in committee would be to look at it more from the perspective of the people who are presently going into this area. As the minister indicated, it is important to protect the beluga and its environment. At the same time we have to take into account that one of the major reasons for this park is for all Canadians and all visitors to have the potential for the same kind of experience the minister had with the whale and the iceberg.

I have one criticism that could be considered partisan. Once again the Liberal government is using the House as a rubber stamp. And it is not just the Liberal government. Between the Liberals and Conservatives who have bounced back and forth across this Chamber frequently there has been the implication that because one has a majority government, it will simply bring in the legislation in due course, in due time.

When the minister talked about “putting the final touches” on this legislation, she also indicated there was a Conservative initiative to this. Why does the legislation come at the very tag end? Why is it that when these parties are in government they consistently use the House as a rubber stamp?

All the details were worked out with the province of Quebec long before it was brought to the House for any kind of discussion. That is really unfortunate and takes me back to the first item on my shopping list for committee. The people in the area and all concerned parties must be heard relative to their support for this park. We have some documentation to back it up but let us hear the people in place.

What are the implications for commercial and sports fisheries on the St. Lawrence? What are the implications for other uses of the river? It is absolutely essential that the people who are presently using that area for its marine life be taken into account.

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I cite by way of example a situation in my constituency. We in Kootenay—Columbia are part of one of the major flyways for waterfowl that come from northern Canada and head south to the U.S. and further. On the Columbia River are very delicate nesting areas. We have to be very conscious of power boats being used in specific locations on the Columbia River, otherwise we would be really fouling up the waterfowl.

However, last summer in particular several idiots on personal watercraft roared through some of these areas. I cannot imagine what if anything was going through their heads. The net result of these few people who chose not to use their brains, who were acting in a reckless and irresponsible way—there was only a handful of them—was that the B.C. ministry of environment suddenly slapped a 10-horsepower limit on an 80-mile stretch of the river.

That really flies in the teeth of the people in my constituency, the vast majority of whom are very responsible, the vast majority of whom choose to live there, as I do, because we respect the area and we respect nature. Those people use the river responsibly. Now, all of a sudden out of the clear blue sky, boom, a 10-horsepower motor limit. That kind of knee-jerk reaction by bureaucracy not only does not solve the problem but actually ends up seriously irritating responsible people.

• (1050)

Why do I say that it does not really solve the problem? If you could put a 10-horsepower motor on something like a canoe—which you could not do because you would sink it—and ran it full bore up the river, you would create as much damage as these personal watercraft are creating in these nesting areas. The 10-horsepower limit means nothing.

With that in mind, what are the implications for commercial and sports fisheries on the St. Lawrence as a result of this bill and particularly as a result of the overlay of park regulations? That is another question we must answer to our satisfaction to ensure that we do not end up doing things unnecessarily and making people angry.

This 10 horsepower limit is seen by myself and many others like trying to kill a mosquito with a 10 pound sledgehammer. It is unnecessary and would probably create more damage than was intended in the first place.

There is another issue. Unfortunately because of the separatist aspirations of the BQ and PQ we must take into account what kind of implications this bill may have. We cannot just say “It is all drafted and it looks fine”. We must seriously examine what this bill means, what its implications could conceivably be relative to the relationship between the federal government and the government of the province of Quebec, particularly as long as the

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province of Quebec is represented by people who would break up this country. We must be very careful with this bill.

Finally, what precedents does this bill establish for future parks? Probably more important, what precedents does it set for the establishment of other marine parks in Canada?

Legislation does not happen in a vacuum. Legislation works almost like an onion, layer upon layer. For the people in the rest of Canada who may have a marine park brought forward in their area, we must be very careful to determine what precedents this bill establishes. We cannot see the establishment of this park and the marine control in isolation.

The minister has already said there is a movement afoot—probably a good movement—to establish a full park system. If we do not take into account what happens on the west and north coasts as it relates to marine life and the use of that water by existing and potential future users, we would be making a mistake.

We are concerned about a number of things. We insist the committee go through these questions and other questions that will be raised by other members. This will not be a committee rubber stamp process, nor do I expect it to be. The parliamentary secretary, the secretary of state and the chairman of the heritage committee are fine gentlemen who will see to it that this is not a rubber stamp process and that we will have the opportunity, in a totally non-partisan way, to establish answers to some of the questions I have posed and hopefully some of the questions that other members will pose.

However, because we do believe this is a good bill in principle, the Reform Party will support it at second reading.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-7, the short title of which is the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park Act.

• (1055)

I am pleased to announce at the outset—and this will not come as a surprise either—that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill.

On December 12, 1996, the governments of Quebec and Canada announced they were tabling a bill on the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park before the Quebec National Assembly and the House of Commons respectively, to implement the April 1990 agreement between the two governments.

At that time, the two ministers responsible for the bill, that is to say Canada's Minister of Canadian Heritage and Quebec's environ-

ment and wildlife minister, stressed how important their two bills were. While identical in many respects, these bills take into account each government's jurisdictions.

These bills were Bill 86 in Quebec and Bill C-78 in Canada. They are aimed at enhancing the level of protection of the ecosystems in part of the Saguenay River fjord and the northern St. Lawrence estuary to ensure conservation, while at the same time promoting its use for educational, recreational and scientific purposes, for the benefit of present and future generations.

At the time these two bills were tabled, the Minister of Canadian Heritage described the legislation as, and I quote:

—the result of several years of concerted efforts between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec.

As for the hon. David Cliche, then Quebec's environment and wildlife minister, he stated:

We are proud of the positive result of our consultations and are convinced we have met the expectations of the public and of the many partners who will be associated with a project of this magnitude.

What therefore was the purpose of the agreement that led to the establishment of this marine park, which is located in an internationally recognized tourist sector and which will boost an already strong and lasting tourist industry?

The marine park project was apparently launched in 1985. On June 3, 1988, Canada and Quebec agreed that they should sit down together and talk about establishing a marine park in the Saguenay.

The parties recognized, and I quote:

The importance and the urgency of protecting and preserving for the present and for future generations the exceptional flora and fauna of the marine territory at the confluence of the Saguenay River and the northern half of the St. Lawrence estuary and of developing said flora and fauna.

It was to be almost another two years before the two governments worked out an agreement, which they signed on April 6, 1990. Under this agreement, both governments undertook, within the limits of their constitutional authority, to cause to be passed legislative or regulatory measures for the purpose of, and I quote:

[...]

(a) establishing a marine park to be known as the Saguenay Marine Park located at the confluence of the Saguenay River and the northern half of the St. Lawrence estuary;

(b) preserving the aquatic flora and fauna, and maintaining the integrity of ecosystems in this territory;

(c) protecting the territory and other resources;

(d) developing these resources for the benefit of present and future generations;

(e) creating public awareness of these resources.

In addition, this agreement created a joint committee that was to report to each government within six months of the signing of the

agreement, in other words around October 1990, regarding the legislative or regulatory measures they should pass.

In article 2, the agreement set out the provisional boundaries of the Saguenay Marine Park and both governments gave themselves four months to agree on a detailed description of the park's provisional boundaries, and a maximum of nine months within which both governments would carry out a public consultation prior to defining the permanent boundaries of the park.

Article 3 of the agreement confirmed the rights and authorities of each of the governments, which became, as it were, co-owners of the park. Thus, under this agreement, the Quebec government maintains ownership of the sea floor and of surface and subsurface resources, whereas the federal government continues to exercise its jurisdiction in matters including navigation and fisheries.

• (1100)

This is in fact a first in Canada, since this park will be under joint federal-provincial management, and neither party will have to relinquish anything to the other.

With an increasing willingness to co-operate in the best interests of taxpayers who are always seeking an end to useless duplication and overlap, the two governments have agreed to harmonize their initiatives and the initiatives of their respective departments and agencies. They have even agreed, under article 4 of the agreement, to share present and future infrastructures, facilities and equipment in the marine park, provided that one of the governments makes such a request to the other.

In addition, the two governments have created a committee with two representatives from each of the governments, whose task will be to find ways to further harmonize efforts. The committee's mandate is to harmonize initiatives by Canada and Quebec, especially in the areas of planning, research, management plan development and programming activities, consultation with concerned individuals and groups, integration of development efforts, arrangements for sharing existing and planned infrastructures, facilities, and equipment, scheduling, personnel exchanges, communications and organization of seminars, symposiums and exhibits, marine fauna and flora and public security.

This proposed marine park innovates in three main areas. To begin with, it is the first time in Quebec that a park is given the mission of protecting a marine environment. Furthermore, it is the first time that the governments of Canada and Quebec work together to establish a park. And finally, there has never before been such an innovative consultation process.

In this regard, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this project originated at the grassroots level and evolved to finally reach Parliament, contrary to numerous projects that are of a centralizing nature and that originate with the government and

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are imposed on the population. The Reform Party must be very pleased with this, because the establishment of this park reflects exactly what the population of this region wants.

I would like to give a broad outline of the consultation process. In December 1990, the two governments held joint public hearings to determine the park's boundaries. Following that, they set up an advisory committee including representatives from the regional county municipalities affected by the project, from the scientific community, from the Quebec union for the conservation of nature and from the coalition for the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park.

The mandate of the committee was to advise planners on, first, the way the park project was perceived in the area and, second, the content of a development proposal. The committee and the representatives of the ministers concerned were able to bring to the fore the issues involved and to show the interest the people had for a marine park.

In April 1993, both governments made public the boundaries of the park and announced at the same time public consultations on the development proposal. Two months later, at the end of the consultations, the governments had received 63 submissions which were thoroughly reviewed. A report was submitted in December 1993.

• (1105)

The governments had everything they needed to prepare the master plan for the marine park, which was released at the beginning of 1996. This major consultation effort produced at least two changes: the name was changed from Saguenay Marine Park to Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park and the area covered went from 746 square kilometres to 1,138 square kilometres, almost double the original area.

After more than 10 years of talks and negotiations between the governments in Ottawa and Quebec, the National Assembly made the project official on June 5, 1997, by passing Bill 86 which had been introduced on December 12, 1996. However, the Quebec legislation will only come into force once Bill C-7 receives royal assent.

However, Bill C-78, which was introduced in the House of Commons in December 1996 at the same time as the bill in Quebec City, met with a very different fate. Last April, during the 35th Parliament, the Bloc Québécois, which at the time was the official opposition, feeling it was becoming increasingly obvious that the Prime Minister was going to ask the Governor General to prorogue the House and call a general election, made representations on several occasions to the government to speed up the process and pass the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park Act as quickly as possible before the general election. Instead, the government chose to let it die on the Order Paper.

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The long awaited Bill C-7 before the House today at second reading is the result of many years of joint efforts on the part of the governments of Quebec and Canada.

The establishment of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park provided for in this bill is also the result of the co-operation between the many organizations already active in surrounding areas, local and regional communities, environmental groups, native peoples and the scientific community. Thanks to this co-operation, they were able to set joint objectives for the management and protection of the area's rich and diverse marine resources, particularly to better protect an endangered species, the beluga.

The management plan tabled in February 1996, after extensive public consultation, mentions the existence of a consensus on the conservation of marine ecosystems and the development of the park. The Canadian and Quebec acts creating the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park are mirror images. Both pieces of legislation have the same objectives, namely the conservation and development of the marine environment. The two bills complement each other, without losing sight of the constitutional jurisdiction of each level of government.

Without going into detail, I will recall the main elements of the bill as outlined in the summary. This bill creates the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park. It will be the first federal-provincial salt water marine park.

It sets out the role the federal government will have to play, mainly with respect to managing the park in conjunction with the Government of Quebec. However, a provision in the bill allows the minister responsible for Parks Canada to enter into agreements with the other levels of government or with organizations, if this is necessary to insure maximum effectiveness in establishing innovative partnerships that will help achieve management objectives for the future.

It implements the 1990 federal-provincial agreement.

It deals with the water column within the park boundaries.

The bill provides for joint management of the parks and the creation of committees for that purpose. Among other things, the governments will jointly establish a harmonization committee to coordinate their respective planning and management activities. The legislation also provides for the creation of a co-ordinating committee, which will give members of the community the opportunity to participate in the improvement of the protection measures and the promotional activities for the park. That co-ordinating structure involves both levels of governments, the regional stakeholders and the band council of the Essipit Montagnais.

• (1110)

Furthermore, the management framework included in the management plan published jointly by both governments under the title "Crossroads of Life, Site of Exchanges, Wellspring of Riches" states that this plan has created a co-ordination zone. The document defines that zone as follows:

The marine park territory and the surrounding regions form the co-ordination zone. Besides the territory of the park itself, the zone stretches from Chicoutimi to Tadoussac and includes all municipalities bordering the fjord. Along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, the co-ordination zone stretches from Saint-Fidèle-de-Mont-Murray to Les Escoumins and includes the territory of the Essipit aboriginal community. On the south shore, municipalities along the estuary from Kamouraska to Trois-Pistoles are part of the zone.

The co-ordinating committee will be composed as follows: one representative for each of the north shore regional county municipalities adjacent to the marine park, that is Charlevoix-Est, Fjord-du-Saguenay and Haute-Côte-Nord; one representative only for the three south shore regional county municipalities concerned by the park, that is Kamouraska, Les Basques and Rivière-du-Loup; one representative of the scientific community; one representative of the groups concerned with resource conservation and preservation as well as with education in natural environment and its interpretation; one representative of the Department of Canadian Heritage; and one representative of the Quebec Department of Environment and Wildlife.

The bill requires that management plans be prepared and laid before Parliament. It provides that a management plan shall be laid before Parliament within one year after the establishment of the park. Afterwards, the management plan will have to be reviewed at least once every seven years and laid before Parliament.

The bill creates a procedure for changing park boundaries. As presently provided, its territory contains 1,138 square kilometres and covers a representative part of the marine environment of the fjord and the estuary. This territory includes the Saguenay River from the mouth of the river up to Cap de l'Est, located about 40 kilometres east of Chicoutimi, as well as the north estuary of the St. Lawrence River from Gros Cap à l'Aigle, located about 10 kilometres east of the town of the same name, up to Pointe Rouge or Les Escoumins.

The boundaries could be changed by order in council, provided that the Government of Quebec has given its approval and that both ministers of both levels of government have jointly consulted the public on this issue.

It is interesting to note that, in this bill, the public is directly involved in the management of the park, since both the federal and the provincial minister must encourage the people to take part in the development of the park's policies and management plan and in the examination of all major related issues.

The bill reaffirms the protection of natural and cultural resources and of the park's ecosystems. It also includes measures to protect the health and safety of all visitors inside the park.

The bill also stipulates the offences and penalties for every person who contravenes this legislation or its regulations. It gives the park wardens the same powers of arrest granted peace officers in the Criminal Code.

• (1115)

Anyone found guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction is liable in the case of a natural person, to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both, and in the case of a corporation, to a fine not exceeding \$100,000.

Anyone found guilty of an indictable offence is liable in the case of a natural person, to a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or to both.

In the case of a corporation, the maximum fine is \$500,000.

The bill will complement existing federal legislation that could be affected by its provisions, such as the Fisheries Act, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994, and the Canada Shipping Act.

The bill is quite clear. All resource exploration and development activities in mining and energy production will be prohibited within the park's boundaries. Oil and gas pipelines and power lines will also be prohibited.

The bill describes clearly all the management and planning activities that will be necessary for proper operation of the park. The Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park will benefit the whole area. Local residents will be provided with the means to conserve this area, and its flora and fauna. The park will generate jobs in the areas of nature conservation, site development, territory protection and tourist industry.

During the development phase, there will be jobs in infrastructure construction and site development. Scientists will certainly contribute to the supervision of environmental aspects of this work. In the longer term, there will be job creation for conservation officers involved in the protection of the park and the security of visitors, for employees in charge of the maintenance of the park and its various sites, and interpreters to help visitors enjoy the park.

The marine park will be a new attraction that will bring new tourists in this area and keep those who had already been going there for a longer period. These tourists will generate new benefits for the accommodation industry, restaurants, and cultural and leisure activities.

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The establishment of this park will especially help preserve, for future generations, a precious and unique regional ecosystem that is found nowhere else in Quebec or in Canada. It is Heritage Canada's job, through Parks Canada, to assign resources to the protection of the environment, just as Quebec's environment and wildlife department does in Quebec.

Quebec has always been protective of its territory and has always reluctantly accepted to let Canada settle on its land. Today, the Department of Canadian Heritage has given Parks Canada the mandate to manage two national parks in Quebec, Forillon and la Mauricie; a national park reserve, the Mingan Islands; four navigable historic canals; 21 historic sites; and a development program of approximately a hundred commemorative plaques.

Through its environment and wildlife department, the Government of Quebec already manages 50 ecological reserves and 17 parks, and it has reserved 18 territories in the north with the intention of turning them into parks.

In the issue before the House today, the Government of Quebec has worked in good faith with the Government of Canada because it wanted to establish this park, because it did not want to give up any rights—the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park does fall under the jurisdiction of both governments—and, consequently, the government could not act alone. It had to act in co-operation with the Government of Canada.

Of course, if Quebec were a sovereign state, the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park would probably have been established by now. The establishment of a new partnership with the Government of Canada meant that the Government of Quebec had to initiate a whole process of discussion, of consultation, of co-ordination and of planning before going ahead with this marine park. If Quebec had acted alone in creating this park, there would certainly have been less discussion, less compromise, no jurisdictional problems and, most of all, no need to wait for Ottawa to pass this legislation.

• (1120)

But, for now, Quebec is still part of Canada. The adoption of this bill will allow Quebec to go ahead with the joint project to create a marine park and to recover some of the tax money it pays each year to the federal government.

I call upon my colleagues from all parties to co-operate in order to ensure speedy passage of Bill C-7, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park Act.

In closing, I would like to read another excerpt from the management plan to which I was referring earlier. I quote:

The Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park is a product of the richness and diversity of its natural and cultural components as well as the interest expressed by the public in their increased protection—. Today, our society is looking to renew its interest in the marine environment and all the memories it holds. Like yesterday's explorers and hunters, today's visitors relive the excitement of an encounter with marine mammals;

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they become image hunters. A good look at the long-term human intervention in the area of the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park will reveal the importance of the marine ecosystem in humanity's heritage.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very proud today to rise on behalf of my constituents of Sackville—Eastern Shore to declare the New Democratic Party's support in principle for Bill C-7, an act to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

In my riding the significance of our natural surroundings affects our very lives and livelihood. Our streams, rivers, lakes, forests and agricultural lands provide sustenance to all who reside there. Whether it is the citizens in the north or the citizens in the south, the need to maintain and preserve the ecosystem is a belief shared by everyone.

I commend the Liberal government's effort to fulfil at least one election promise made to Canadians. I am pleased that the proposed legislation will enable all Canadians the opportunity to visit and enjoy another jewel in our country's natural heritage.

Bill C-7 is the reincarnation of Bill C-78 tabled late in the 35th Parliament which died on the Order Paper with the dissolution of Parliament. Its reintroduction is a continuation of the effort which began in the 1970s when the need for marine life protection along the St. Lawrence achieved national attention.

The disgraceful state of the river at the time was best signified by the dead and dying St. Lawrence beluga whales washing ashore. Toxic contaminants from upriver sources have been identified as the primary culprit. The establishment of a marine park it is hoped will assist in the recovery of this endangered species.

The rich diversity of marine life found at the confluence of the Saguenay fjord and the St. Lawrence River supports many species and is visited each summer by blue whales, fin whales, minke whales and on occasion by humpback and sperm whales. The whales represent the top of the park's marine food chain and efforts to correct the damage to this area inflicted by man deserve our support.

There is another fact which may be overlooked. Millions of people depend upon the waters of the St. Lawrence for drinking water, recreational and employment purposes. Given the endangered state of the St. Lawrence beluga, a victim of outdated practices and environmental impacts, the risk to people is acknowledged. The requirement for the protection of this ecosystem becomes an absolute necessity.

The significance of the establishment of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park goes beyond the benefits of this ecosystem. It is a hallmark in intergovernmental co-operation. The process to

guarantee the conversion of an acknowledged jewel involved the active participation and conciliation between the governments of Canada and Quebec. Both levels agreed upon a need to correct the errors of the past and to proceed with a common purpose to achieve a noble end, the protection and preservation of this marine ecosystem.

Both levels agreed to honour their respective jurisdictions. Throughout the years which followed, they discussed, consulted and overcame adversity. On June 5, 1997 the proposed legislation received Quebec legislature assent.

The degree of public participation and input must also be recognized. The communities were consulted. Aboriginal participation was ensured. We hope that the co-ordinating committee, a key component toward the park's success, will continue the spirit of goodwill to provide input and direction that is both productive and proactive.

• (1125)

A fine example of how the public consultation principle can be incorporated into a decision making process occurred when all parties agreed to expand the park boundaries from 746 square kilometres to 1,138 square kilometres. Environmental groups and marine scientists for the most part were acknowledged and listened to beyond political agendas or preferences of the day.

The process will not end with Parliament's assent. A new stage begins: the definition and implementation of the management plan. The management plan will define the ability for the ecosystem to survive, to thrive and to provide a sustainable use of the natural resources. There are several concerns that various stakeholders have expressed on proposed management plans, parameters and restrictions. I look forward to raising these important considerations at committee.

I am confident that the co-operation shown throughout the years can continue at committee and the matters related to a successful, sustainable marine park management plan specific to the Saguenay—St. Lawrence area will be included for final reading.

There is agreement between all proponents that it is imperative to establish the park for the belugas, for the hundreds of marine species, for the preservation and enjoyment of future generations. There is agreement between many proponents that to ensure this principle's success, several basic standards are absent from the proposed legislation as written today.

There is very little language in Bill C-7 referring to the conservation mandate of the park and Parks Canada. A suggestion from the World Wildlife Fund, active proponents and contributors to this process, is the strengthening of the language in the preamble and the purpose of the bill. The park is being created not

just to protect but to conserve and maintain the integrity of the natural ecosystems within the park's boundaries.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, the initial impetus to establish the Saguenay-St. Lawrence marine park came out of the efforts to protect and recover the beluga whale population living in that region. Perhaps we should ask why there is no mention of species at risk. Through the years this can be interpreted as a basic oversight easily corrected by committee.

I believe that a second sentence can be added to the purpose of the bill or to the preamble to the effect that "this will be done by preserving and maintaining the natural ecosystems within the park boundaries, and in particular by protecting and aiding the recovery of species and populations designated as at risk". Fine words written by our friends and a principal tenet I am proud to refer to the House.

Proponents have requested that the bill should include the Parks Canada guiding principles to be used as the definitive reference to guide park operations. Proponents have requested that some of the zone one areas, those areas deemed as vital for integral preservation, be expanded. Concerns on a complete ban on bottom trawling to prevent the disturbance of contaminated sediments which will cause further ecological damage is proposed also.

The cornerstone to this park's sustainable success will be restrictions on recreational and commercial impacts upon breeding areas and other areas in this region deemed as critical for marine life preservation. We believe a balance can be struck to ensure the economic benefits gained by the surrounding communities through ecotourism initiatives. We believe that the environment and jobs are not inconsistent when managed wisely in a sustainable manner.

This process has evolved over many years. I am confident that any conflicts or differing views in management plan procedures can be addressed at committee. A national marine conservation areas policy is in its infancy. Although a national marine parks policy was produced over a decade ago, a lack of practical experience has led to a continuing study and consultation period.

Parks Canada is recognized internationally for its professional standards, its high degree of determination to ensure the conservation and preservation of Canada's national parks. It is truly to be congratulated.

The protection of our wilderness areas is often thought of in terrestrial terms, semi-closed ecosystems which have defined components based on specific locations and limited outside impacts. There are Jasper, Gros Morne, Wood Buffalo, Fundy, Kluane, La Mauricie, Grasslands, Prince Albert, Cape Breton Highlands and over 20 other national parks in this fine country. Banff, the original jewel, was established in 1885.

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Today we refer to committee another effort to preserve a part of our national heritage for future generations. There is a significant difference between the proposed Saguenay-St. Lawrence marine park and this country's efforts across the past century. However, I must explain to my colleagues the responsibilities we accept today are on behalf of all Canadians.

• (1130)

The proposed legislation recognizes the respect for alternate jurisdictions and I join my colleagues to commend the fine degree of co-operation demonstrated by the federal and Quebec governments toward this noble cause.

The federal government's responsibilities will include the overlying water column and exercising its legislative jurisdiction over marine resources and maritime transportation activities in this territory. The Quebec government retains administration for the seabed and subsoil resources.

The water column is the fundamental component for this park's success. The water column is a transportation medium for the pollutants which contribute to the near demise of the St. Lawrence belugas. The water column is a fluid highway that delivers the outfalls and ecosystem degradation from a distant point to impact upon our best intentions and efforts which will determine a recovery or loss.

The establishment of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park will require close co-operation and collaboration across many jurisdictional boundaries. There will be a new era of scientific and educational unity which cannot be destroyed by political interference or self-serving agendas of the day.

The water column has the capacity to transport the nutrients and support requirements for the regeneration of this area. Through conscious efforts to conserve and maintain the integrity of the marine ecosystems within the park's boundaries we have the opportunity to improve and contribute to the betterment of adjacent and distant regions.

The protection of the proposed park will require an effective management plan and I agree with the concerns raised by my colleagues on behalf of concerned Canadians and international organizations. In addition to the aforementioned concerns and comments we must accept the responsibility which is this and future governments' duty to ensure.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans must commit to a comprehensive monitoring program in the park. The department must commit to acting in a responsible and co-operative manner. This responsibility will include the budget allocation for adequate personnel and sufficient equipment to fulfil jurisdiction requirements. This responsibility will include a comprehensive emergency spill contingency plan and a capability for effective implementa-

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tion. This responsibility will include swift response and acceptable enforcement measures on those occasions when deleterious and detrimental impacts from beyond park boundaries are identified. This responsibility will include first and foremost the capacity and sincerity to act within park boundaries to ensure the park's success to maintain and preserve the marine ecosystem.

I believe a balance can be struck to ensure the economic benefits which can be attained through ecotourism initiatives. I believe that jobs and the environment are not inconsistent when managed in a wise and sustainable manner. However, the pursuit of one must not damage the effort of another.

Parks Canada has stated that an integral component for the success and sustainability of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park is the expected tourist income from whale watching operations. The first test of this government's sincerity for marine protection will arise during the definition and restriction phase of management plan parameters.

Again, a balance can be struck to affirm long term recovery and park viability. However, the concerns raised by the scientific community cannot be ignored or misrepresented as has been done in the recent past.

The Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park can succeed if it is memories and photographs which are harvested, not the marine inhabitants. Without conscientious efforts to balance tourism and the protection and perhaps the expansion of zone I areas within the park we will end up without marine inhabitants to present to tourists.

In the words of one marine scientist we must avoid the project becoming "Disney does Beluga". I am confident that such concerns will be presented at committee and acted upon with foresight and objective considerations. I am pleased to join my colleagues across both sides of the House in support to refer this bill in principle to committee for final review.

For our children's future I encourage all my colleagues on both sides of this House and in the Quebec legislature to support not only this bill but other environmental initiatives that protect the future for our children. On behalf of the New Democratic caucus I am pleased to offer my support to referring this bill to committee for final review.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have just listened to the previous speaker and I am very pleased

that he approves of Bill C-7, since it is a bill that has its roots in an enhanced community consciousness.

I have also listened to my colleague from Rimouski—Mitis, who explained the mechanisms that will enable local and regional authorities to remain actively involved in this matter.

I have already said, and will repeat it here in this House, for it is a statement that comes from the heart: my roots are in the Bas-du-Fleuve, the lower St. Lawrence, Kamouraska to be precise. This bill touches me particularly, therefore, in some ways.

There has been much reference to the beluga, but there is also much to be said for the beauty of the whales that frequent this region, to the delight of visitors. Obviously the population density is such that, as there is as yet no recognized park, we have visitors who are passing through. But once the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park has been established, I imagine still more will come to enjoy the beauty, dare I say the ecstasy, of this environment.

There has been reference to the beluga and it must also be pointed out in this context that the presence of visitors must be properly managed if we want to still have these animals around and to be able to observe them. In the past, and this may be what has raised people's awareness, there has been abuse, or at least there have been problems in regulating who would show visitors around. Now I believe this is a thing of the past, and we will no longer have such abuse, once there is a regulated park.

The need for environmental standards was also mentioned in the speeches. I think we have no choice but to tighten environmental standards if we are to keep and increase marine animal populations. On this subject, people speak of the mouth of the Saguenay. However, there is an extraordinary population of marine animals and birds along the shore, by Kamouraska. They have already been studied by professors from Laval University and must be preserved. This area too has hardly been touched and is largely unknown by the public, but interest has been shown in the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park in developing this aspect and making it more widely known. The Kamouraska archipelago is populated by wild migratory birds.

One final point has not been raised. I am speaking of the culture of algae, which is part of the ecosystem and perhaps a part of the future. On the coasts of Norway and of Europe, people have come to live on, use and speak of marine algae. These people, who enjoy working with algae, are delighted by the number and variety of algae on the rocks of the Kamouraska archipelago.

For all these reasons, which are partly emotional, I admit, and partly for the pleasure of tourists, I am delighted at the co-opera-

tion between the governments of Quebec and Canada on Bill C-7, and I invite all members of this House to support it.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Madam Speaker, again I echo the comments of my colleague from Quebec. I reiterate that Bill C-7 is an example of what can happen when federal and provincial jurisdictions get together to work with a co-operative nature, not just for the marine park for the Saguenay—St. Lawrence but also in areas off the coasts of Nova Scotia, Îles de la Madeleine, British Columbia and in our various Great Lakes. It is an example of what we can do when we have a vision of the future, of what we can do not only to protect other species but to protect ourselves as well.

A true testament of man is not what we have left for our children in terms of finances and the type of homes they live in. If we see species in our realm today will our children be able to witness them as well? I know my great grandparents read about things like the passenger pigeon which is no longer available. We in our lifetimes in this House will never get to see such a beautiful creature.

● (1140)

We are hoping that this bill will protect the beluga whale so that our children may go to the shores of the St. Lawrence and one day witness those belugas.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Chicoutimi who, I am proud to say, has been involved with this project since its inception.

Although this is not the first time I rise to speak in this House, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voters of West Nova for having placed their faith in me. I will do my utmost to bring their concerns forward during this 36th Parliament and beyond.

[*Translation*]

It is also an honour for me to be sitting in this House with members from all regions of the country. After only two months in this House, I have a deeper appreciation for this great country and a new respect for the diversity of our fellow citizens.

As an Acadian from St. Marys Bay, I am very proud to represent a riding where anglophones and francophones have been living together for hundreds of years, and where the sea always played a key role in the lives of its inhabitants. Our ancestors, whether English, French, Scottish, Irish or German, all lived off the fisheries in one way or another.

[*English*]

Having two distinct or unique marine areas in our backyard, it is difficult to think of a marine park and not be reminded of western Nova Scotia. Having grown up on the shores of the majestic

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Atlantic Ocean and the world renowned Bay of Fundy, the preservation of our marine ecosystem is very important to me.

On behalf of the Conservative Party of Canada, it is an honour for me to speak in support of Bill C-7, an act to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park and to make a consequential amendment to another act.

As members may be aware, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park is part of a larger effort to protect Canada's marine environment.

In 1986 the PC government approved the national marine park's policy. In 1987 the country's first national marine conservation area known as Fathom Five in Georgian Bay was established.

In 1988 the government signed a federal-provincial agreement with the province of British Columbia to create a national marine conservation area at Gwaii Haanas in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

On April 6, 1990 the Progressive Conservative government signed a historical and unique agreement between Canada and Quebec to create a marine park at the confluence of the Saguenay fiord and the St. Lawrence estuary.

This federal-provincial agreement represented years of co-ordinated conservation effort, and for the first time the two levels of government had jointly agreed to establish a park and to co-ordinate their park activities.

Bill C-7 is a mirror act to bill 86 which was passed by the Quebec legislature last year. Our government also called for the creation of an additional four marine conservation areas by the year 2000.

As my colleague from Chicoutimi will attest to, there is much work involved in establishing a marine park. There are various components that need to be examined. Above and beyond preserving the marine ecosystem of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence, there are impacts such as tourism.

We knew that terrestrial parks brought in large numbers of tourists, and therefore it was safe to assume that there would be an influx of tourism to this community.

Our government consulted the local residents who would be impacted, and we are happy to see that this government has continued this consultative approach.

Two very constructive rounds of public consultations were conducted. The first took place in December 1990 regarding the boundaries of the park. This marked the first time the proposed boundaries of a park had been increased. Local residents wanted a larger protected area.

The second round of public consultations to be carried out by the Progressive Conservative government was held in June 1993 to consider a development plan for the park.

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• (1145)

We all know the more people you consult the more ideas are brought forward. More ideas often bring more changes and it takes time to make changes to a document. What I find dismaying is that it took the government this long to finally approve the management plan for the marine park and to bring forward this bill.

In 1994 the Canadian heritage minister of the day introduced the national marine conservation areas policy. This was followed up by the national marine conservation areas system plan in 1995. This plan would divide Canada's three oceans and great lakes into 29 distinct marine conservation areas or NMCAs. In typical Liberal style of environmental one-upmanship, the government set a goal for itself of establishing 10 such marine parks by the year 2000. To date there are three marine parks on the Canada Parks map but only Fathom Five is a legal entity.

In December of 1996 the government introduced Bill C-78, an act to establish the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park and to make a consequential amendment to another act. The government must have thought it was moving too quickly on this and called an early election, effectively killing Bill C-78. Finally, here we are in November 1997 with Bill C-7, which is essentially identical to Bill C-78.

The clock is ticking. As we approach the millennium we cannot afford to waste any more time in this very urgent matter. With less than three years to go, we have yet to establish a marine park in each region, let alone the 10 parks promised by the government.

We must adopt this legislation as soon as possible. I look forward to dealing with the specifics of the bill when it goes to committee, as well as examining the feasibility of other NMCAs. I am very excited by the prospect of establishing other marine parks, especially in the Bay of Fundy and off the Scotian Shelf. Aside from the obvious benefits of preserving the ecological integrity of our marine life, marine parks would increase tourism and create much needed jobs for the people of my area.

I would like to share with you a small story. In spending some time in the waters off Nova Scotia, specifically off Briar Island while doing some sailing, I have had the opportunity of seeing the majestic whales that many tourists from across the world come to see. I see this as a perfect opportunity to protect this environment and make it better than it is at this point.

[Translation]

I look forward to working with this government toward achieving the main objective of the marine park, which is to preserve our marine environment for the present and future generations to enjoy.

[English]

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member in regard to the establishment of these marine parks.

There was one plan a number of years ago for my riding of Charlotte. It was referred to as the Fundy Isles Marine Park. It was to include areas of Campobello Island, Deer Island, Grand Manan and the surrounding area. One of the concerns expressed at the time was the question of the marine park versus the traditional fisheries and what impact that would have on traditional fishing areas.

For example, would lobster fishermen be restricted in the areas they could trap lobster, or scallop draggers restricted? This collision between the park and the traditional fisheries was there. It was a major obstacle at that time. Other matters had to be taken into consideration as well the debate between fisheries and park officials about the park concept, somewhat like the debate which is taking place this very day between the aquaculture fisheries and the traditional fisheries.

• (1150)

Has consideration been given to that? And is it being debated at the local level in Nova Scotia?

Mr. Mark Muise: Madam Speaker, the comments I made regarding looking into a marine park for the areas I described were on a preliminary basis. The points the hon. member raises are very important.

A park could not be developed without consultations because it is another very important aspect of our economy. Without those consultations there would be dangers. I would say very strongly that anything of that nature taking place would be as a result of consultations with all parties.

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi, PC): Madam Speaker, let me point out that my primary reason for rising today is to thank all stakeholders in this matter.

Today is indeed a wonderful day not only for myself but also for the people I have the honour of representing. After a dozen years of efforts, work and consultations, the government finally agreed to designate land located in the heart of my riding as a national marine park.

Allow me to thank the majority, if not the vast majority of my colleagues from all parties, who, so far, have supported this bill to formalize the establishment of a national marine park. I also wish to thank the ministers, who, one after the other, have brought this project to completion. I would like to acknowledge in particular the contribution of former federal minister McMillan, who, in 1985,

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launched the co-operative effort with the Quebec government then in office, including then minister Clifford Lincoln, who is now the Liberal member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

I thank them all for their valuable help in developing and then selling the project to both levels of government.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all the stakeholders in the vast region affected by the establishment of the marine park, including the municipalities that helped promote the idea of this marine park, which was probably the park that underwent the largest consultation process ever held in the country.

I also want to thank all the mayors who testified, and also the representatives of economic and environmental organizations who did the likewise to help further a project which is a model of co-operation between the various levels of government and which is the result of the positive contribution made by all the community organizations that have helped, during the past 12 years, to build the case for the establishment of this national marine park.

Many investments have been made in recent years by various research centres, for analysis and research work on fauna and flora, with a view to establish the marine park.

I was elected on June 2, 1997 because I told my fellow citizens I was not going to come here and pretend to be representing them, pretend to be upset on a daily basis. I am here to promote issues that will benefit my region, which is severely affected by major economic problems.

• (1155)

We know that the action plan on the national marine park will be revealed soon. We hope that specific measures will be announced, especially to increase as quickly as possible the number of visitors to the area. We know that the Tadoussac-Baie-Sainte-Catherine area receives between 200,000 and 300,000 visitors.

We hope that the action plan, which will focus on economic development and the need to increase tourist traffic, will be sensitive to the needs of local communities and provide for new facilities that will accommodate a growing number of visitors to our region, especially by building in close cooperation with the Quebec government a highway between Baie-Sainte-Catherine and Petit-Saguenay so that visitors will not have to drive through Saint-Siméon to get to the fjord and the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region.

In addition, there are sites that need to be promoted and made more accessible. I refer in particular to an extraordinary site, which is known nationally and almost all over the world, namely Cap Trinité, where the population is aging and where it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to reach the cape which is located 350 metres above sea level and which is probably one of the most unique and extraordinary observation sites in the country.

I am convinced that when the government will reveal its action plan, it will be possible at that time to provide input and suggestions for the development of infrastructures that will allow the region to benefit from increased tourist traffic. An increased number of visitors will bring more jobs and economic development. So this is important for the whole region.

A lot of money will be invested over three years, and we are very pleased with this. You can rest assured that our regional organizations will follow very closely the implementation of the action plan by the two levels of government and that the member from Chicoutimi, as he has always done since 1984, will play a positive role in improving the action plan so that the money to be invested will contribute to the economy of the area and of all the communities along the St. Lawrence.

This is obviously not a good day to engage in partisan politics. I would like to thank the minister for her kind words for the member from Chicoutimi who, since 1984, has worked on the development of this wonderful project. People say that hard work is its own reward. Often this work is done quietly, not always in front of the cameras, but today is indeed a great day.

I should like to point out that back then, our government had a very substantial agenda. It was substantial environmentally with the acid rain treaty. It was also substantial from a trade point of view with the free trade agreement, which enabled us to increase our exports to the U.S. by 140%. In addition, it was substantial with respect to fiscal reform, particularly with the passage of the GST, the ultimate purpose of which was to lower taxes.

I hope that the government will also be listening with a view to finalizing tax reform, so that all our constituents will benefit and see their taxes go down and their employment insurance premiums decrease, because back then—I think we must give credit where credit is due—there were reforms, there were bills introduced by a government with a vision based on structural measures, which are now helping us to control the deficit.

I am obviously very happy to take part in the vote today on this bill that, with the support of my regional constituents, I set in motion. Several ridings are affected. I thank everyone who played a role in this wonderful project.

Rest assured that, in the decades to come, we will not regret having created this national marine park, which enables us to preserve all living things in our environment, but also to promote the economic development of a region sorely in need of assistance.

• (1200)

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Saint-Eustache—Sainte-Thérèse, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak this morning on Bill C-7, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park Act.

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I would like to remind the House that this bill was first introduced by Mr. Bouchard when he was Minister of the Environment in this House in 1990, at the time of the "beau risque".

I would also remind honourable members that it is the premier of Quebec who sponsored the bill and the recent agreement between the federal and the provincial governments.

I would like to focus on our parks, particularly those in Quebec and especially this one. Quebeckers, like all other Canadians, love the outdoors. This park will be an important tool for tourism development in our region and an essential facility for learning about marine life in our province and especially in the beautiful Saguenay River, which is almost comparable in terms of size and water flow to the great St. Lawrence.

One interesting feature of this bill is that it was initiated by ordinary people. Local people consulted each other in order to develop this provincial asset. Local people, with the help of the provincial and federal governments, came together to create an essential facility.

Most interestingly, even today the agreement signed provides that the marine park will be administered by local people. Naturally, the committee will also be composed of a federal representative, a provincial representative, as well as representatives of the surrounding municipalities and RCMs.

This new marine park—which I invite you to visit—will be not only a tourist attraction but also a protected area for fish from our ocean and our river.

Like all my Bloc colleagues, I support Bill C-7.

Mr. André Harvey: Madam Speaker, I would like to point out—I think I mentioned it—that several provincial and federal ministers worked on this project in succession and that they all did a very good job.

From 1985 to 1988, federal minister McMillan worked very hard on this project in cooperation with Mr. Lincoln, who was then Quebec's Minister of the Environment. Out of this came out the St. Lawrence action plan and the first millions of dollars to be invested in the national marine park project. Mr. Bouchard worked on the project in 1990, followed by Mr. Charest.

I think that today, we must pay homage to our Minister of Canadian Heritage. At the risk of infringing on our rules, I will use her name, Sheila Copps. She put the final touches on the bill. Those are the words she used this morning to officially confirm that the project is now official.

• (1205)

Many people worked very hard on that project and I am glad to be back in the House, if only to vote in favor of this great bill.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, immediately after my appointment as Quebec's Minister of the Environment in 1985, I was visited by two young people, a young woman named Léone Pippard and a young man named Bruce MacKay of Greenpeace. This was the first time anyone spoke to me of the idea of having a Saguenay Marine Park. Léone Pippard had been monitoring and researching the beluga in the St. Lawrence from a base on Île-aux-Coudres. These two represented a broad range of people in the community, scientists and politicians who wanted a marine park in the Saguenay.

In 1988, when the federal-provincial agreement was signed between the Conservative government of the time and the Government of Quebec, the preliminary St. Lawrence plan for 1988-93 earmarked \$10 million for the establishment of the Saguenay Marine Park.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate those who have been involved over the years in this undertaking of such importance, above and beyond political lines: the member for Chicoutimi, who gave it its first impetus in many ways, certainly in the political arena; Minister Tom McMillan, of the Conservatives, who joined in and who signed the 1988 agreement with Quebec.

What is interesting about this undertaking is that it started with the signing of an agreement between a Conservative federal government and a Liberal provincial government in Quebec, and now it being finalized by a Liberal government in Ottawa and a Parti Québécois government in Quebec. This is, therefore, an undertaking that goes beyond party lines, that rises far above the political bickering we see, unfortunately, all too often.

It took a year for this project to come to fruition, to make the thing a reality soon with Bill C-7.

The Saguenay marine park is an exceptional achievement. It is one of the first marine parks in Canada, many would say the biggest to date. It is the result of a unique form of co-operation between two levels of government—those of Quebec and Canada—which managed to align and complement their respective, complex jurisdictions. It took a lot of negotiations to achieve an agreement that reflects both the integrity of the jurisdictions and the idea of working together to make them complementary.

This park stands for environmental protection, conservation and most importantly education and scientific research. The extraordinary thing, as many of my colleagues have mentioned, is that this park is the product of co-operation and perhaps the most extensive consultation done on a project in Canada for a very long time.

It was a long drawn-out process, a federal-provincial agreement that established the interdepartmental groups that pulled the project together.

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In 1993, consultation was expanded. All the groups involved were given the basic ideas to work on in order to improve the original project, to define the context of the Saguenay marine park as well as the guidelines, the regulations and the final legislation.

In addition to the two governments involved, there was a master plan for the marine park, expressing people's desire to work together to develop the Saguenay fjord and the St. Lawrence estuary.

• (1210)

As I said, this park stands for environmental protection, public education, scientific research, and sustainable and harmonious land use.

[*English*]

As well the management plan defines the physical boundaries of the park. Within these boundaries not only are the two levels of government working together but the aboriginal communities as well. They have been consulted and have been very much a part of the project and will continue to be along with the local communities.

One of the defining elements of the park is the constitution of a co-ordinating committee. It is the first time in Canada that two governments have worked very closely together with their community organizations to form a co-ordinating committee which will be entrusted with the management of the park. This in itself represents a tremendous departure from the usual stereotype where governments decide and run everything. This will truly be a community project where the government is a partner willing to share, listen and help when necessary.

The selection of a site is not an accident. As my colleague from Chicoutimi knows far better than I do, this is one of the most beautiful and breathtaking sites in Canada or anywhere for that matter. It is the harbour of 54 species of vertebrates and 248 species of invertebrates.

When consultations were extended in 1993 we decided to look at the use of that park.

[*Translation*]

It is much more complicated to draw up a zoning plan for a marine park than one for land environments. Today, the management plan will include this zoning plan as well as a tourist route crossing three marine ecosystems. This in itself is quite a challenge and shows great promise for the future of a kind of sustainable development that will make the use of this exceptional marine environment possible, to develop a tourist attraction that will greatly benefit the local economy, while at the same time incorporating a fairly strong element of public education.

This park is a model for the future.

[*English*]

It is a wonderful model for the future because of its composition and because of the way various community groups and interveners of all types have joined in the work in this regard.

[*Translation*]

In fact, it is in line with the recommendations made by the auditor general in his report on Canadian parks.

[*English*]

It follows the thrust of the famous Bow Valley study and the recommendation of the auditor general's report that the first requirement for any park is to ensure its ecological integrity. The ecological integrity is the very essence, the very heart of a park. Without ecological integrity all the rest dies.

We need education and that depends on the ecological integrity of a park. We need tourism and that depends on the proper ecological use of a park.

[*Translation*]

On June 5, 1997, the Government of Quebec passed Bill 86, which legislated the establishment of this marine park. We needed to do the same on our side. Unfortunately, the election delayed things, but today Bill C-7 is finally before us.

I think a number of conclusions should be drawn from this project. First, successful co-operation among all stakeholders, starting with a Conservative federal government and a Liberal government in Quebec, followed by a Liberal federal government and a PQ government in Quebec. This instance of co-operation between the federal and provincial governments certainly was successful, positive and harmonious, with broader consultation of the public at large, including the first nations, the local population of course, as well as all sorts of other stakeholders with various qualifications, academics and scientists.

• (1215)

In conclusion, if we believe that in order to create a lasting society, a society that the native peoples would describe as a society composed of seven generations, which will live on long after we are gone, which will be able to preserve its natural heritage, its natural resources for more than one generation, for seven generations and more, then we must change our attitudes, our behaviours, look at things in a new way, and find new ways of preserving this natural heritage. What could be better than a marine park to bring this about, to rally people around a constructive project, an outstanding ecological project, to add a dimension of public education, environmental awareness, particularly for future generations? It is an exceptional tool for promoting public awareness.

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In conclusion, in a House where more often than not, whether during debate or oral question period, we listen to contradictory and conflicting arguments on an almost daily basis, how many bills are there that we all agree on? They can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In fact, that might be more fingers than we need.

Today we see a bill that goes beyond political disagreements, that goes beyond social conflict, and that truly unites us. Whatever our party, whatever our walk of life, we all rejoice in the creation of this outstanding ecological and tourist project.

It is therefore a unifying bill above all. I myself have felt for many years now, well before I was even in politics and became environment minister, that the ecology was one of the most unifying elements of our society. Along with health, the ecology is something that affects us all. When it comes to health and the environment, political partisanship, and religious and philosophical differences are laid aside. We find our common ground through the extraordinary medium of the environment.

The bill before us today gives concrete expression to this coming together of ideas and the desire to do something together that will benefit the public, and our young people, that will serve as a example, that will contribute to sustainable development for the future, not just for ourselves, but for future generations.

[*English*]

Indeed the environment is one of the greatest binding threads among us. This is a concrete example of what it should be.

I rejoice in the support of all the parties in the House that have spoken warmly about this project. I welcome their support. I thank them for it.

I congratulate all the parties for their spirit in trying to bring about Bill C-7. It is a gesture of joining together to create something which will be unique for Canada, whether we live in Quebec or beyond. I hope all Canadians and people from around the world will come to the marine park in the Saguenay to see the wonderful ecological heritage.

I hope we will all join together to pass Bill C-7 soon. All the very best for the marine park in the Saguenay.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the words of my colleague, who is the chairman of the heritage committee, by the way. He can count on our full co-operation for the speedy passage of Bill C-7.

• (1220)

I also heard messages that are quite self-explanatory. He spoke of successful co-operation between all stakeholders. He stated that

this co-operation, and I noted the three words, was “successful, positive, harmonious”. I think that what is interesting in this bill is the basic lesson it is teaching us.

I remember, several years ago, the Government of Quebec wanted to acquire the Mingan Islands, which belonged to a private firm. At that time, Mr. Trudeau, who was Prime Minister of Canada and for whom politics was always “The sky is the limit”, had put \$5 million on the table et we lost our bid. On our side, we had the impression that the federal government had just robbed us of a part of our territory that was dear to us, the Mingan Islands.

Quebec is one of the provinces with the least number of national parks managed by Parks Canada, although we do have many things that are managed by Parks Canada, because we are rather protective of our territory. I think that the lesson to be learned from this joint project that we are about to implement is that from the very beginning, the federal government and the Quebec government have respected one another and have also respected each other’s jurisdictions under the Constitution.

At no time did the Canadian government attempt to expropriate land, and at no time did the Quebec government attempt to take over an area that is the responsibility of the Canadian government. I believe that this is the basic lesson that we should draw from this project. When there is mutual respect for areas of responsibility, Quebec is capable of working within the framework of existing arrangements.

But if we look back on history, each time that Quebec is rejected for what it is, as a founding nation, that it is rejected for its identity and its culture, or that an attempt is made to invade its areas of responsibility, each time that the federal government goes beyond that limit, that there is a lack of basic respect for areas of responsibility, whatever the reasons for the federal government wanting to take over a provincial area of responsibility, it is always in such a situation that Quebec reels back, jumps on the defensive and adopts a rather adversarial approach.

I would like to ask a question to my colleague. Does he not find important that the lesson we are learning here, or the experiment we are trying with Bill C-7, could be applied also to every area of responsibility, and that the federal government could learn to keep within its own jurisdiction?

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, I can only agree that each level of government must stick to its own areas of jurisdiction and that we must co-operate in the greatest possible mutual respect.

I have always believed that, in any federal-provincial project, in any policy change, the two sides, that is the federal government and the Quebec government, must respect each other.

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I too find that Bill C-7 is a unifying initiative. It should serve as a model and I hope it will for all the bills that will come before us in the future. I fully agree with the hon. member.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question or, rather, a comment for the Liberal member.

We are willing to work together to achieve such results. We want the federal and provincial governments, for example the Quebec government, to work together. If we are to co-operate, as you pointed out, a feeling of mutual respect must prevail between the two governments. It seems to me that seeking separation is not the way of showing we want to work together. It is by co-operating, not by walking away, that we will achieve something.

• (1225)

You are welcome to comment if you wish.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Madam Speaker, it is by working together that we realize that we can succeed. This bill shows that Canada is a country where people can work together, where we can have a successful partnership and where federalism can be constructive, positive and harmonious. Therefore, in this regard, I believe that Bill C-7 is an striking example of what Canada must be, and I believe that whatever side one is on, this shows that when there is co-operation, it can work very well.

[English]

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Secretary of State (Parks), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity as the Secretary of State for Parks to address this important piece of legislation.

This is my first opportunity as secretary to have legislation in this House. I believe that when this is passed it will form an important step, an important part of what we are trying to do in this country to protect our special places.

Bill C-7, the establishment of this park, represents some important initiatives, some important achievements. This is the first time ever that we will have a federal-provincial marine park established in legislation and I think that is a good milestone. It is a good accomplishment and it is something excellent that this House is moving toward.

It is moving on a broader sense to completing and working on what we hope to have one day, a national group or national plan of marine conservation areas. We recently published some material. We indicated there are some 29 specific marine ecosystems, marine environments that we want to protect and this represents one of the steps along that way.

I think it is an important step in protecting a very critical ecosystem in that part of the country where the St. Lawrence and

the Saguenay meet and in particular, as some other members have mentioned, the protection of the beluga whale.

As was mentioned by the previous speaker, it is a good example of this government's working with its provincial counterparts to achieve some important objectives in this country.

As I said, this represents our achieving some very broad principles which we are dedicated to as a government. We believe it is important that we work toward protecting our built and natural heritage, that we ensure that we can pass on, unimpaired, to future generations these special places we have in Canada. This legislation is one step toward that important objective.

What we will be doing is honouring what happened over 100 years ago when people had the foresight to establish the first national park in Banff. We look back to that over 100 years ago and we see how much foresight those people had when they undertook that.

I hope with the actions we are taking in this House today that 100 years from now generations will be able to look back to us and say that we shared the same foresight as the people did over 100 years ago who first began the national parks in western Canada.

It is important to note as well that we are doing this, we are providing this protection as a public trust in this country under a public mandate and to be answerable for all Canadians from coast to coast.

Bill C-7, which establishes this marine park, is one part of an overall strategy that we are undertaking as a government, that we are undertaking as a nation, to protect our special places. We undertake that in a large number of ways.

• (1230)

As I alluded, we have an extensive national park system. Indeed today we have 38 national parks. We also protect our national historic sites. Through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board we have designated over 700 important areas in Canada as national historic sites. Parks Canada operates directly almost 130 of them. We are able to protect and to ensure our heritage for future generations.

In addition, a number of important canals and waterways are recognized as historic and come under the mandate of Parks Canada, waterways such as the Chambly Canal in Quebec, the Rideau Canal in Ontario and the Trent-Severn Waterway near my own home riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka.

We have talked about the legislation in terms of co-operation with the provinces. We also operate with the provinces the Canadian heritage river system. We have an opportunity to work with our provincial counterparts on important waterways within Canada that have been nominated by the provinces that have come forward

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to the federal government. Between those nominated and those designated we have almost 30 such waterways in Canada.

We also work to protect our national heritage railways stations so that a very important part of our Canadian heritage, our Canadian history, will be maintained for future generations. Parks Canada works with other government departments to protect the built heritage already contained within the federal government.

I am pleased as the Secretary of State for Parks to have the opportunity to pursue a number of policies that will help us continue to do those types of things in the future and continue to protect those special places.

One commitment we have made is one that I believe is shared as a good objective by most Canadians. I am referring to the expansion of our national parks system. As I mentioned earlier we have 38 national parks. We have designated 39 specific geographic areas in Canada that we would like to see a park represented within. We have 38 parks and we are represented in 24 of them.

We are working actively in co-operation with provincial government, with territorial governments, with first nations, with other aboriginal groups and with stakeholders to expand the park system so that early in the next century we will be able to say we are represented with a national park in all 39 regions.

Good progress has been made. Within the last two years we have set aside close to 60,000 square kilometres for protection. That is important progress. I am pleased we have been able to accomplish it.

Later in this session I hope to be able to table amendments to the National Parks Act which will provide a legislative framework to achieve these accomplishments even more efficiently and with a streamlined process that will allow us to provide protection in an orderly fashion.

In terms of the work we are doing in protecting our special places, we are committed to undertake an ecological review of existing parks. We will be proceeding with that objective in the near future. It is important not only to look at expanding the parks system but to make sure those parks within the framework right now, the ones that exist today, are being correctly managed and correctly protected.

In terms of protecting our special places we announced in the 1996 budget the movement to a Parks Canada agency. This will be a public body reporting directly to the minister and accountable to parliament. It will help to provide new organizational, financial and human resources tools to the employees of Parks Canada. It will allow us to apply our resources such that we can go even further in protecting our special places.

• (1235)

We hope to build on Bill C-7, on the establishment of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park. We have held extensive consultations with Canadians to move forward with comprehensive legislation within which other marine conservation areas can be established.

Our government has aggressive objectives that we hope to put in place over the next several months so that we as a nation, as Canadians, can recognize the specialness, the uniqueness of what we have. When we had the opportunity to travel around the country we learned very quickly that we have some of the most beautiful places in the world right here in Canada. Part of our parks system is to ensure those special places are not only for the enjoyment of this generation of Canadians. The responsibility we intend to live up to is to ensure those special places are there unimpaired for future generations to enjoy.

That is our dual mandate. That is what we wish to accomplish and that is why we are bringing forward this type of legislation and the other tools I mentioned that will give us the ability to protect those areas for today as well as for the future.

Some important principles in establishing this park with Bill C-7 can be applied as we move forward in the future. This is the product of an agreement between different levels of government. It is important to see that kind of co-operation. We in Parks Canada ensure that we work with our partners, with the provincial and territorial governments, with the first nations, aboriginal groups and stakeholders, to make sure we have a consensus and an understanding of where we want to go.

In my time as a secretary of state and in talking to Canadians from coast to coast to coast I have noticed a deep desire among Canadians to see us move forward with these programs, to see us move forward with the protection of our special places.

The establishment of this park and the establishment of other parks and other historic sites should represent an expression of public will and not government working in isolation. That is why we took so much time, and I think appropriately so, on the consultative process. We wanted to make sure various components within the community, such as the public at large, the commercial components or the business components, understood, appreciated and bought into the types of objectives we were trying to achieve.

The bill helps to protect a very important and fragile marine ecosystem in that part of the country. That is the genesis of the bill. That is why we have moved forward. That is why we have co-operation between governments and the buy in of the public. They see the importance of protecting the ecosystem for conservation purposes and for the benefit of future and present Canadians.

As we operate our existing parks and historic sites, and as we move forward to create more, it is important to ensure that we have an opportunity through these facilities to educate Canadians; that

we have an opportunity to provide them with recreational opportunities; and that we have an opportunity to allow Canadians to celebrate the specialness of our unique land and to celebrate the specialness of what we are. That is important and that is part of what we do.

• (1240)

In conclusion, I urge the House to support the legislation, to allow it to move forward, to be passed and to come into law so we will have accomplished one more important step in protecting the nation's special places.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the comments of the Secretary of State for Parks about this issue. He will know it is the Reform Party position to support the bill in principle at second reading, although we have some serious concerns we want to have addressed at committee.

I wonder if it might be instructive to take a look at the current practices of Parks Canada with respect to existing parks to try to get a feeling of how this park will be treated.

If we take a look at Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, we have a situation where people entered into leases with Parks Canada. The leases very clearly and specifically say they are renewable and will go on forever. Now Parks Canada is suddenly coming along and saying "No, I do not think so". They are trying to force negotiation when there is no place for negotiation.

Let us take a look at the situation in Field, British Columbia, where there has been a decision to remove the trailer park which is very important as low income housing to people delivering services as parks employees or working in the parks. On one side of the coin we have Parks Canada saying "We will leave you alone, but if you want to move out of the park and you want to sell your trailer to someone else, we will not give you an occupancy permit. We will not stop you. We will not dismantle the trailer park. We just will not give an occupancy permit should you decide to opt out".

There is the whole situation of the Trans-Canada Highway through the Yoho area and the movement of the maintenance facility there. I have repeatedly asked for a cost justification from Parks Canada not only as the parks critic but also as the member of Parliament for the area. The department has not responded to me.

Probably the most flagrant one—and there are hundreds of examples—has to be the issue of the landing strip in Banff where there is a court injunction that clearly and specifically states there shall be no action on the part of Parks Canada, its employees or agents which in any way would equate to shutting down the strip.

In answer to a question from my colleague from Yellowhead the other day the secretary of state had the audacity to say that they are

not really shutting it down, but he did admit that they are ticketing pilots when they land there.

This is an issue of safety. This strip happens to be at the confluence of three valleys. When they fly in from Calgary past the airstrip and head up toward Lake Louise, there is another valley and very frequently a wall of weather comes down there. I have flown to that airstrip with a pilot from Invermere who has had to land on that airstrip twice in his career because of weather conditions. He had gone as far as Lake Louise and had to turn back rather than being able to reach Springbank, the closest airport, because the weather had closed in behind him.

Would the secretary of state tell Canadians how in the world he can countenance his employees flagrantly going against a court injunction and taking action by way of ticketing and overly aggressive inspections, the equivalent of shutting down that airstrip, when the court in fact has said no?

Hon. Andy Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member across, the critic responsible for heritage and Parks Canada. From discussions with him I know he has a deep commitment to our national parks system and to the various other things I have talked about in terms of protecting our special places.

• (1245)

I am going to get to the specific point on the airstrip in a second. However, speaking in general on the original comments made, it goes back to what I said in my speech about the fact that there are two major components that the national parks system is trying to accomplish.

Yes, parks are established for the use of Canadians and we encourage that use. Over the past 100 years we have seen the traditional use built up, but there is another very important component to our mandate. That is our obligation to pass those special places on to future generations unimpaired. That is an important mandate and stewardship which we must ensure is fulfilled. It means that we need to find a balance between the uses that are allowed today and the uses which will ensure those facilities will be there in the future. Many of the situations the member brought forward have to do with that balance.

He mentioned cost justification and wanting to get the information. I will undertake to get that information to the member as quickly as possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today at second reading of Bill C-7, an act to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park.

The Saguenay region, the Charlevoix region is undoubtedly the loveliest region of Quebec, but personally I would say the second loveliest region after the Mauricie region. A great number of

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Quebeckers are familiar with that region, which is known in Quebec as Little Switzerland, with its majestic landscapes, its remarkable vistas, and also as the area where salt water reaches up to the Saguenay, where the St. Lawrence's freshwater ends.

It is also a region that shares many characteristics with the Mauricie, because of its river, the Saguenay River, which is a bit bigger, a bit more imposing than the Saint-Maurice River. The Saint-Maurice River, which today is free from the logs that once cluttered it, has also become very majestic.

Recently, I heard the member from Saint-Maurice in the National Assembly, who is the Deputy Speaker there, speak proudly of the attributes of the Saint-Maurice River, which can be compared to a certain extent to the wonders of the Saguenay River.

I have a question for our colleague. We know that because of its beauty, the site that will be included in the marine park should attract numerous international visitors. I would like to know what the input from the federal government will be.

There is one small point I would like to make, however. All this may have been done in harmony, but the federal government's financial co-operation should not be referred to today as a gift. Quebeckers will be paying \$30 billion in taxes to Ottawa, to be redistributed, and this is part of good management.

I would like to know what part the federal government will play in attracting international visitors to enjoy this lovely site that will be developed by the whole community.

[*English*]

Hon. Andy Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows from the work we have done together in the House, tourism as an economic generator is important for the area from which I come. In my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka almost 50% of the jobs depend on tourism.

Obviously the establishment of the marine park in and by itself will help to attract individuals to that part of the country. In so doing it will create economic activity which will assist the population as a whole. It will help with job creation. It will help the small business community and it will help to build tourism.

This federal government has made tourism one of its priorities. We have established the Canadian Tourism Commission which works with partners such as provincial governments and tourism associations to help develop and market particular areas. I am sure there will be opportunities through that. There is also a regional development agency which operates in the province of Quebec which looks for partners from the local community and from the provincial government.

• (1250)

I am sure that with the establishment of this park we will see that type of activity take place, while always remembering the other side of that balance which is to ensure we do it in a way which protects the ecosystem and makes sure it will be there for future generations of Canadians.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to participate in the debate on second reading of Bill C-7.

This morning the Minister of Canadian Heritage talked about her experience with the wonders of nature in Newfoundland. My colleague from British Columbia talked about his experience in the Rockies. I want to add that I grew up close to national parks in east Africa. As such I am a very strong supporter of preserving our environment and its unique habitants. One can proudly call them national treasures. These treasures also belong to the citizens of the world. Nations fortunate enough to be custodians of these treasures must fulfill their obligations to preserve this heritage for present and future generations.

The purpose of Bill C-7 is to create a marine park at the confluence of the Saguenay fjord and the St. Lawrence estuary, and to conserve and manage its marine resources.

This bill represents the culmination of an agreement which was signed by the federal government and the Quebec provincial government in April 1990. The Quebec national assembly ratified its commitment to the establishment and maintenance of this park earlier this year in June. Its bill will come into force once the federal legislation has been enacted.

This bill is a first. Not only is this the first federal-provincial salt water marine park, it also represents the first time these two governments jointly agreed to establish a park and to co-ordinate their park activities. Under the agreement made in 1990, the Quebec government retains the ownership over the seabed and the sub-soil resources. The federal government maintains responsibility over matters such as navigation and fisheries.

Since the agreement was signed in 1990, the two governments have worked together on legislative mandates respecting the park, compliance strategies, emergency plans and on research and education programs to ensure the protection of the area designated for the marine park.

The level of involvement by the regional and local organizations in this whole process has shown the general support for the creation of such a park. There has been no transfer of land in creating this park as both governments are responsible for their own jurisdiction in creating and protecting this park.

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This park comprises a marine environment exclusively and measures 1,138 square kilometres. The boundaries may be changed if both governments agree on such changes and only after the public has been consulted.

A park management plan must be tabled in Parliament within one year of the park being established. The plan is to be reviewed every seven years and must be tabled in Parliament. I will speak on these points later.

Funding for the park was provided for in the 1995 federal budget. The federal contribution toward the development and operating costs is to total \$20.7 million over five years. Additional funding from the federal government over 1989-93 was in the range of \$6 million. Between 1993-95 an additional \$4 million had been set aside from the green plan for the funding of this park.

Parliament must approve all new parks and any changes to existing parks. Although the auditor general feels that this is a cumbersome process, we welcome the fact that we have to debate such changes.

Our national parks system is a great source of pride for all of us. I do not think there are too many people who have yet to visit our magnificent parks. They provide us with a connection to nature and also give us a glimpse of our past and even our future.

• (1255)

National parks are owned by all Canadians and are supposedly managed on their behalf. By debating changes to the national parks system in Parliament, the government is held more accountable for how these parks are managed. The official opposition welcomes this debate and the opportunity to see that the government is held accountable for its actions dealing with our national parks.

That being said, there is some concern about the way in which this bill came before Parliament. By the time we as parliamentarians were given the opportunity to debate this bill, the agreement to establish the park had already been in place for several years. Should there not have been some consultation with Parliament before such an agreement was entered into?

I know that this is somewhat of a special case and that there were extensive consultations with local and regional groups in the area in which the park is to be established, but I wonder about future cases. Will the government do the same thing the next time? Are we nothing more than a rubber stamp?

This is the first of many future national marine conservation areas which the government set out in 1995 with its sea strategy. At present studies are under way to judge the feasibility of establishing 15 more NMCAs and another six within the next two

years. To date four areas have already been established. What guidelines are in place to ensure that there is adequate consultation with Parliament and with the areas involved?

Even though I have some concerns with this legislation, most of them dealing with the manner in which the government approached Parliament, I wholeheartedly support this bill. I believe it is important to live up to the agreement made at the beginning of the decade to conserve our environment, in this case our marine environment.

I would like to take a few moments to go over some of the specifics of the bill and deal with the concerns which I have.

This bill outlines four zones for managing parks resources. Zone one deals with the rare, unique, natural and cultural features that are sensitive to any type of land use. Zone two is similar to the previous zone, however some form of use can occur. Zone three deals with recreational activities. Zone four deals with land which will be accessible to many human use activities, such as commercial shipping and fishing, and natural resource harvesting.

There are no specific levels of protection described in this bill. They are more clearly outlined in the 1995 management plan. Fortunately this plan goes into much greater detail concerning how these regions will be protected and available for use. However as it is only a plan, it is subject to change quite easily.

As I alluded to earlier, a new management plan is to be tabled in Parliament a year after the park is established and is subject to review every seven years by the respective provincial and federal ministers responsible. My concern is that the government of the day, either due to pressures from certain groups on either side of the issue or from economic pressures, may decide to make changes in the plan which may be detrimental to the park and to the organisms that the act is to protect.

Another concern relates to governor in council appointments concerning the administration of federal activities within the marine park. The minister can under the powers outlined in Bill C-7 conduct activities to advance ecosystem knowledge and to enter into intergovernmental agreements. The minister would have to allow for public participation and could cancel and issue permits. If it is not the minister currently responsible, namely the Minister of Canadian Heritage, then it will be up to the cabinet to choose who is in control of this park.

On a related note, some concern also exists with respect to the regulations.

• (1300)

Currently the two governments are working to harmonize the activities of both levels of government in this park. This harmo-

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nization committee currently is comprised of representatives from the federal, provincial and four regional governments, the affected band council, the scientific community and a conservation group.

At present they are ensuring the goals of the management plan established in 1995 are put into place and are serving as a consultant to the respective federal and provincial minister responsible for ensuring that the strategies and methods outlined in the plan are attained.

The main concern here comes with the minister's power to determine the composition of this committee. Although the 1995 management plan has already established the composition, it is at the minister's discretion to change this composition.

My main concern deals with the accountability of the minister. Will such changes be announced or will there be some consultation with Parliament before any changes are made?

A good portion of the bill deals with compliance issues and enforcement officers powers to control unsanctioned activities in the park, including their authority to conduct searches with and without warrants and to make arrests.

Fines for individuals range from an undetermined amount for minor fines and anywhere from \$10,000 and/or and six month jail sentence for summary convictions to \$20,000 and/or a maximum five year jail term for indictable offences.

For corporations, the fines range from \$100,000 to \$500,000 for more serious infractions. Courts are also given the authority to order compensation for any remedial action necessary.

I support the general principle of this bill. Both the federal and provincial governments over the past several years have indicated that there is at the time a strong commitment to conserving this unique area.

The regulations and management plan that have been put in place appear to give this bill its teeth. While I can understand why these two governments have proceeded this way, as it is much easier to amend management plans and regulations when not legislated into law, I do hope this practice is maintained by future governments and that adequate public consultation takes place before any changes are made.

As I said already, national parks such as the one proposed here are national treasures for all Canadians to enjoy. It would be a shame if actions were taken which would not reflect the sense of immense pride we take in our national parks.

I therefore join my colleagues on both sides of the House in supporting this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, once again I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-7, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park Act.

As I have already said, this is one of the most beautiful regions of Quebec, and what is more, this bill is the result of a special collaborative effort by the community concerned. In other words, the people themselves decided to do something, and have very ably moved this bill along for several years, so that today we find ourselves considering it with a view to enabling the federal government to move into this fine project which, as I have said, encompasses both shores of the St. Lawrence.

We need to realize that this bill involves three regional municipalities, two on the north shore and the other on the south. It also concerns a very particular part of the St. Lawrence, as I have said, the point at the mouth of the Saguenay where the fresh water stops and the salt water starts. This project is even more valuable because its intent is to protect the ecosystem in place there, particularly the beluga, the focus of world wide attention, and the whales, which attract thousands upon thousands of tourists: Quebecers, Canadians, Europeans, and increasing numbers of Asians.

• (1305)

It is a region set apart by its beauty, offering some very attractive places. There is, for example, the Manoir Richelieu, which has had a casino for a few years now. There is also the Manoir Tadoussac, in Tadoussac, which is really beautiful. In terms of nature itself, all along the Saguenay there are mountains, known as the Trois Soeurs, with La Trinité, L'Éternité and another whose name I forget.

It is worth a visit, and I invite those of our viewers who have yet to visit this beautiful part of Quebec to do so, whether they live in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada. It is, without bragging, an area of international calibre. For this reason, I was questioning the secretary of state earlier on the government's efforts to encourage international tourism, since its responsibility is to draw foreign visitors to Canada and hopefully to Quebec.

I do not consider the answer particularly clear, but we are counting on the past activities of Canada's embassies and consultates to promote the merits of Quebec abroad. Everyone knows that 80% of the diplomatic corps coming from Canada and not Quebec—as I heard it put recently by an industrial commissioner—does not speak French. I think we must insist that the Canadian government, with the money that comes from Quebec pockets, make a creditable and basic effort to promote this unique location as a site for international tourism.

As previously mentioned, one should point to the collective effort implied in such a project, which found its genesis locally,

was the subject of public hearings, is already largely supported by the Quebec government and can now count on the co-operation of the federal government to go ahead even more efficiently.

This naturally beautiful area deserves to be encouraged. It marks the beginning of the St. Lawrence estuary. There is now a road along the North Shore, which goes all the way up to Natashquan, the birth place of Gilles Vigneault, who composed “Gens du pays”, the closest thing we have to a national anthem. From Tadoussac a very pleasant road leads to Chicoutimi along the Saguenay river, through very picturesque villages—I went there over 10 years ago—like the very nice village of Sacré-Coeur. The village of Tableau also comes to mind; you come to this place where the mountain looks like a blackboard and you almost feel like writing something on it.

This area is well worth a visit. I hope this will entice people who are listening today. It is one of the very beautiful areas in Quebec and, for the time being in Canada; it is aptly dubbed the Quebec Switzerland.

I would like to ask my colleague who spoke before me, if he is not gone yet—if he is not here, one must conclude he is gone—what his idea of the Canadian government’s effort was.

We know how hard the Canadian government tries to promote the Rockies, and rightly so, it is one of the most spectacular areas in Canada, if not the world. I would have liked to ask my colleague what efforts if any, in his view, according to the information he has, if he has more than us, the Canadian government intends to make to promote internationally this gorgeous site called the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, I encourage the government to really promote this unique national park around the world. I agree with the hon. member, as I mentioned in my speech, that national parks are a treasure for Canada but they are also a treasure for all human races.

• (1310)

We should promote this national park all across the world, through all the means that we have from our Canadian embassies, brochures and tourism listings to promote this unique heritage. We are the custodians of this great national park for all the world.

[Translation]

Mrs. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-7, an act to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park. This bill holds a special interest for me as I represent the 70,000 people of the riding of Jonquière, which is adjacent to this unique park.

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As my colleague for Rimouski—Mitis said, the Bloc Québécois supports this bill. Indeed, more than seven years after the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec signed an agreement to establish a marine park where the Saguenay river enters the St. Lawrence estuary, the time has finally come to pass legislation establishing that park.

I remind you that this park will include a unique feature of Quebec geography, the Saguenay fjord, where a mighty river flows. As you know, this fjord opens onto the largest estuary in the world. This is a place blessed with a large variety of living organisms. There are several species of plankton and many species of fish, both fresh and salt water fish. This area offers excellent conditions for breeding and feeding, and it is also a staging and wintering area for a number of water fowls.

As you can see, this is a special environment that should be protected. This is the most beautiful site in our country to be.

The time to pass the marine park legislation has finally arrived. I say “finally” because the agreement was signed on April 6, 1990 and the local and regional communities, the environmental groups, the native peoples and the scientific community, who are all committed to improving the management and protection of the rich and varied marine resources of the area, had to wait seven years, I repeat seven years, before that agreement finally translated into something concrete.

We will recall that under this agreement both governments are committed, within their constitutional jurisdictions, to passing legislative or regulatory measures for the purpose of, and I quote:

- (a) the creation of a marine park called “Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park” and located at the confluence of the Saguenay River and the northern half of the St. Lawrence Estuary;
- (b) the conservation of the marine fauna and flora, as well as maintaining the integrity of ecosystems on this territory;
- (c) the protection of the territory and its other resources;
- (d) the development of these resources for present and future generations; and
- (e) the appreciation of these resources by the public.

And I am not talking about the strong pressures exerted since the 1970s by local people—despite those in this House who would like to take the credit—for action to be taken in order to preserve the rich and diverse marine life in the Saguenay region. It did take the Canadian government some time to respond to the will that had been unanimously expressed for a long time by the local people.

The least we can say is that this project, which required several years of discussions and negotiations between Ottawa and Quebec City before coming to a successful conclusion, is hardly the best example of an efficient federalist system because of the long negotiations, even though the local people have agreed on this since the 1970s.

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• (1315)

That being said, I would like to elaborate a little bit on some features of Bill C-7 which give it a unique character and which should be used as a model by the Canadian government in its future relations with the Government of Quebec.

So, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park will be the first salt water federal-provincial park, the first park created jointly by the two levels of government and for which Ottawa and Quebec agreed on their respective management roles. This is a unique agreement between the two governments and it was made possible because the federal government agreed to recognize the rights and jurisdiction of each level of government—and I insist on those words “agreed to recognize the rights and jurisdiction of each level of government”—without trying to make its own rights prevail over those of the Government of Quebec and the people it represents, which rights are just as legitimate.

This is an example the present government, its Prime Minister and its ministers would be well advised to follow in many other sensitive matters concerning the future of Quebec and Canada.

I have to stress another feature of Bill C-7 that reinforces its uniqueness: for the first time, the Government of Canada has agreed to participate in the establishment of a marine park without claiming in return the ownership on the seabed and the sub-soil and ground resources. Indeed, the Government of Quebec keeps its property right, but this right does not prevent the federal government from continuing to exercise its jurisdiction over navigation and fishing.

This is another fine example from which the Liberal government should draw inspiration in its relations with Quebec, and a model of respect for Quebec’s territorial integrity that should guide the federal government in other discussions.

The federal government would have been really ill-advised to claim a greater jurisdiction than that recognized in the bill establishing the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park. Indeed, is it necessary to recall that, for 61 years, up until 1983, Quebec had assumed responsibility for the administration of the whole fishing sector?

That is a jurisdiction the federal government has encroached upon under the pretext that it would be easier to protect the resources of the Atlantic region from Ottawa. In the last 10 years, there has been little evidence to support the federal government’s claim to be in a better position than Quebec to protect resources. Besides, the general collapse of the groundfish stocks is a direct consequence of the federal government’s inability to assume its mandate to protect resources.

Another important part of this bill that is worth mentioning is the involvement of local representatives in the management of this new marine park. This bill confirms the mandate of the existing joint Canada-Quebec management committee and gives an important role to local stakeholders who, as members of the coordinating committee, will be in a position to monitor the implementation of the management plan.

The composition of the coordinating committee will be as follows: one representative from each of the three RCMs concerned on the north shore, namely Charlevoix-Est, the Saguenay Fjord and Haute-Côte-Nord; only one representative for the three RCMs concerned on the south shore, namely Kamouraska, Les Basques and Rivière-du-Loup; one representative from the scientific community; one for the groups dedicated to the conservation and preservation of resources, environmental education and nature interpretation; one from the Canadian heritage department; and one from the Quebec ministry of environment and wildlife.

• (1320)

These local representatives will have a very important role to play, for this bill is admittedly rather sketchy concerning the conservation ethics to be observed in managing the park. We have to refer to the management plan to learn more about the protection strategies that will be implemented.

Unfortunately, we must admit this is a flaw because it is always much easier to amend a management master plan than a law. So this master plan could be changed at any time in order to increase or reduce the protection of marine resources, in spite of all the good will expressed here today.

Moreover, clause 17 of this bill authorizes the governor in council to make regulations for the protection of marine resources, for the control of activities, for the issuance of permits and for prescribing the fines for offences.

As a consequence, I believe that the stakeholders will have to be very vigilant—I repeat, very vigilant—to ensure that the application of the management master plan is consistent with the spirit of Bill C-7, which we are about to pass.

There is one last point I wish to highlight, once again, as a source of inspiration for the federal government. It is the accord concluded by Quebec and Ottawa on how to finance the creation of the marine park and its annual operating costs.

The Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park is already an internationally renowned tourist destination with an enormous tourist development potential that, if properly exploited, will contribute to the establishment of a sustainable tourist industry in our region, the Saguenay. I am pleased to see that, in this matter, the federal government is getting involved in regional development in Quebec

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without bypassing the provincial government, which is very much to its credit. [English]

It is indeed worth mentioning since, during its first term, this Liberal government had shown us another kind of approach which was a lot less respectful of the Quebec government's jurisdiction in the area of regional development.

When the Liberals took office in 1993, 62% of federal funding for regional development came under various agreements with the Quebec government. Now, four years later, that percentage has gone down to 33%.

This means that in more than two thirds of regional development matters in which the federal government is involved, it bypasses the Quebec government, often duplicating what is already being done.

Need I remind the members that, since the creation of the Federal Office of Regional Development, the Liberal government has been using this agency almost exclusively as a propaganda tool to increase its visibility in Quebec, hiding behind that agency to get directly involved in regional development in that province. And, unfortunately, it has been doing so without giving any consideration to the effectiveness of its interventions.

As a matter of fact, 90% of the Federal Office of Regional Development activities duplicate the Quebec government's activities and, according to some estimates, this duplication is costing taxpayers \$20.7 million.

The fact that for once the government respected Quebec's jurisdiction over regional development, by signing an agreement with the province, can only be cause for rejoicing. But let us also hope that this approach will become the rule in future federal interventions in regional development in Quebec.

In conclusion, I urge my colleagues to cooperate so that Bill C-7, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park Act, can be adopted as soon as possible.

• (1325)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I declare the motion carried.

This bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

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

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.) moved that Bill C-17, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, the government's agenda as outlined in the speech from the throne sets out the course it intends to take to ensure that Canada succeeds in the global knowledge economy of the 21st century.

The agenda sets out clearly the actions to be taken and the partnerships to be forged to ensure that Canada realizes its potential in this new economy.

One of the first priorities is to connect Canadians. The goal is to make Canada the most connected nation in the world, making sure that all Canadians can have access to the electronic highway and the information economy by the year 2000. This is perhaps the single most important action that government can take to ensure success in the knowledge based economy.

[Translation]

A national strategy designed to give access to the information and knowledge infrastructure will enable individuals, rural communities, and small and medium size businesses to find new opportunities to learn, communicate, trade and develop their economic and social potential.

Bill C-17 marks a major step in our strategy to connect Canadians to the information highway.

It is also a milestone in this government's strategy to encourage competition, innovation and growth in Canada's telecommunications industry, which plays a vital role in the knowledge economy and greatly contributes to the information infrastructure.

Today, the telecommunications industry accounts for 115,000 quality jobs and 3.36% of GDP. We believe it will be one of the key growth areas in the 21th century economy.

The purpose of Bill C-17 is to pursue the liberalization of Canadian telecommunications, which started more than 10 years ago and has already greatly benefited Canadians and Canadian telecommunications companies.

[English]

That liberalization began with the licensing of competitive cellular telephone service and moved forward with the privatization of Teleglobe and Telesat, the introduction of competition to long distance telephone service and the passage of the new Telecommunications Act.

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Over the last two years, this process has been continued with the licensing of suppliers of new services, including personal communications services and local multi-point communication services. We have also been pursuing this liberalization agenda at the international level to promote global competition and new opportunities for Canada's telecommunications sector.

• (1330)

The bill before us today paves the way to implement an international agreement that Canada concluded last February. Members may remember that the Uruguay round of the GATT trade negotiations developed new trade rules for the services sector. These are known as the general agreements for trade and services, GATS.

Last February agreement was reached to extend the GATS to cover basic telecommunications. Following successful negotiations under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, 69 countries including Canada concluded an agreement to liberalize basic telecommunications services. These countries account for more than 90% of the world's \$880 billion telecommunications market.

The GATS agreement on basic telecommunications covers basic telecommunication services, including voice and data but not broadcasting.

One of our key objectives during the negotiations was to gain access to foreign markets for Canadian telecommunications companies. This we have achieved. As a result, our telecommunications companies will have more secure access to major markets such as the United States, the European Union and Japan, as well as the developing markets of Asia and Latin America. The agreement also establishes a clear set of multilateral rules in a sector that previously had no rules. The dispute settlement process provides the necessary safeguards to ensure that countries respect their commitments.

[*Translation*]

Under the agreement, we will be making a few changes here, in Canada.

First of all, we will lift all restrictions on mobile services provided to Canadians worldwide using satellites belonging to foreign concerns.

We will put an end to Telesat's monopoly on fixed satellite services.

Our transparent and independent regulatory and competition regimes will be maintained.

We will also put an end to Teleglobe Canada's monopoly on international traffic and eliminate the special ownership restric-

tions imposed on this company, which prohibit any investment by foreign telecommunications companies.

We will authorize foreign concerns to have full ownership of international submarine cable landing facilities in Canada.

We will, however, maintain our general foreign investment regulations to ensure that the industry remain in the hands of Canadian interests.

Many of the changes we promised can be implemented by administrative means, while others require that legislation be passed. This bill provides the legislative framework required to make these changes.

[*English*]

Perhaps more important than these details is the overall objective to foster competition both domestically and internationally. Competition fosters innovation and innovation sparks the development of new products and services, more choice for consumers, job creation and economic growth.

Over the last 10 years Canada has made major strides in liberalizing its telecommunications industry, and the benefits to consumers and businesses have been impressive. For example, a study by the international consulting firm KPMG estimates that long distance telephone rates today are 55% below and traffic is 67% above what they would have been in the absence of competition in that market. Savings to consumers are in the billions of dollars. And the benefit is not just in services. Investment in switches and related hardware is estimated to be more than \$2 billion higher than it would have been under monopoly conditions.

Our objective is to free Canada's telecommunications and information technology sectors to be more competitive and dynamic both at home and abroad. It was to further this objective that we became parties to the information technology agreement last year. About 40 economies with 90% of the world's trade in information technology have endorsed that agreement.

• (1335)

They have agreed to eliminate tariffs on some 300 information technology products by the turn of the century. Together these two agreements have significantly opened up the global marketplace in telecommunications services and equipment, creating new opportunities for all countries. As a result, Canadian telecommunications companies will be able to capture a larger share of the global market in telecommunications services and equipment.

The bill we are considering today will also strengthen our ability to keep pace with a rapidly changing telecommunications environment. We will be empowering the CRTC to introduce a licensing regime to ensure that all providers of international services play by the same rules. We are also strengthening our ability to enforce standards for telecommunications equipment.

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[*Translation*]

We must pass this bill as rapidly as possible. The agreement on basic telecommunications services takes effect January 1, 1998. A good number of the amendments to our regulations do not take effect before October 1, 1998, but the new regime must be in place before then.

One of the amendments proposed in this bill will enable the CRTC to establish a licensing regime for telecommunications service providers. The CRTC will ensure that Canadian and foreign telecommunications providers hold licences consistent with WTO rules and Canadian regulations.

The CRTC has held public hearings on licensing and the whole issue of international services. If the CRTC is to be able to wrap up this process and introduce the new regulations by October 1, 1998, the bill must be passed without delay.

The bill also amends the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act so as to repeal the provisions concerning the special ownership and other regimes related to ending Teleglobe's monopoly. I wish to point out that Teleglobe approves of this initiative.

[*English*]

Changes to the Telecommunications Act are necessary for us to meet our commitments in the area of satellites, undersea cables and international services, and also to ensure observance of other Canadian telecommunications policies.

The benefits flowing from the GATS agreement are significant. We anticipate that Canadian businesses and consumers will gain access to a wide variety of world class telecommunications services at competitive prices. Canadian telecom service providers will be able to penetrate new markets on an equal footing with local companies and foreign competitors. Canadian telecom manufacturers will find a huge new demand for their state of the art products as telecom operators around the world prepare for a new global environment of open markets and competition.

Canadians want us to move quickly to realize the economic, social and cultural benefits of the knowledge based society. International agreements like the GATS agreement lay the groundwork for us to construct this society.

We are working on a number of fronts to build. For example, I have invited my OECD counterparts to come to Canada in the fall of 1998 for discussions to develop a global framework for electronic commerce. Electronic commerce means using advanced communications and computer technologies to do business. Its uses range from selling consumer products and services electronically to managing investments over computer networks, to transactions

between major banks that involve large amounts of money and other assets.

Electronic commerce is not only central to a modern knowledge based economy, it is also the foundation for future growth and job creation. Given our small domestic market and dependence on foreign trade, we must foster a domestic and international environment that is friendly to electronic commerce if we are to reap the significant trade and investment benefits it offers to Canadian firms and citizens.

The OECD Canada conference is an important step in this direction. It ensures that we can support, participate in and influence the creation of an open, transparent, multilateral electronic commerce regime.

• (1340)

Our hope is that this conference will set out the policy framework and implementation timetable needed to establish a stable, open and transparent environment favourable to the development of worldwide electronic commerce. An integrated approach would allow all countries and regions to enjoy the benefits of electronic commerce while avoiding duplication of effort and the creation of new international trade barriers.

We need to do more if Canada is to be a leader in electronic commerce. That is why the government is also working toward using electronic commerce when doing business with its own clients. By being a model user we can encourage the private sector and other levels of government to adopt the new technologies.

Advances in information technologies are transforming industrial economies such as our own. Canada has the opportunity to be among the first rank of the new knowledge based economies.

As these new technologies eliminate distance they are taking us ever closer to the global village envisioned by Marshall McLuhan. They are also creating a world in which knowledge is our most important commodity and the key to our economic performance.

By overcoming the barriers of distance these technologies are creating great opportunities for people, communities and countries that were once on the periphery, from the developing nations of Asia, Latin America and Africa to Canada's own rural and remote communities.

[*Translation*]

Over the last four years, we have defined and implemented a information highway strategy, so that Canada can take full advantage of these technologies and so that all Canadians can have access to the information based economy.

This information highway will be Canadian and will offer Canadian products and services, but it will be open to the entire

Government Orders

world. It will encourage innovation, economic growth, job creation and communication throughout Canada.

Our government's priority is to create the conditions necessary to encourage the private sector to build this information highway. Hardware and software suppliers, and designers of related contents and services are now among the fastest growing sectors in Canada.

Opening up competition in the telecommunications services sector represents an important component of the Canadian strategy. We know that the best, as well as the fastest, way to build an information based economy infrastructure is to institute an open competition policy.

[*English*]

We have the best overall communications infrastructure among the G-7 nations. We are among the leaders in terms of penetration, quality, market development and rates. For example, Canada tops the G-7 in proportion of households with personal computers. We have the lowest residential telephone and Internet access charges in the G-7. We have the highest rate of cable television subscribers in the G-7.

As we build the world's best communications infrastructure we have also built industries that sell knowledge based goods and services around the world. Our information and communications technology industries export to more than 90 countries. The sector is a leader in research and development, accounting for one-third of total industrial R and D in Canada.

These industries hold enormous potential for jobs and growth. Now that we have cleared the way for them to compete internationally that potential is growing even greater.

This legislation is a necessary step toward the continuing process of liberalizing telecommunications trade worldwide. I urge the House to act on it quickly and to secure for Canadians their entry into the global telecommunications marketplace.

• (1345)

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I will be speaking today to Bill C-17 which amends two acts, the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act.

I will preface my remarks with the encouragement I personally take that the minister recognizes the importance of this sector and has continually put it forward as a priority for Canada. I and my party may differ with the process to take us there but we certainly concur with the priority he places on it.

Prior to my time in this House I served and worked in the telecommunications sector for many years. I do concur that we have one of the finest communications infrastructures that we will

find anywhere in the world. I take personal pride in being a part of having shaped that in Canada today.

Our telecommunications policy in Canada and that infrastructure has largely been born out of an inward looking approach to our telecommunications industry. We have to some degree limited ownership in the past to Canadian players and Canadian content. We have had a monopolistic approach to the development of the industry. In the past it has served Canadians and did the job and allowed for the creation of some infrastructure, but the day we are in today is certainly different from what has been in the past.

Today we are facing a greater degree of globalization and competitiveness as we have never seen before. To continue with an approach of inward looking, restrictive type policies will only serve to restrict Canadians' full participation in the global marketplace.

We have much to gain as Canadians. We have equipment and competencies in Canada that are second to none. We are well equipped right now to compete in the global marketplace, a marketplace which offers an \$880 billion industry in which Canadians are eager to participate.

The global network that is evolving around the world today has changed the way we relate. Time and distance no longer are the factors they were in the past. Our world is changing.

New agreements need to be put in place to reduce the restrictions on trade and to promote investment in this critical industry if we are to capitalize on the benefits that are available for Canadians.

Speaking to this particular bill, there are some encouraging points to this bill that we have long awaited. The reduction in foreign ownership and control requirements and the lifting of some of these requirements on submarine cables, earth stations and technologies that carry long distance telecommunications services outside of Canada are good and positive signs and things we personally endorse.

The Teleglobe monopoly wind down and the Telesat monopoly divestiture are good signs. They are things that have been called for for some time. As the minister has alluded to, even the entities themselves, such as Teleglobe, embrace the opportunity to participate in the global telecommunications industry.

There are some changes required if we are to meet our trade commitments and adapt to these new realities and move away from the restrictive approach of the past. We need stronger legislative controls which are inherent in this bill around technical standards for telecommunications equipment, both that which leaves Canada and that which comes into Canada, provided those controls are applied to telecommunications equipment and not to other equipment that may not be pertinent to the telecommunications industry.

Government Orders

• (1350)

Generally we are supportive of the components within this bill that call for the elimination of the monopolies, the relaxation of foreign ownership restrictions and greater access to international markets. However we have some concerns with this bill and I would like to speak to three of those concerns. Unfortunately these concerns are of such a grave nature that the positive aspects of the bill, which the industry and this party have been calling for for some time, are almost negated by these more detrimental aspects of the bill.

The first concern is the expansive new authority which has been given to the CRTC under this legislation, brand new licensing powers over telecommunications service providers. The process around this licensing and how it is applied is undefined in the legislation. There is no mention of costs or fees which may be involved in obtaining a licence. This is another opportunity to potentially extract new revenues for the government and to further diminish the success of entrepreneurial interests in this area.

Is the process impartial? We have no way of knowing from this legislation. There is a clear indication that entities which exist in Canada today but do not require a licence will require one once this legislation is in place. There is no criteria outlined for granting of licences.

Some may think this is an over concern, but when we look at the CRTC's track record in other industries and in other areas, there is justification for concern. It has a track record of picking winners and losers. Often those picks are justified by a nebulous public interest statement rather than clear guidelines.

This significantly greater power given to the CRTC seems to be in exactly the opposite direction of what we see in the divestiture of the monopolies and the wind down of the monopolies of Teleglobe and Telesat. It is a trade off which is very unfortunate in the packaging of this particular bill.

We prefer a more clearly defined process if in fact licensing is even necessary, protecting impartiality in free market forces with less potential for abuse and political interference. It may be that none of this is intended, but define the process. Build in the safeguards so that accusations cannot be made. If that is there, it stimulates investor confidence and business development.

The second point which gives us concern about this legislation is the brand new administrative powers granted to the CRTC. In the short term the justification for these powers is targeted at the administration of the North American numbering sequence for long distance calling. On the surface it might seem reasonable but I suggest that in the past this work was actually done by industry. Does the CRTC have the skills to manage and administer an operational process such as this?

I know there is a clause in the legislation for the CRTC to be able to appoint a third party to administer this activity. Our concern is that this is an operational type of administrative duty which is new to the CRTC. I would suggest the skill sets are not there to effectively manage this and it may not be the best place to carry this on.

• (1355)

Even beyond that, a greater concern on this same theme is the open ended administrative power on a go forward basis granted to the CRTC by this legislation which it can impose or as the legislation itself says, prescribe for any activity related to the provision of telecommunications services by Canadian carriers.

The CRTC can further delegate powers to a chosen third party, including one created by the commission itself. This means that any area of the industry that the CRTC feels needs to have its administrative oversight can be subject to a third party management that the CRTC puts in place.

These two areas of undefined and extensive administrative power go far beyond what is required for increased participation by Canadians in the global communications marketplace.

Our concern is that what Canadians have gained in the removal of the monopolies and greater access to international markets is more than offset by the much greater controlling powers given to the regulator here at home. These are very serious precedents in the wrong direction, especially given the CRTC's track record of an expensive application process and weakly defensible subjective public interest arguments for the chosen winners and losers in the industry.

My third and final concern relates to what we believe to be the very short term nature and short sightedness of this bill. We see within this bill the continued attempt to separate broadcasting from telecommunications but the reality is that these two technologies are undergoing a convergence at a very rapid rate.

In Canada today, broadcast information through digitization is being carried by telecom carriers. As voice data and broadcast material is increasingly carried by telecom infrastructures, the attempt to partition broadcasting from telecommunications regulation will become increasingly cumbersome and increasingly difficult.

I believe that this attempt to continue to embrace the Broadcasting Act is really driven more by a desire to regulate what Canadians watch rather than any efficiencies in the actual distribution. It is again CRTC censorship regarding what Canadians will have exposure to.

However because of convergence and the attempt to strip out broadcast from telecommunications within the industry, I would suggest to the minister and to the government that is going to be

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effectively impossible in the days ahead as these technologies move together. There is a better approach.

The Speaker: My colleague, of course you have quite a bit of time left in your speech but it is almost 2 o'clock and I thought perhaps we could start with statements by members. You will have the floor when we return to the debate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

COUNCILLOR FRANK MCKECHNIE

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past summer the city of Mississauga lost a good friend and a former colleague of mine, councillor Frank McKechnie.

Frank immigrated to Canada from Glasgow, Scotland in 1950. First elected in 1958 to the former Toronto township council, he served as a Peel county councillor, town of Mississauga councillor and a member of the city of Mississauga council and region of Peel council. Widely known as the mayor of Malton, Frank was Mississauga's longest serving councillor and one of Canada's longest serving municipal politicians. In addition to politics he was extremely active in the community, volunteering his time with a large number of organizations.

• (1400)

Frank was a kind and gentle man whose vision helped Mississauga grow into this country's ninth largest city and whose years of dedicated service to his constituents serve as inspiration to all of us.

The municipal election on November 10 will be the first time in 39 years without Frank McKechnie's name on the ballot. He will truly be missed.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in less than one month the government will commit Canada to legally binding targets regarding greenhouse gas emissions. This will be done despite the following.

First, the scientific community remains divided on whether greenhouse gases do indeed cause global warming.

Second, the government has failed to receive the agreement of the provinces before it goes to Kyoto. The provinces that will enforce the emission standards must be on side before Kyoto, not after.

Third, developing countries such as China, India and Mexico that will be the big contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the

future are not part of the Kyoto agreement. Clearly this is a global concern that requires all countries to be involved.

The government has had four years to prepare for Kyoto. Yet here we are less than one month away and our government still has not tabled the Canadian position or provided any documentation on the implications.

Where is the leadership?

* * *

RABBI GUNTER PLAUT

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow evening I will have the honour of attending the inauguration of the W. Gunter Plaut Humanitarian Award at Holy Blossom Temple.

Rabbi Plaut will be the first recipient of this award which recognizes community leadership and commitment to human rights. He has worked tirelessly to promote social justice in the community.

This occasion will also mark the launch of Rabbi Plaut's new book *More Unfinished Business* and his 85th birthday.

Rabbi Plaut is a world renowned theologian and the esteemed senior scholar at Holy Blossom Temple in my riding. Holy Blossom Temple is the oldest and the largest Jewish reform congregation in Canada.

Rabbi Plaut has made significant contributions to Holy Blossom and our broader community for the past 36 years.

I thank Rabbi Plaut for his dedication and work in our community, congratulate him on receiving this well deserved award and wish him a happy 85th birthday.

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[Translation]

PARISH OF PRINCEVILLE

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the parish of Princeville is celebrating the 150th anniversary of its foundation this year.

In addition to generating numerous activities, this event is a perfect opportunity to become more familiar with our roots and to rediscover Quebec's traditional values.

As the member for Lotbinière, I wish these people some happy celebrations and I take this opportunity to congratulate the organizing committee chaired by Roger Bilodeau.

One of the highlights of the festivities was the launching of a history book. I also congratulate the author, Claude Raymond, who did not hesitate to show his attachment to Quebec by entitling his book *Dis-moi comment on a bâti mon pays*.

PHARMACY AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the House and all Canadians that November 3 to 9 is Pharmacy Awareness Week.

Various activities will take place in communities across Canada to promote the fact that pharmacists are experts on the use of medications.

This year's theme is "A healthy partnership—You and your pharmacist. Finding solutions together" stresses the idea that health is a shared responsibility. Pharmacists and the public are key partners in Canadian health care services.

Pharmacists can also be partners with other health care groups in finding solutions to health care problems.

This week is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn how their pharmacist can help them improve their health.

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the temperature has been rising in the Chamber lately and the cause is the hot air emitting from the Reform Party. It is confusing fact with fiction and lobbying for narrow special interest groups instead of the public good.

This is not an east-west issue. Over 90% of Albertans support meeting our greenhouse gas commitments.

• (1405)

Here is what one Albertan had to say in the Edmonton *Journal*:

I am enraged by the stupidity, self-centredness and shortsightedness of our so-called leaders who are opposed to measures being taken by the federal government to curb the emission of greenhouse gases.

The dinosaurs did not die out four million years ago. They are still huffing, puffing and snorting on the other side of the Chamber.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for several years I have been watching with fascination and disgust the transformation of the theory of human induced global warming from an interesting scientific hypothesis to widely accepted doctrine. This has been accomplished without the addition of significant new data by mere constant repetition of unproven claims.

When science becomes entangled with anti-technological ideology it takes real courage for a researcher to remain loyal to scientific principles and the scientific method of investigation.

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Mediocrities and charlatans need only parrot appropriate politically correct slogans about rising oceans and parched farm lands to receive grants and to have their egos massaged by gullible mass media.

A medieval culture of hostility to objective scholarship is emerging—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Whitby—Ajax.

* * *

PEACEKEEPING

Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to serving the cause of fighting for freedom and justice in time of war, Canada has taken a back seat to no nation. This week as we celebrate the contributions made by our servicemen and women during times of conflict we should also remember their heroic efforts throughout the past half century in keeping the peace. I am of course referring to our peacekeepers.

With its origins going back to the late 1940s, the term peacekeeper has become synonymous with the word Canadian. From Suez to Cyprus to Yugoslavia and at times and places in between the United Nations has called on Canadians to help out, and help out they have.

Tens of thousands have served in more than 40 separate peacekeeping missions around the world. More than a hundred have lost their lives and hundreds more have been wounded. They continue to serve as we speak.

Canada and the nations around the world remain in their debt for their protection—

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[Translation]

STATUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, year after year, throne speech after election campaign, we hear the same promise: jobs for the young workers and a better quality of life for the next generation. But what are the facts?

The unemployment rate for young people aged 15 to 24 is close to 17% and, in Quebec, it is close to 20%. The dropout rate for 18 year old students is 15%. The average student loan has increased by 42% between 1989 and 1996 as a direct result of cuts in transfer payments to provinces.

At the same time, the Liberal government insists on duplicating about a dozen programs for young people initiated by the Quebec government, even if it admits services should be rendered by the most appropriate level of government level, which is certainly not the federal level.

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Mr. Denis Coderre: You are not angry enough. Get real mad.

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay: Even if the member for Bourassa thinks this is unimportant, this government's action should be entitled "Vicious circle" or "How the Liberals have our young people going around in circles".

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is prone to creating confusion and even fear-mongering on climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gases.

In reality, greenhouse gas reduction means good business. One of the first steps is to stabilize emissions in Canada by cancelling costly and perverse subsidies, by switching to natural gas wherever possible, by capping industrial emissions and putting in place a system of tradable emissions permits, by improving fuel efficiency for new vehicles, and by launching a national program aimed at energy efficiency.

These steps will make Canada a world leader in energy efficiency. These steps will also create jobs, increase revenues and reduce costs.

* * *

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, fetal alcohol syndrome is the leading cause of preventable birth defects in Canada. Among other things it causes devastating neurological damage. With an average IQ of 68 most of these children cannot function in school. Many run afoul of the law and it is estimated that half the people in jail have FAS or FAE.

Yesterday the justice minister glibly suggested that this was Manitoba's problem. This is everybody's problem.

• (1410)

Today I challenge the Minister of Justice to meet with her provincial counterparts to amend the Mental Health Act so that a woman can be placed in a treatment facility if she wilfully consumes substances that will damage her unborn child.

This is not an abortion bill. This is a bill to prevent children from being poisoned so that they too can have a fair chance in life.

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[Translation]

MUNICIPAL ELECTION IN VERDUN

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday was municipal election day in Verdun—

Saint-Henri. I would like to congratulate those who won and praise their courage in running for jobs that are so very challenging.

I particularly want to congratulate our mayor, Georges Bossé, who was re-elected by a wide margin as mayor of Verdun, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish him a very happy birthday one day early.

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Reform Party says that he is not convinced of the link between emissions and global warming. I remember when I was a member of the special committee on acid rain in the 1980s. Scientists were trying to educate another captive of the captains of industry, former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, about acid rain.

Perhaps the Reform Party leader also thinks that acid rain comes from ducks or trees, that smoking does not cause cancer, or that global warming is somehow related to not having an elected Senate. Would the Reform Party be happier with the greenhouse issue if it were proposed that we hang or whip people caught polluting? Would that get its attention?

As for the Liberals, they continue to show contempt for Canadians and for parliament by having more to say at a \$350 a plate fund-raising dinner about their emission reduction plans than they have been willing to divulge in question period. Do we have to attach donations to our questions to get answers about Liberal policy?

* * *

QUEBEC

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to explain the difference between real and false humiliation.

False humiliation is that claimed by separatist leaders when Jacques Villeneuve proudly displayed the Canadian flag after his racing victory.

False humiliation is what Quebeckers are told they feel when Canada's ambassador to France, Jacques Roy, is dubbed a political commando because he toured Quebec and spoke of the world's high regard for the way Canadians of all backgrounds work together to continue to build our great country.

False humiliation is what they are supposed to feel when Mr. Roy argues that Quebec has maintained a strong independent voice in this federation, which is quite different from the situation faced by many countries in the European Union.

Now let me talk about real humiliation. That is what Quebeckers are subjected to when their mean spirited leaders make them a laughing stock with small petty words.

Real humiliation is when we forget why we fought as Canadians on many occasions to defend principles of tolerance and peace.

I ask the leaders of the separatist movement how the people of Quebec can be humiliated by showing—

* * *

MERCHANT NAVY

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago merchant navy veterans received a very special recognition from my riding of Saint John, New Brunswick. During Naval Week, the city invited the merchant navy veteran's association to fly its flag on the official city flagpole.

Saint John is the only city in Canada to permit this. Its actions go a long way to recognizing the efforts and the important role the merchant navy played in the second world war. The merchant navy has been fighting to receive equal status in relation to other veterans. Some merchant navy veterans still cannot qualify for benefits.

Today members of the merchant navy coalition held a press conference on the Hill, urging the government to honour its obligations to these veterans.

As we embark upon Remembrance Week and as we get closer to Remembrance Day, I urge the government to remember the role members of the merchant navy played in bringing peace around the world and finally provide them with equal access to equal benefits.

* * *

SPACEBRIDGE

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, time and again we hear from members across the floor how Canadians do not care about Quebec. Let me give an example of a company in my riding that cares.

Recently COM DEV International of Cambridge, a world leader in satellite technology, together with Newbridge Networks of Kanata, announced the opening of a new company in Quebec called Spacebridge.

• (1415)

Located in Hull, Spacebridge will create more than 200 new high tech jobs. COM DEV's success and the bold vision of its CEO, Val O'Donovan, shows that Canadians outside of Quebec not only care about the province but are willing to invest in Quebec, creating good jobs for present and future generations of Quebeckers as well as for all Canadians.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians heard about the prime minister's speech last night they were more interested in what he did not say than what he did say. When the prime minister spoke about the Kyoto deal he did not rule out a gasoline tax to pay for it.

My question is very straightforward. Will the prime minister rule out any jump at the pump?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is always trying to find something to attack that does not exist. It was all excited about a carbon tax. We said a year ago that there was no such plan. The minister of energy of the day, the Minister of Justice, made many statements about it. Having nothing to complain about, the opposition invents an issue and tries to make hay out of it.

I said there would be no carbon tax. Should we have an income tax increase—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between carbon taxes and gasoline taxes. My question was not that difficult. Either the prime minister knows how he is going to pay for this Kyoto deal and he is keeping it as a Christmas present for Canadians or he does not know. And if he does not know, he should say so.

Economists have said the Kyoto deal, only 27 days away, could add up to 10 cents, 20 cents or 30 cents for a litre of gasoline.

Here it is again. Do not run away, do not make excuses and do not change the subject. Will there be a jump at the pump to pay for the Kyoto deal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first we have to have a deal. That is the first point. We are going there because Canadians want us to do something about climate changes. The Reform Party is against it. It does not give a damn about the environment but we do on this side of the House.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what is responsible is going and signing a treaty when you do not what is in it, you do not know what it will cost and you do not know how you will pay for it.

The Liberal political minister for Alberta was very quiet in the House yesterday but outside in the lobby she was quite talkative. She told reporters that the Liberals have not ruled out a gasoline tax. She even reminded Canadians that Liberals increased the gasoline tax 1.5 cents a litre several years ago.

Oral Questions

I ask the prime minister—

An hon. member: Bingo.

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, I think we should go and play bingo. They really do not know what we have said on that. They attacked the Minister of Justice when they knew very well that the rules of this House did not allow her to get up in the House of Commons. She replied to them later.

We are responsible on this side. They are irresponsible on the other side.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, so far the only government officials who have publicly stated the costs of the Kyoto deal are the finance minister's own people. They have been quoted in the *Globe and Mail* that the Kyoto deal could consume any hope for budget surplus.

Is the finance minister willing to run up a deficit to pay for the Kyoto deal?

• (1420)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, it is nonsensical to speculate on a deal that has not taken place. It is nonsensical to speculate on a series of commitments to be negotiated with a multitude of countries around the world. It is nonsensical to speculate on negotiations which have not begun. It is nonsensical to speculate on fundamental changes that are going to take place over great number of years in a negotiation with a great number of countries.

That is our position. The prime minister has expressed it well.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the prime minister has stated it well. They do not have a position.

We can read in the newspaper where the Americans are coming from. We can read in the newspaper where the European community is coming from. We cannot find out in this House where this government is coming from.

The finance minister's department has stated that the Kyoto deal is going to eat up the surplus of the budget. Where is the finance minister going to get the money to finance the Kyoto deal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is this very member of Parliament who is the one who has proposed a tax increase to settle the problem of the Kyoto deal. He is the only one who spoke about it.

As the Minister of Finance said, we have a responsibility for the protection of the environment and climate change.

These people on the other side do not feel that the world is changing or that we have international obligations. They are still at the stage where they think the planet is flat.

* * *

[Translation]

DRINKING WATER

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has just interfered in another area under provincial jurisdiction, drinking water.

In reading Bill C-14, we see that the government, under the guise of setting national standards, is trying to take complete control over drinking water.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that, under the guise of setting national standards, he is going to assume complete control over the selling of drinking water, over its quality and over all related products?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that of course is quite untrue.

What the bill does is regulate a matter entirely within federal jurisdiction; that is to say, standards for the manufacture, sale and use of mechanisms and equipment used in connection with the transporting of drinking water.

[Translation]

Provincial jurisdiction is being fully respected. Our sole intent is to respect federal responsibilities.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indeed just confirmed that this involves all products related to drinking water. That is in the bill, moreover.

They always have good intentions but, is it not the bottom line that, having figured out that drinking water is going to become a major economic issue, a strategic issue in the years to come, the federal government is trying to grab control of drinking water, as it has already done with telecommunications and oil?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position expressed by the hon. member is a somewhat odd one. Is he opposed to Canadians having safe water? Is he opposed to health standards for Canadians?

It is very odd to find a constitutional question in all this. I am extremely surprised and disappointed. It is our intention to act in order to protect the health of all Canadians.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government will get involved in the area of drinking water through its health department, on the grounds that it must protect public health in Canada.

Is this not an excuse for the federal government to take complete control over drinking water, thus taking over responsibilities which Quebec already exercises and which come under provincial jurisdiction?

• (1425)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our actions, we have respected the jurisdiction of Quebec and of all the other provinces.

In fact, we discussed the details of this legislation with my provincial counterparts and their officials, and it is widely recognized that we took action to meet a challenge faced by every jurisdiction in Canada. It is a federal responsibility, but we are respecting provincial jurisdiction.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Health not once again trying to pull a fast one, as in the case of raw milk cheese, by suddenly and clumsily getting involved in an area where no one in Quebec thinks he has any business, using public health as an excuse?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should check with her colleagues in Quebec City, because we have the support of all the provinces to introduce this legislation.

We intend to proceed to protect the health of all Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the prime minister. At a \$350 a plate dinner last night the prime minister nixed carbon taxes as a way to reduce greenhouse gases.

Unfortunately dinner goes and Canadians alike still did not get their money's worth. We still do not know what positive position the government will put forward at Kyoto.

Economic and scientific experts agree that solid leadership on greenhouse gas emissions can be win-win for Canada economically and environmentally.

Why then will Canada not go to Kyoto prepared to provide leadership?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will provide leadership and that is what we are talking about at this time. As members can see, there is no agreement.

There is the Reform Party which does not want to do anything about the protection of the environment and the NDP which does not think a minute about what the cost might be.

At this moment my ministers are speaking with provincial governments because for the implementation of the Kyoto commitment which will come eventually we need the collaboration of the provinces. The ministers will be meeting on November 16.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister, the heritage minister and the prime minister are all on public record in support of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2005.

In fact, this promise was front and centre in the Liberal red book, page 70, right up there with the promise to scrap the GST.

When the government broke the GST promise, the member for Hamilton East was forced to resign. Who is going to resign over this broken promise?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will finish what I was saying. There will be a meeting in a few days, actually the 12th of this month, and we want to have discussions with the provinces because in Canada the federal government is not like the NDP. We do not tell the provinces to do exactly what we want.

We want to have discussions with them to develop a consensus and have a position that will represent the interests of every part of Canada.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, last night at this fund-raising dinner the prime minister made the whopping statement that he wants Canada to get credit for selling nuclear reactors to China because he says that a country like Canada should get some recognition for helping a developing country reduce its emissions and get some credit for it.

Since the prime minister holds that position, could he table in the House of Commons today the environmental assessment on which he bases that statement?

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not need to table anything. It is obvious that if the Chinese can use electricity produced by atomic energy, they will not have to burn coal. One does not have to be a genius to understand that it is better to use electricity that does not pollute than electricity produced by burning coal.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, genius is a rare commodity on the government benches.

Oral Questions

• (1430)

[English]

The Minister of Finance said on the weekend in an interview that when he was Liberal environment critic he was tremendously “deceived” by Rio because governments did not live up to their commitments. I know this is a concept with which he is familiar, being the minister responsible for the GST.

The finance minister is part of a government that has held office for four of the five years since Rio. I would like to know what his government has done to live up to those commitments.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that when a number of us from this side of the House and, in fact, the current head of the Suzuki Foundation went to Rio, we put a great deal of faith in this member when he was the minister of the environment.

However, a number of promises were made that were not kept. When we came into office we found that nothing had been done. In fact, they had engaged in anti-rhetoric. Everything this member said he did not mean.

The Canadian people were tremendously deceived and I was too. When the hon. member was in Rio he should have set commitments—

Some hon. members: More, more.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton North.

* * *

RCMP INVESTIGATION

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the Liberal’s top Quebec fundraiser, Pierre Corbeil, appeared in court to answer charges of criminal influence peddling.

However, questions remain for the government. Who actually leaked the government documents and lists so that Mr. Corbeil could have them? When we asked this question of the Prime Minister on October 9, he said he was going to have a chat with his ethics counsellor and get him to look into it. It is now nearly a month later.

Could the Prime Minister tell us what the ethics counsellor had to say about this deal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I talked with the ethics counsellor and he said that no minister had broken any of the guidelines.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that may be comforting for the Prime Minister, but I do not think Canadians are going to be happy with that answer. There are still some questions unresolved.

Canadians want to know how those confidential lists got into Pierre Corbeil’s hands. The Prime Minister says that the ethics counsellor said everything is okay. Surely there should be a report available. The ethics counsellor must report to Parliament, not just to the Prime Minister over coffee.

Will the Prime Minister release a copy of the ethics counsellor’s remarks or are we going to have to find out about the government’s ethics at a criminal trial?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is making an attack which is based on information that is not available.

She should know that when something is in front of the courts, no minister can reply until the court has disposed of it. It is elementary.

* * *

[Translation]

DRINKING WATER

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

The federal government’s intrusion in the matter of drinking water leaves us scratching our heads and points to a new source of potential confrontation with Quebec. Once again, Ottawa is trespassing on the established jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec.

Just as Quebec is setting up a water policy, is the federal government not opening the door to confrontation through its intervention by promoting duplication and overlap, when it is not needed in the area?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is completely mistaken. We prepared the bill with a view to honouring areas of provincial jurisdiction and to acting only within federal jurisdiction to achieve a national priority.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec’s water policy has not yet been drawn up, and the minister is already defining priorities.

By getting involved in the matter of drinking water, is the federal government not taking over what Quebeckers quite rightly consider a natural resource that belongs to them?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member would care to read the bill, he would see that it is clear we have dealt only with matters of federal jurisdiction.

• (1435)

The details of the bill are clear. Provincial jurisdiction is respected. It is up to the provinces to deal with the other matters, and I hope they will.

Oral Questions

[English]

[Translation]

AIRPORTS

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has revealed that more than a dozen ground handlers at Pearson airport are in the pay of Colombian drug lords to unload smuggled cocaine.

When we asked the revenue minister last month if drug inspection officers were being pulled away from planes to fast track certain shipments, he did not answer and he did not act.

Can the minister assure us today that not a single plane containing smuggled drugs has gone uninspected at Pearson airport?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the opportunity to speak on two situations.

I want to congratulate customs. Just in the last five weeks Canada Customs officers have seized about \$10 million in smuggled cocaine from Trinidad.

On Friday, as a result of the good work of customs officers, a man with two false passports and a grenade was detained and subsequently turned over to police. This speaks to the good work that our customs officers are doing at our airports and our borders.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let the record show that I asked the minister if any planes were not inspected. He did not answer the question.

Last month Dennis Coffey, a senior customs officer blew the whistle on lax inspection practices at Pearson airport. Instead of acting on these allegations, the minister's department intimidated Mr. Coffey.

While his bureaucrats were bullying Mr. Coffey, how many plane loads of cocaine were allowed to land and go uninspected at Pearson airport?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member does not know the facts at all. He should look at the facts and the stories that have come out about the good work that customs do.

If the member is saying that we should inspect every piece of goods that comes through the border, he should be aware that Canada does over \$1 billion of trade. I would need a lot of money from the finance minister to inspect every piece of goods. We do an excellent job. We have some of the best customs officers in the world and I am proud of the work they do.

BC MINE

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

In the BC mine issue, everyone is calling for an improved POWA to help older workers who have just lost their jobs. Only this Liberal government is turning a deaf ear.

Is the minister, who has had since last week to give this matter some thought, ready to change his position and allow this request?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is completely wrong to say that this government is turning a deaf ear.

Our government was the first to react to the situation of the workers who lost their jobs at the mine, the first, in late September, to put an offer of a package of up to \$3 million in active job measures for workers on the table.

There was excellent news in the region yesterday. There was talk of Noranda creating 350 jobs in Asbestos. Clearly, things are happening. Our government wants to help these people re-enter the job market.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not know Quebec. The Asbestos region is not the same as the Thetford region.

Will the minister admit that, at least in the case of these older workers, what is needed is not active measures, but a form of income support that will see them through to retirement with dignity at the age of 65? Jean Dupéré and Louise Harel have already stated their position. It is now up to the minister.

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each government is free to decide on its course of action. In the past, the Government of Quebec decided to intervene in the shipbuilding and clothing industries. It did so in its capacity as the Government of Quebec and is perfectly free to do so again.

I have responsibility for certain active measure funds and that is what I am offering them. The POWA was phased out one year ago and the workers themselves said it did not interest them unless it was improved, which would mean it was no longer the same program.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the appointment of Judge Advocate General Brigadier-General Boutet expired on November 2, after having been extended last spring.

Boutet was the Judge Advocate General who oversaw the worst abuses in military history in Canada. Will the defence minister confirm whether Boutet's contract as Judge Advocate General has been extended?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position of the Judge Advocate General has been extended for three months.

The military justice system is going through changes and we are looking at what we want to do in the future. We need an extra three months to do that, so an extension has been made for a three-month period.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Judge Advocate General is responsible for the military justice system.

It was reported earlier this week that dozens of military personnel stationed at CFS Leitrim were suspected of being cocaine users and drug traffickers.

The JAG's investigation into these allegations was dropped because it was so badly botched. In light of the newly leaked evidence, which the minister must have known about, why on earth has he extended the contract of the Judge Advocate General?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the research of the hon. member opposite is not very good. It is not the Judge Advocate General who investigates these matters, it is the military police.

The military police have had the matter under investigation. They have not closed the file but they have suspended it because of insufficient evidence on which to lay charges. If further evidence is brought forward, then charges will be laid.

Meanwhile, we are extending the position of the Judge Advocate General—a separate issue altogether—because of the major changes being made.

We want to have a look at who is the best person to occupy that position and an additional three months is a wise move to make.

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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

After benefiting from rate increases three times the rate of inflation, major telephone companies are yet again asking the CRTC to approve 100% to 200% increases, thereby jeopardizing the very concept of basic public telephone service.

The Telecommunications Act states that affordable basic service should be available across Canada. Does the government intend to remind the CRTC that—

The Speaker: The Minister of Industry has the floor.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could not hear the whole question. The hon. member should know that here, in Canada, we have the lowest telecommunications rates in the world, for both local and long distance calls.

I believe we have instructed the CRTC to support universal service, and this process is under way as we speak. We will see what the CRTC's decision will be.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

This morning in this building the Merchant Navy Coalition showed how for 52 years its members have been denied housing, have been denied education and service benefits given to other veterans.

Is the minister prepared to give all wartime merchant marine veterans the same benefits as other veterans?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a very timely question.

A little more than five years ago Bill C-84 was passed which made merchant seamen fully eligible for all veterans benefits. With the passage of this bill there was finally tangible recognition of the key contribution merchant seamen made to the success of the Allied victory and the freedom which we enjoy and celebrate today.

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PEARSON AIRPORT

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport said in the House earlier this year that the full cost

of settling the Pearson airport fiasco would be \$60 million, which appears in the public accounts.

We now find another \$97.6 million buried in the supplementary estimates for adjustments to the Toronto airport lease.

Will the minister come clean, or is he just padding the Pearson payoff?

• (1445)

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the original announcement was made by my predecessor, it was always envisaged that there would be adjustments to that payment. That is what is reflected in the estimates.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport this spring was quite categorical in saying that \$60 million was all there would be to pay off the Pearson airport fiasco.

I again ask the minister, is it just another \$97.6 million, or how much will we have to pay next year to cover this Liberal boondoggle?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think I answered the question initially.

The fact is that this was a rather complicated agreement, a complicated deal and not all of the costs were in at the time of the announcement.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, countries around the world began initiating energy efficiency measures after Rio, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Other countries have used higher standards and proactive regulations to increase employment and protect the environment at the same time, a win-win situation.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Since coming to power in 1993 what has this government done to increase energy efficiency and meet global commitments beyond a voluntary registry program and a weak federal building standards program?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a variety of initiatives are under way. There are the self-starting initiatives that we are supporting and encouraging in the private sector, the strengthening of efficiency regulations, certain incentives to encourage greater energy efficiency in the use of renewables, the encouragement of co-generation projects, the promotion of science and technology, the fostering of a whole range of alternatives in terms of energy.

Oral Questions

We believe that in properly dealing with the climate change challenge we can develop a truly win-win situation for Canada.

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, protecting the environment and creating jobs are important to Canadians. The issue of climate change was even ratified by a great country like China.

Will the Minister of Finance commit today that after Kyoto he will establish a national commission consisting of an investment fund and asking leadership from governments and health, community and labour groups to recommend measures to maximize jobs and economic benefits for all Canadians?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is quite right in saying that we have to enlist the involvement and the creativity of a broad cross-section of Canadians, indeed a broad cross-section of people around the world, to come to grips with the problem of climate change.

I know the hon. gentleman's motivation is sincere. I would encourage him to direct at least part of his enthusiasm for this issue to the province of Saskatchewan to encourage constructive solutions there too.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, Atlantic fishermen are being subjected to an unbearable number of fees: licence fees, inspection fees, wharfage fees and monitoring fees to name just a few. Some of these have gone from \$30 to \$7,000 in a single year.

My question is for the minister of fisheries. Is it the intent of the department to put these small fishermen out of business and will the minister review some of these onerous fees with an aim to providing some relief to the fishermen in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the direct question is no. The answer to the second part of the question is we are trying very hard to make sure we have a viable fishery in Atlantic Canada and indeed on the Pacific and Arctic coasts as well.

It is very important to recognize that as part of the viability some fishermen who have in fact quite substantial incomes pay a legitimate fee for the product that they use. For others who are smaller fishermen such as the ones referred to by the hon. member, we are constantly examining the fee impact. There is a three year study which will start next year on the impact of it.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the minister's response is going to offer much encouragement to the fishermen back home.

Oral Questions

As we speak, fishermen are being subjected to electronic black box monitoring and on-board video surveillance. This is akin to the electronic bracelets worn by prisoners, but at least the prisoners had a fair trial before being subjected to this humiliating and patronizing process.

What are the limits of intrusiveness and again, will the minister review some of these costs and the purposes of some of these practices?

• (1450)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the important factors both internationally and domestically with the fishing fleet is to get accurate information on the stocks that are being fished in particular with respect to bycatch and other destructive practices that may be taking place. It is therefore important to have information on catch.

Whether the black box the gentleman is talking about is in fact a two way radio which keeps the fishermen in touch with shore so they can report catch I am not sure. However where it is possible to use technology instead of having a human observer, generally speaking costs are saved and the fishermen are dramatically advantaged as a result.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Elinor Caplan (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development regarding the First Nations Land Management Act tabled in the last Parliament which did not address the concerns of aboriginal women. Married women living on reserve cannot get an order for a share in the matrimonial home and the land it is on and they cannot get an order for exclusive occupancy of that home when their marriage ends.

What is the minister doing to address the concerns and the rights of aboriginal women who want to protect their homes when their marriages end?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the First Nations Land Management Act is an important initiative that could provide more control for First Nations over their lands. Concerns have been raised over the issue and the need for a process to manage matrimonial property. We take these concerns very seriously.

It would be my hope that we could find a solution out of court through positive discussions with all the parties. We certainly respect the right of the B.C. Native Women's Society to pursue its concerns through the courts.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week the immigration minister reappointed Stéphane Handfield to an \$85,000 a year patronage plum with the IRB. Mr. Handfield was originally appointed to the IRB right out of law school but surprise, surprise, surprise. His mother just happens to be a key Liberal organizer and fundraiser.

Was it Handfield's years of experience in immigration law or was it his mother's long term service to the Liberal Party that won him his \$85,000 a year patronage position? Canadians want to know.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can see that the hon. member from the Reform Party is not at all aware of the procedure for making appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board.

There is a selection committee that assesses candidates and makes recommendations on appointments to the government. In this case, in accordance with the procedure, the selection committee recommended the person be reappointed because he was qualified.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Despite years of austerity and cuts, the propaganda budget for Canada Day and heritage celebrations has increased by 1,000% in two years.

Can the minister explain to us why she has served Quebec so well this time by giving it 56% of the Canada Day budget? Is it because Quebec is a distinct society, a unique society, or because it is sovereignist?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the heritage critic for the Bloc Québécois for her first question.

I will just point out to her that I recently read in *La Presse*, I think, that the budget for the Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebrations was higher than the Canada Day budget.

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[English]

ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the health care community in Canada, including the

Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Public Health Association and I might point out to members on my far right in the Reform Party, the Alberta Medical Association, all agree that global climate change presents serious health, environmental, economic and social risks.

To protect the health of Canadians and in support of health care professionals all across the country, will the Minister of Health support a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2005?

• (1455)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that health is indeed one of the considerations that should figure in the development of environmental policy. It is for that reason that my colleague the Minister of the Environment has engaged me along with all of our colleagues in cabinet and caucus in developing the government's position.

The hon. member can rest assured that when this government announces the position, it will reflect not only the best interests of Canada but health considerations as well.

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TRADE

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. When the current Minister for International Trade was Minister of the Environment, he mismanaged Bill C-29 resulting in the \$350 million Ethyl Corporation lawsuit against the Canadian government. This is one of three lawsuits against the government under chapter 11 provisions of NAFTA.

MAI expands on the scope and definition of the investor provisions of NAFTA as well as geographically expanding it to 29 OECD countries. This exponentially increases the ability for foreign investors to sue the Canadian government—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Susan Whelan: Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know that this government—

The Speaker: Excuse me, I did not see the parliamentary secretary rise. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

One of the reasons for pursuing MAI is to strengthen Canada's position in world trade. We are going to go to the bargaining table in January and we will not back away and fight for those things that the hon. member is most concerned about. MAI has a great future, if we can get 29 countries together singing from the same hymn book.

Oral Questions

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know that this government is building a modern, innovative economy. What steps has the Minister of Industry taken to encourage support for innovation and risk taking in the science and technology industry in Canada?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could hear the end of that question.

Clearly innovation and knowledge are the keys to Canada's participation in a knowledge based economy of the 21st century. Therefore we have invested in supporting research and development in the universities through the extension of the networks of centres of excellence and the \$800 million Canada Foundation for Innovation. We have supported research in the private sector through the Technology Partnerships Canada program.

There have been 11,000 jobs created and maintained through the extension of the industrial research and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Macleod.

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KREVER INQUIRY

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Judge Horace Krever is about to make his report on November 21 and he will surely say that the federal government shares the blame in the tainted blood tragedy.

Will the health minister commit that he will also share the compensation package with those victims who got hepatitis C?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think instead of anticipating the recommendations the judge will make, it is best to await the delivery of the report. It will be in our hands within a few weeks. We will make it public and then we can all have a look at it and go from there.

* * *

[Translation]

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister.

We all know that the Canadian government wishes to exclude culture from the multilateral agreement on investment. To achieve this, however, the negotiators must agree on the wording of a clause whereby cultural industries will be exempted.

Is the Prime Minister willing to make a commitment to the cultural industries that their recommendations will be considered

Government Orders

for adoption and that a clause worthy of the name providing for a general exception for cultural industries will be negotiated?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, whatever the forum we have been involved in. We have always acted to protect Canada's cultural industries. We did this when NAFTA was signed and we have always done this in our multilateral negotiations, always.

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CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice, who was kind enough to reply to my question yesterday, even if it was directed to the Minister of National Revenue.

Bill C-41 authorizes Cabinet to establish guidelines on child support payments. The courts refer to these when making child support orders, for instance to determine the amount to be paid to the parent with custody.

• (1500)

If the government has authority to establish guidelines governing orders, why are judges awarding today smaller benefits than those that were awarded after taxes under the old law? How can the government accept and justify such practices?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned to the hon. member yesterday in response to her question, the support guidelines were enacted by the government. In fact we believe those support guidelines will ensure that the children of divorced couples will be better off.

If the hon. member has any indication that these guidelines in any part of their application are not working well, I would be very happy to discuss it with her.

* * *

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw members' attention to the presence in our gallery of Marc Fischbach, the minister of justice, minister of the budget and minister of parliamentary relations for Luxembourg.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-17, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Resuming debate with the hon. member for Calgary Centre who has approximately 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, just to recap from where I left off, I was speaking to Bill C-17 and our concerns about some of the changes the bill is bringing about.

There were two changes to the broadened powers of the CRTC linked to the bill which sadly limit the benefit of the bill. We are very concerned about the extensive increase to the powers of the CRTC.

I was also beginning to address a third concern related to the bill in that it has a very short term nature. It is somewhat shortsighted in its application of a greater degree of competition within the industry.

The reason I say that is the bill continues to attempt to separate broadcasting regulation from telecommunications regulation. In Canada today we are facing an increasing convergence within technology where voice, data and broadcast are all being carried over telecommunications facilities.

• (1505)

It is increasingly difficult to try to separate the broadcast component from the telecommunications component because of the convergence of the technologies. As the convergence continues it will be increasingly difficult to keep these two acts separate. Therefore this piece of legislation will have a very short lifespan.

A better approach would be to allow and promote the Canadian cultural industry to produce a package of broadcast content that Canadians actually want. This would allow Canadians to select the kind of material they want to view rather than what the CRTC decides they need to see.

In this way we would be able to reduce the requirement of the Broadcast Act to control content. Then the Broadcast Act and the Telecommunications Act could be combined so that we would be controlling the transmission media rather than the actual content through a combined simplified Telecommunications Act.

Rather than delay the inevitable and hold up the industry from being able to capture some of the gains in the telecommunications market through simplified regulation, we recommend the government take a leadership role and amalgamate the Broadcast Act and the Telecommunications Act. It should harmonize and relax the regulations. It should reduce rather than expand the CRTC protectionist role.

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We encourage a strong Canadian product that will compete well locally and internationally. We are not in a protectionist age. We are in a very competitive age. We need regulations which will allow Canadian telecommunications interests to compete. Broadcasters must be able to provide the products Canadians wish to see rather than the products the CRTC deems we should be able to see.

If we move in this direction we will see a much greater interest by investors to step into the telecommunications marketplace. It will also generate a substantial amount of business confidence.

In summary I will deal with some of the positive measures of the bill. We are encouraged because several of the measures are ones the Reform Party has long been calling for such as the removal of monopoly interests and allowing for Canadian interests to fully participate in international carrier services.

Another positive is the opportunity for greater competition at home when accessing long distance services within the international marketplace. This should lead to lower rates for Canadians.

Unfortunately these positives are coupled with some very significant concerns that we have. I will list them briefly. We are concerned that more power will be given to the CRTC, beyond what is called for by the legislation. We are concerned about very expansive CRTC administrative power over operational concerns, which it is not equipped to manage and never has been. We are also concerned that there is no recognition of convergence between the broadcast and the telecommunications technologies.

It is not a forward looking bill. It is a reactive bill. It is reactive to industry and technological pressure. It does not take us into the information age as the minister so clearly likes to tell us it does. It continues to attempt to strip out broadcasting and the regulations associated with broadcasting. It is getting increasingly difficult to do this.

We encourage the government to address these concerns before the next reading of the bill. Then we as a House can take what is the good part and the good start that we see in the bill, improve it, keep it on track and allow the Canadian industry to become a world leader.

● (1510)

If members opposite and the minister will entertain these changes to the bill and will allow the increase in the controls they are calling for within the greater powers to the CRTC to be uncoupled and removed from the bill, it will strengthen the entire package. It will also strengthen the opportunity for Canadian interests to participate fully in the global information age.

We ask the government to entertain that. I know it would be endorsed by many of members of this party and by many other members of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Calgary West on a question or comment.

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I have a tough question for the member for Calgary Centre.

I wonder if he could enlighten the House with regard to the CRTC—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Chair has made a mistake in that there are no questions or comments following the first three speakers.

However, the Chair having done that, recognizes that the Bloc member who is supposed to be speaking at this time will have to be brought back into the House. Therefore the Chair is at a loss as to exactly what the Chair should be doing.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was surprised by the fact that 40-minute speeches can be followed by questions and comments. That is why I have rushed back to my seat.

First of all, I am pleased to indicate that I agree in principle with Bill C-17, which eliminates the two remaining monopolies in the telecommunications field, that is Teleglobe Canada and Telesat.

On the other hand, the government is using this bill to give additional regulatory powers to the CRTC, and supplementary legislative powers to the minister and the governor in council.

This second aspect is indispensable because it must be clearly understood that this liberalization of telecommunications in Canada makes Canada and Quebec—and I stress the latter, because as a result Quebec has been stripped of all power in this area—two of the countries most open to competition. And that competition is being carried out right under the nose of a giant. That giant is the United States, a country which makes massive use of international communications and one in which giant production companies with networks have a very strong presence.

This is why, in addition to these provisions, Quebec has supported—and the Bloc is also pleased about—the fact that, in negotiating the basic telecommunications agreement with the World Trade Organization, Canada insisted on preserving Canadian majority ownership and limiting direct and indirect foreign ownership to 46.7%.

● (1515)

This then is support for the underlying principles. However, this bill also provides an opportunity to express three major concerns, questions and proposals.

Naturally, this liberalization comes with promises for business. Teleglobe had five years to prepare to face the international

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competition, and the loss of its market in Canada is amply compensated by an increase in its market share in the United States, first, and then in Europe and no doubt in developing countries. We will come back to this, if time permits. This liberalization is therefore favourable and suits business.

As for the two other benefits that are supposed to result, namely access to WTO regulatory mechanisms—which has at times proven to be an advantage, albeit a less certain one—and promises to consumers that rates will drop as competition increases, recent events in the telephone and satellite telecommunications sectors show that this is not a sure thing. So we invite the minister and the CRTC, who have given themselves new powers, to exercise them to ensure this liberalization, this globalization, not only benefits business, but also takes consumer interests into account. This is the only condition that will ensure the government has the support it needs.

We are seeing a sort of revolution in the telecommunications field of the sort they went through at the end of the 19th century with the industrial revolution. Without a minimum of targeted and well-thought-out regulation, this revolution will take place at the expense of those who can afford it the least. Fortunately, this is not the 19th century; therefore, while creating a favourable environment for business, the government and the CRTC will have to protect consumers and ensure access to services at affordable rates.

This is not the only question we want to raise, effectively I hope. There is also the question of privacy. I would like to point out right off that there is a great deal of documentation on the subject. I will conclude with a comment, by saying that government ministers across the way have promised to introduce legislation on privacy. But we are continuing to build this information highway that creates extreme risk conditions without giving ourselves the legislation required to ensure people's privacy, which may result in Canada becoming a country with which the European Union for example will not exchange confidential information, especially since it already feels that Canada does not properly protect this kind of information.

• (1520)

I will try to read in the most lively fashion possible excerpts from a few documents. Rather than paraphrasing, I will quote directly what Paul-André Comeau, Quebec's privacy commissioner, said on this issue.

He said: "In Canada, the federal government and some provincial governments have established legislative frameworks setting out the principles that define the protection of personal information held by government institutions. But, he said, the main designers and owners of the new information systems are currently consortia largely made up of private businesses. It is these businesses which

will soon—this was in 1994, so we are there now—with the implementation of the information highway, be in possession of all sorts of information on people. This information will circulate, it will be disseminated and spread in such a way that it may be difficult for people to protect the data relating to them".

He goes on to say: "To protect privacy, voluntary codes of ethics are often suggested. Such codes are less restrictive than the regulatory framework, especially for businesses. Yet, as interesting and useful as they are, these codes have flaws, a major one being that businesses refusing to comply with the code leave people totally unprotected".

Paul-André Comeau then cites the Quebec legislation: "In this respect, Quebec serves as a model and a beacon in North America. The Quebec experience, still in its early stages at the time—which is no longer the case, although Quebec continues to be proud of this legislation—shows that it is possible to protect people's privacy and their personal information in the private sector, without adversely affecting the competitiveness of businesses and creating obligations that would prevent them from operating".

Paul-André Comeau is certainly not the only one who spoke highly of the Quebec law and who stressed the need for Canada to adopt similar legislation. In their report, the Fédération nationale des associations de consommateurs du Québec and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in Canada state that Canadians are quite concerned about the collection and use of personal information. People feel there is less control over personal information. Canadians are particularly concerned by the transmission of personal information between various organizations, especially private businesses.

Consumers want to know and control how their personal information is being used. The technological changes must not impose a new burden on individuals seeking to protect their privacy.

Why am I raising this issue in the context of the legislation on Teleglobe and Telesat? Because it is precisely through this information highway, through the Internet and the Intranet, through old-fashioned telephone lines and numerous new means of telecommunications, that information about people's private lives may be collected in the form of data banks that, if not protected, can seriously compromise people's privacy.

Naturally, businessmen are doing business and are concerned with maximizing their companies' competitiveness. But the role of the Quebec National Assembly and of the House of Commons of Canada is to take account of these concerns, to have a vision, to know to what extent this information highway is transmitting data in Canada through Quebec and towards other countries, to what extent this electronic highway, this series of networks requires that a way be found to protect confidential information.

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• (1525)

I would like to add that at the level of the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, there is a great concern for another related issue, and that is to ensure that Internet can be used to safely conduct business.

It is of course extremely important to find means to ensure reliability. Otherwise, Internet will not develop to meet all the expectations it is giving rise to today. But the same thing can be said about the protection of personal information. It must be remembered that when the Internet is used, there are always traces of these operations. These traces are numerous and varied on all existing systems.

It should be noted that the hon. member for Mount Royal was chair of a committee that submitted a report dated April 1997 and entitled "Privacy: where do we draw the line?".

This report stated, last spring:

Throughout the country, people are calling for a comprehensive and uniform package of rules to protect personal information. The scope of this legislation should be as wide as possible. Therefore, this committee believes that it should apply to Parliament and also all federal government departments, agencies, crown corporations, boards, commissions and government institutions and to the federally regulated private sector. The participants at our public discussions stated repeatedly that the voluntary application of codes of practice for the protection of personal information does not work.

The committee recommended that the Government of Canada introduce new legislation that would replace the current act. This legislation would comply with the requirements of the Canadian Charter of Privacy Rights and would apply to all departments and also to all the industries and companies subject to the act. This legislation should be enacted by the year 2000.

I would like to add this little part that I find very important:

As we are advancing on the information highway, most of our daily activities leave an electronic trail that many data banks can register.

It is obvious that current legislation in Canada is inadequate and that this situation also affects Quebec citizens in their international relations. An important player also added his voice to all these concerns, and this is the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Bruce Phillips, who, in his 1996-97 annual report, reminded us of the promise made by the then Minister of Justice that legislation would be introduced to protect privacy in a concrete and binding manner in the private sector.

He stated "The Commission has been calling for such an initiative for a long time", and he added, referring to the report by the hon. member for Mount Royal, "that the committee devoted

almost a full year to the review of the impacts on privacy of new technologies".

I could continue, but I believe that this act provides the opportunity to state clearly that further development of the information highway can only be welcomed if we succeed in implementing ways to protect privacy.

• (1530)

As I said, the introduction of this bill affords an occasion not only to rejoice that a number of businesses are being given the opportunity to be competitive not only in Canada but on the world market as well, but also—and I will word it this way—the market and the competition alone, I repeat, the market and the competition alone, are not sufficient to ensure access for all at a reasonable price, as two recent examples have shown: the telephone situation and the bankruptcy of Alphastar.

The minister, the government, the CRTC, cannot do otherwise than to listen to businesses. I understand this, because we are aware that, on the world scale, the biggest Quebec companies are only middle-sized or sometimes even smaller. So, yes, businesses need to grow and this brings considerable challenges.

It is impossible, however, to believe that our businesses' competitiveness comes solely from the pockets of consumers, and often from the most disadvantaged among them. We must therefore continue to make telecommunications services available, and to increase access to them. This bears repeating.

International services, and all other telecommunications services, must be not only accessible, but also affordable. They must be affordable. The minister, the CRTC, the government and the governor in council must face up to their responsibility for issuing operating licences to businesses that could not be economically viable. You will realize I am referring to the experience with Alphastar, which I shall return to in a moment.

It is true that the bill contains good news, but if the minister intends to exercise the powers he is giving himself, as set out in clause 6, there will be an amendment to the Telecommunications Act to permit increased charges to set up a fund to promote uninterrupted telecommunications services. We should note clause 8 too. It gives the bill teeth, if the minister or the CRTC or the government so want, to enact new statutory or regulatory provisions. My understanding is that these provisions will prevent a repeat of something like Alphastar.

I will take the liberty of pointing out that telephone companies denied by the CRTC the increased revenues resulting from the rate increases they sought won their case with the government, which,

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rather than doing what the CRTC asked, that is, reducing long distance rates, let them keep the whole amount. We might think there was talk of investments.

• (1535)

However, it is to be noted that they used it to increase dividends to 12.5%. All this is complicated. We know that telephone rates have increased tremendously. In the Montreal region, they have gone from a little over \$12 in 1992 up to \$21 now, and if the government agrees with the applications being made the rate will climb to \$27. I am talking about Montreal.

The hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis made strong representations to ensure that, in northern Quebec, telephone companies, which used to be managed by the Quebec company, would no longer be able to significantly raise telephone rates and keep the resulting profits. What the hon. member asked, and this is absolutely indispensable, is that while a competitive market should be allowed, companies interested in providing services should all be subject to the same regulations and requirements.

Companies are once again before the CRTC. There is a movement in Quebec and across Canada asking that this new application be rejected by the CRTC. The minister has the authority to tell the CRTC that it is better for basic services to continue to mean something and that, consequently, their costs should not be increased.

In the spring, our former critic who will have the floor after me, was already saying that telephone costs should not be increased until it was demonstrated that such a measure would not change the meaning of basic telephone services. Current rates are taking us away from the basic rate.

The government claims that the number of telephone users has not diminished, that there have not been a large number of cancellations. What I am about to say is true in the case of small and medium size businesses, which won their case but could still be subject to rate increases, but it is even more true for low and very low income people. The telephone can be considered as something so indispensable that if people's income is reduced, some will go so far as to deprive their children of food to keep their telephone. So, when considering what a basic telephone service is, it is not possible to keep talking about increases strictly in the context of national and international competition.

Yes, it is important for businesses to have conditions that will help them, but this is impossible. We must look at the overall picture, and it cannot be done. As I said earlier, I am pleased to see that the government wants to create a fund to subsidize, if need be, regions where costs would be greater, so that a basic communication service, including not only telephone but also basic telecommunications services, would be maintained.

• (1540)

It is essential, again, so that the population will know, that such "economic modernization" not be undertaken at their expense. Why should we want to compete in Europe? Why should the government say "I am allowing businesses to compete in the United States and Europe", if this results in penalizing the average consumer or the consumer with a small income?

This is the issue that parliamentarians, the House of Commons, the National Assembly must address.

Also, when things like the Alphastar case are involved, the government cannot stand idly by and let the market make the rules. Satellite communications today are still considered important because there are areas in Quebec that do not have access to cable and where there are no digital telephone lines. Therefore, they do not have access to Internet and cannot rely on communications that elsewhere are basic commodities. There are self-employed workers and also small businesses who depend on these. It is always possible for them to be connected, but then they have to pay long distance charges, and this makes no sense.

So satellite communications for access to television are important, but the minister has instructed the CRTC by an order in council not to consider economic viability when awarding licences to businesses. The result was, as observers had foreseen, that Alphastar, which had 6,000 subscribers in Canada, went bankrupt. People were left with lovely dishes with which they could decorate their gardens, but which had cost them hundreds of dollars, and also with subscriptions that also cost them hundred of dollars and which are now useless.

The market cannot ensure fairness in all cases, and in this case, consumer protection required that there be basic safeguards.

With this bill, the government is creating appropriate mechanisms and we sincerely hope that it will use them.

Finally, there is another grave concern that I would like to address in relation to this bill. I just spoke about the lack of powers in Quebec in the area of broadcasting and telecommunications.

I think it is worthwhile to take a few minutes of my colleague's precious time to go over this. We are always well advised to ensure that our colleagues better understand Quebec, of which they often get tired, but whose demands are always based on the fact that Quebec is a people and a nation. Binational countries are rare in this world, and many of them have not succeeded in holding together—binational or trinational if we consider first nations, as we should.

I would like to remind you that communications are a field that Quebec claimed very early, I would say from the very beginning, when it first appeared, and it was not a bad separatist who did so, at the time.

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• (1545)

Way back in February 1929, Alexandre Taschereau, the Liberal premier of Quebec, introduced a bill to give Quebec exclusive jurisdiction over the emerging broadcasting industry. Those were the days, before the CBC, when broadcasts were often drowned out by all sorts of interference. Liberal premier Taschereau, who was no doubt a federalist, a staunch federalist, claimed exclusive jurisdiction over broadcasting and wanted Quebec to operate its own radio stations. This eventually led to the creation of Radio Quebec.

Around the same time, in Canada, there was a royal commission on radio broadcasting, the Aird Commission. It tabled its report in the fall of 1929 and recommended that exclusive jurisdiction over radio broadcasting be given to the central government. Its model was based on the BBC, a publicly owned network.

Who was asked to settle the issue? The supreme court, in 1931. What do you think it decided? Naturally, it decided this was an exclusive jurisdiction of Canada, but the Government of Quebec, not satisfied with this ruling, submitted the matter to the Privy Council, which upheld the supreme court's decision in 1932. The first Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act was passed in May 1932, and, in 1936, the CBC was born.

In 1945, after the war, Maurice Duplessis, the premier of Quebec, in the middle of a fight against university subsidization—at the time, Duplessis did not want Quebec universities to receive federal subsidies—contended this was an area under provincial jurisdiction. Duplessis then proceeded to legislate, to introduce a bill, to establish a provincial radio broadcasting service. Radio Quebec was born. In September 1973, Robert Bourassa, a Liberal premier, and more of a federalist than Duplessis, said shortly after being elected:

In cultural matters, the decision making centres we need for our own cultural security will have to be transferred, particularly in the telecommunications sector. Here again, it is a simple matter of common sense, because we cannot leave it to an anglophone majority to ensure the cultural security of a francophone minority.

That was what Robert Bourassa said. Jean-Paul L'Allier, his Minister of Communications, said:

It is up to Quebec in the first instance to develop a global communications policy. This policy is indissociable from the development of its education system, its culture and everything that comes under Quebec's domain.

There was nothing in Meech or Charlottetown on this issue, but it continued to be discussed. In 1994, we know that the supreme court ruled against Quebec with respect to telephone services and the Régie des télécommunications du Québec ceased to exist.

I mention this today because the information highway, this telecommunications revolution, is drawing the highway ever closer to its contents. If the medium is the message, what can we

say about the present information highway and the relationship between the road and what travels on it, roads that are closed and small roads that are open?

• (1550)

To recap, we agree in principle with this bill, which will end monopolies. We are all the more in agreement because the government is giving the CRTC, the governor in council and itself greater regulatory powers to ensure that there are controls over how this liberalization takes place.

However, this bill is an opportunity for us to insist, and we are going to keep coming back to this, that there be legislation to protect personal information, in order to assure consumers that this liberalization that is supposed to provide the necessary conditions for businesses to position themselves on the market does not come about at the expense of those at the low end of the wage scale and of outlying regions, or take consumers for a ride, as happened in the case of Alphastar.

Finally, it is an opportunity for Quebec to say that it will need this jurisdiction for its culture, and the only way we have found to advance this to date is by seeking our sovereignty.

[English]

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unlike my colleague from the Bloc Québécois, the NDP is opposed to Bill C-17. We do not even favour the bill in principle. We are flatly opposed to this bill, the intent of which is to implement the general agreement on trade and services, GATS as it is known, and the agreement on basic telecommunications.

The reason we are opposed to the bill is that Bill C-17 is part of the process of completing the free trade agreements and the implementation of the regulations of free trade.

We oppose this bill because we opposed the negotiated free trade agreements which were against the interests of ordinary Canadians. The NDP, unlike other parties that have been all over the map on this issue, has consistently stood in opposition of these liberalized trade agreements from the beginning of the North American Free Trade Agreement to NAFTA and now the MAI. In 1997 we are still speaking in opposition to these trade agreements.

It is worth taking a few moments to look at the context of Bill C-17 and the history of these free trade agreements. The trade agreements of the last decade, if we look at the overall results, have made it easier for corporations to increase their profits and harder for workers to keep their wages and benefits.

The impact of this is reflected in Statistics Canada reports. Corporate profits have increased dramatically, while real family income has declined and masses of jobs lost in this country. The

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reality is that deals like the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement encourage corporations to go where wages and benefits are lower and where environmental regulations are weaker.

These agreements are designed to increase the mobility of capital and goods, making it easier for corporations and the wealthy to avoid paying taxes. In other words, these deals are designed to push down Canadian wages and social programs like medicare, environmental protection, safety and labour standards and the revenue from taxes to pay for our desperately needed public services.

Ten years ago when the FTA was signed the Canadian people heard promises of the jobs that would abound. We heard the promises of greater prosperity for Canada and for Canadians that would result from increased trade. We heard promises of better social programs and unimpaired Canadian sovereignty. All these promises stand revealed today as nothing but a fraud. We only have to look at the facts to see what free trade has meant a decade later. It has been a disaster for Canada and for Canadian families.

Since Canada entered into free trade agreements, we have experienced the longest period of sustained high unemployment and the worst social and economic conditions since the 1930s. That is in stark contrast to the promises and the issues that were held out as being the things which would change our economy since the advent of these agreements.

• (1555)

Canadians have experienced 84 straight months of unemployment at 9% or more. What kind of record is that under these free trade deals? We have seen the disappearance of 100,000 direct jobs in the public sector. We have seen the decline in labour force participation, which has fallen from 67.5% prior to the recession to less than 65% today. That is equivalent to the loss of 700,000 jobs. If we included these discouraged workers in the official tallies of unemployment, it would bring our unemployment rate to something around 13%.

More than that, we have had an appalling crisis for young people, whose participation rate has plummeted from 70% before the recession to barely 60% today. If we included the young people who have also been discouraged, then the official unemployment rate would almost double for young people, going from 16.5% to 30%.

What we have witnessed is the declining quality of jobs in the Canadian economy with the NAFTA and a growing emphasis on part time work and low wage jobs. Even our unemployment benefits, which used to cover 87% of Canadians who were jobless, are now going to only about 40% of people who are unemployed,

and 25% of Canada's manufacturing base was wiped out in the first three years after signing the FTA. That is the real story of—

Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand that Bill C-17, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act, is what we are debating this afternoon. I would ask for your guidance that we debate on that subject.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Chair was following the hon. member very closely. The hon. member was debating telecommunications, its relevance to free trade and the effect of this bill on the implementation of free trade. The Chair would consider the debate to be relevant.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, thank you for those words. In fact, the background of the free trade agreement is very relevant to the bill before us today. In my discussion I will be moving right into the bill itself.

The point that we wish to emphasize is that the real story of the NAFTA, when we look at this bill, has not been a success for the Canadian people.

Going to the background of the bill before us today, we know that on February 15 of this year at the World Trade Organization Canada and 68 other countries concluded a multilateral agreement to liberalize trade and investment in telecommunications services.

The GATS agreement on basic telecommunications followed the conclusion of the information technology agreement which liberalized trade in information technology equipment.

Under the GATS the federal government has said that it is committed to eliminating the two remaining areas now closed to competition, overseas telephone service and fixed satellite services. As a result, Teleglobe's monopoly will end on October 1, 1998 and Telesat's monopoly will end on March 1, 2000.

Canada, as part of this agreement, has also agreed to remove foreign ownership restrictions in satellite earth stations and the landing of international submarine cables.

The key elements of Canada's offer under the GATS agreement on basic telecommunications are the elimination of the remaining monopolies of Teleglobe and Telesat, the liberalization of traffic routing restrictions, the elimination of minimum Canadian equity requirements for mobile satellite systems, the elimination of the special foreign ownership limits applicable to Teleglobe Canada, the elimination of the foreign ownership limits for international submarine cables and the adoption of a regulatory reference paper which sets out principles of regulations for all the signatory countries.

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• (1600)

What is the government's position on this? We have been told by the industry minister that the changes contemplated in the bill before the House today, along with the GATT agreement, will lead to increased business opportunities for Canada's telecommunications industry at home and abroad.

We are told that Canada's telecommunications firms will have easier access to a more competitive international market and will capture a larger share of the \$880 billion global telecommunications industry. Those are the same old arguments that were put before the people of Canada under FTA and under NAFTA. I would suggest that what we are really experiencing, instead of the benefits that we have been told that we will get, is the Americanization of all aspects of Canadian life as a result of these trade deals and now as a result of this bill if it is passed by the House.

I would like to spend a moment to look at what that experience has been for some Canadian companies. Think about the company CN, the railroad which once linked our country together and pioneered public broadcasting and our national airline. What happened to that company? It was sacrificed as a result of free trade. CN was sold for half of what it was worth and it is now owned 70% by Americans. It is now busy selling off parts of the rail network which, I might add, was built at public expense. It is being sold to other U.S. companies. All of the lines of northern Manitoba, including the port of Churchill plus two Saskatchewan lines, have been sold to Omnitrax of Denver, U.S.A.

It is now virtually impossible for Canadians to buy Canadian if they want to do so because whole sectors of our economy, such as pulp and paper and advertising, have been taken over by U.S. corporations. Now we are facing the same thing in the bill that is before us today. That is the real history of free trade.

Instead of getting out of these agreements and defending Canadian business interests and public interests, the Liberals ratified Mulroney's NAFTA and are now currently negotiating to extend NAFTA's investment section into a large new agreement called the multilateral agreement on investment. However, they do not have a public mandate to go ahead with the program under the MAI.

Regrettably, we all know that unless there is massive opposition by the public that the Liberals are prepared to sign the multilateral agreement on investment. They will be egged on to do so by the Reform and the Conservative parties, pushed and aided by corporations and their CEOs, to whom these parties are best friends.

It is absolutely necessary that these trade agreements and the bill that is before us today be advanced in terms of the public interest and not just corporate interests. They have to be advanced in terms of what will benefit Canadians. Trade liberalization should help

improve wages and working conditions, not drive them down to the levels that exist in developing parts of the world.

We should be working for trade agreements that will help Canadian families and will include the introduction of real, enforceable and progressive social, labour and environmental standards.

We need to be working for stricter measures to prevent corporate tax evasion and stronger financial reporting requirements for large corporations that are not publicly traded.

The government should be working with its trading partners to develop international standards for taxation of income from capital to counter tax avoidance and evasion by corporations and the super wealthy.

That is what the government should be focusing on instead of opening up the flood gates and saying that under trade liberalization that we are going to somehow benefit. The contrary is true.

We also need the introduction of an international tax to control speculative currency trading. In recent years, such speculation has undermined some national economies, forcing up interest rates and throwing people out of work.

• (1605)

The NDP caucus speaks against Bill C-17 because it is part and parcel of the free trade agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement and is now part of the globalization we are seeing under the multilateral agreement on investment.

I challenge the House of Commons and this Liberal government to protect the interests of ordinary working Canadians when signing any further trade agreements. It is time we had agreements that worked for Canada and Canadians, not against them.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious to anybody who has any understanding at all about how jobs are created or who has had any contact with business that deregulating these government monopolies contributes to tremendous levels of employment and helps people get jobs.

I was in the telecommunications industry prior to becoming a member of Parliament and experienced the deregulation of the telephone and telex systems which were partially under the CRTC and Teleglobe in the early 1980s. The expansion of the telecommunications industry as a result is phenomenal. Northern Telecom expanded dramatically and the telecommunications industry worldwide has grown and created huge numbers of jobs as a result of deregulation and of NAFTA.

In addition to that, anyone who has been in business or understands how jobs are created knows it is high taxation that causes unemployment, that has caused our 83 months of unemployment,

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not deregulation of government monopolies. It is high taxation, over-government regulation and government overspending.

If government spending could create jobs—it has already overspent by \$600 billion—we should have three jobs each by now. It is totally ludicrous to blame deregulation for high unemployment. It does not make sense to anybody who really thinks about the situation.

If the member thinks that NAFTA is a disaster, what could she say to the people in my riding like Mr. Hans Gawenda or Mr. Peter Belding? Like dozens of other small businesspeople, they have expanded their businesses up to 50 employees and more from just one or two because NAFTA allowed them to do business in the United States, to get rid of all the tariffs that prevented them from assembling products in Canada?

Some old, worn out, tired, oversubsidized industries went out of action, such as the shipbuilding industry in my riding that never could compete, but in its place are thousands of new jobs in these deregulated industries, in these new industries available through NAFTA.

How does the hon. member rationalize her position with the facts?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Clearly we have a strong difference of opinion on the effect of trade liberalization on Canadians, Canadian jobs and Canadian companies.

I argue very strongly that deregulation is part of a global agenda that is driving us in a direction where larger corporations, multinational corporations, transnational corporations are gaining greater control. The overall effect of that has not been to create jobs.

We are in favour of fair competition. We are in favour of regulation that sets a level playing field. That is not what NAFTA and FTA are about. That is not what the MAI is about. MAI and these trade liberalization agreements are about corporate rule. They are about giving more power to corporations and driving down wages, ensuring that basically there are no environmental standards left.

If the member is arguing that is good for his constituents, I would argue the opposite. Canada has had a long tradition in the shipbuilding industry in the province of British Columbia, in the member's riding and in my riding of Vancouver East. We want to see a government committed to industrial infrastructure and to manufacturing. We have all kinds of workers with the skills and knowledge to create a shipbuilding industry who have been dumped out of work through agreements like NAFTA, the FTA and now the MAI.

The facts show a different story in terms of what has happened in our economy.

• (1610)

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder how a tax, as the NDP member has termed it, on currency trading creates jobs. Investment and growth in the economy are what creates jobs. But restricting Canada's access to capital markets and to currency does not. Is she possibly proposing that Canada move to a gold standard rather than having a free floating currency? How does the free flow of capital stimulate investment and create jobs?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

Part of the problem we are witnessing is that with agreements like NAFTA and now the MAI there will be no rules about the movement of capital around the world where huge profits are being made. There is more than enough evidence to show that very large corporations are making record profits at the expense of jobs. There needs to be in the context of a globalized economy some international institutions and structures that have the ability to ensure that windfall profits are recouped for public benefit.

If the member cannot understand that and understand that we are talking about a matter of financial and social equity, then I guess we have a very different view of how things should operate.

We in the NDP see that under the trade liberalization we are transferring power to very powerful corporations that have absolutely no accountability. There are some very undemocratic organizations. Who are they accountable to? Not to governments, not to the people of Canada or any country. The very real issue is whether they are creating jobs in the long run. There is a small percentage of people who are making enormous profits at the expense of millions of ordinary people, workers who are getting low wages or people who have been thrown out of work. That is why we need to have a fair and open system where we can ensure that windfall profits are properly taxed.

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I asked the question and, indeed, a lack of understanding of economics was proven by the member from the NDP. I have done a fair amount of trading and as far as I know the markets, if Canada were to go ahead and create a tax on currency trading unilaterally, we could be guaranteed there would be a sucking sound which would be the capital leaving this country. Or capital may never come into the country again.

By proposing that we tax these transactions, the member is actually encouraging the driving out of capital. I just do not understand how that would create jobs. Obviously in the member's fantasy world the economy has orange skies if she believes that this may work in creating jobs. It will not.

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Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate that the member would dismiss another point of view and other arguments as somehow being a fantasy. If the member would listen closely to what really is now developing as a huge concern for Canadians about the impact of trade liberalization, then the member would not be so quick to judge that these concerns are somehow a fantasy or should not be taken seriously.

Second, if the member had been listening closely he would have heard that what was being advanced in our comments on the bill was the need for international institutions that have the ability to also provide regulations. We are facing globalization. Therefore, the issue before us is how to ensure that there is a level playing field and that Canadians do not lose out in the short run as well as the long run.

The member needs to listen carefully to what is actually being put forward.

• (1615)

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, if Canada was unilaterally to go ahead and act against currency trading or if there were to be a multinational universal agreement in terms of taxing currency trading, all we would be doing is regulating it to death. What would be the point of even having a floating currency?

The hon. member for the NDP should suggest a fixed currency in terms of a gold standard, for example, rather than suggest that somehow the multilateral agreement should end it. It is not that I support it necessarily but then at least it could be credibly argued from her point of view.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, very briefly I think it comes down to a question of priorities. The priority for the NDP is to ensure that Canadians have good jobs. We have seen a drastic decline in that regard under the Liberal government.

What the Reform Party has offered in that regard has been no different from that offered by the Liberal Party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Delta—South Richmond, Mefloquine; the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, Foreign Aid; the hon. member for Brandon—Souris, Fisheries; and the hon. member for Frontenac—Megantic, Program for Older Worker Adjustment.

Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the PC caucus will be supporting the legislation. We see it as a way to prove to the rest of the world that we can be competitive, can create jobs and can do it through a free trade agreement.

I am amazed that the NDP caucus still fights against the free trade agreement. I guess it is not as changeable as the Liberal Party and the Government of Canada are today. All parties fought against the free trade agreement when we brought it in back in 1988. Basically it was a big issue. It was to be terrible for Canada. At least the Liberals had sense enough to realize that it was good for Canada. They have been building on it ever since. The NDP is consistent in its opposition even when it is a good idea.

I will be sharing my brief time with the member for Compton—Stanstead.

Bill C-17 amends the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act in keeping with our obligations to liberalize basic international telecommunications services under the GATS, an agreement which Canada signed this past February.

Under the terms of the GATS, Canada agreed to end monopolies held in the area of overseas telephone services and fixed satellite services. Canada also agreed to eliminate restrictions on foreign ownership in satellite earth stations and the laying of international submarine cables. Bill C-17 ensures that Canada fulfils these obligations.

Bill C-17 amends the Telecommunications Act by establishing a licensing regime for international service providers to be administered by the CRTC. This is a similar system to that of many other countries.

Bill C-17 empowers the CRTC to contract out the need for a telecommunications numbering service and overseeing the collection and distribution of local subsidies.

Bill C-17 also clarifies the Telecommunications Act with respect to the role of Industry Canada in the certification and inspection of telecommunications equipment for use in Canada.

In order to protect the integrity of our telecommunications system under the bill non-certified equipment cannot be used in Canada. The bill also gives Industry Canada powers to set technical standards, inspect equipment and enforce penalties for those selling non-standard equipment within Canada.

The Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act is amended by repealing the provisions that create a monopoly environment in Teleglobe Canada. It opens up the telecommunications market between Canada and the rest of the world, allowing other providers the opportunity to provide services within Canada. This is expected to result in cheaper long distance rates due to increased competition.

The opening up of the telecommunications industry is a policy of the Progressive Conservative Party which began in 1987 when we privatized Teleglobe Canada. After a few years of functioning as a private sector business Teleglobe's management decided to expand

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its operations. In 1995 it recognized that its future was in servicing foreign markets and it proceeded to do so. Now two years later it has increased its share of telecommunications carrier services between several non-Canadian destinations by over threefold.

• (1620)

When the PC Party began privatizing many crown corporations federal Liberal Party members in particular fought against the plans. They believed we would lose our identity in the process but are now expanding on the achievements of our party by further opening up markets and allowing non-Canadian carriers access to our telecommunications sector. Is it not odd how they have changed?

When we privatized Telesat Canada the official opposition of the day also fought against our plans, stating that it needed all the government support it could muster to challenge the world in the face of global competition. Reformers have gone now from advocating interference to opting for a freer marketplace. With the FTA and the North American Free Trade Agreement the PC Party further liberalized trade in telecommunications for Canadian businesses. The official opposition of the day also fought against these.

They now stand as avid free traders, signing the GATS and extending the North American Free Trade Agreement. Our obligations under the GATS mean that Teleglobe Canada will relinquish its exclusive access to the Canadian market as of October 1, 1998. Telesat's monopoly will end on March 1, 2000. Therefore current ownership restrictions have to be removed from the Telecommunications Act.

Our caucus supports the GATS because it is a free trade agreement. We continue to support the principle of free trade. The relinquishing of Teleglobe Canada's exclusive rights to the Canadian market has led the U.S. to open up access to its market, which is what we thought would happen in the beginning.

Canada also benefits from greater access to European and other developing nations. Furthermore, as I stated earlier, the consumer will be rewarded with the possibility of cheaper long distance rates due to increased competition in the marketplace.

When the Telesat divestiture act was being debated it was argued that the 10-year monopoly was not enough; it had to be longer. The government now realizes the 10 years was more than enough. After 8 years we are debating the opening of the marketplace. Industry wants less control in exchange for open access to the rest of the world. That is really the principle of the free trade agreement. It will not grow without these changes and the government has finally recognized it.

The PC Party is supporting the legislation because it continues the process we started of enhancing the competitiveness of Cana-

dian firms. It is because of our initiatives that Canadians enjoy the great degree of prosperity we have today.

Our evolutionary approach has produced well positioned Canadian companies that are today strong enough to compete globally. We support them in their continued efforts.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make some comments with regard to the Tory member who just spoke.

Those oh so avid free trading Tories are the ones who brought us the GST, the ones who did not eliminate the interprovincial barriers to trade or make significant steps to that effect. My comments are not strictly reserved for them. They are also directed to the Liberals across the way. I will say in the NDP's defence that it was against free trade then and is against free trade now.

The Liberals have flip flopped all over on the issue. They were against it. Now they are for it. Now they are continuing it, promoting it and extending it.

Those Tories, those free marketeers, what a joke. If they had been free marketeers, if they had actually believed in freer trade, in smaller government and less regulation, they would have balanced the budget in the nine years they had in power. They failed to do so. Shame on them.

Why do the Tories across the way not talk about their record in terms of regulation and spending?

Mr. Charlie Power: Mr. Speaker, oh those righteous Reformers. They stand and criticize the Liberals. They criticize NDP members for opposing the free trade legislation because they think they will build fences around Canada. The Tories opened up Canada to the world. We showed the world we could compete in telecommunications and in many other sectors, but now the only people who know anything about managing Canada's economy are the righteous Reformers.

They have a long way to go before they can do some of the good things the Conservative Party did for Canada. Free trade was one of them and the GST was another.

• (1625)

Today the country is in decent financial shape because of the GST. Nobody liked it. Nobody liked free trade. However, anybody who looks back in an historical unbiased way will say that both those actions of the Conservative Party were very good for Canada.

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, years after their government fell from 177 seats down to two, lo and behold in 1997 the Tories are still proud of their record of introducing the goods and services tax. Nothing ceases to amaze me.

In terms of regulation, these free marketeers kept the CRTC around through thick and thin during Tory governments, Brian Mulroney governments. As part of its mandate some time after the

turn of the millennium 100% of all programming in Canada was to be Canadian content. There would not be anything allowed outside Canadian content.

We may be proud of some of the programs we produce in Canada, but shame on those Tories who supported the idea that people should not be able to watch anything other than Canadian content.

Mr. Charlie Power: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member with respect to deregulation. It is something we all have to do.

Today a piece of legislation is being presented that deregulates and opens up a Canadian industry so that more jobs can be created through deregulation. I cannot understand how the Reformers say in one case it is good and in the next case it is bad. They have to be consistent. In our case we are consistent.

We believe in free trade. It creates jobs in Canada and we are proud of our record on that accomplishment.

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-17, introduced last week by the Minister of Industry.

The Telecommunications Act and Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act follow in the path of removing monopolies and trade barriers in the service sector to allow Canadian firms to capitalize on their strong reputation in the international marketplace.

Canada's \$18 billion telecommunications industry provides over a 145,000 direct and indirect jobs to the Canadian economy. The international telecommunications sector stood at \$770 billion in value in 1995 and is expected to grow to \$1.2 trillion in 2002.

The bill allows our Canadian telecommunications sector to serve the international community and increase its overall value by gaining valuable market access not only to the world's largest telecommunications nation, the United States, but also in 65 other markets.

Canada held extensive negotiations with the United States at the World Trade Organization last February where 67 countries were involved in trade services agreement negotiations. Canada coupled with the United States are important players in the international telecommunications industry because we have the largest volume of bilateral telephone traffic in the world. We obviously love to talk.

Since the days of Alexander Graham Bell and Marconi Canada, Canada has been a major in telecommunications. As with any trade objective certain aspects of the bill before us should be given serious consideration. Before I outline these portions of the bill I would like to examine the importance of Canada's overall trade competitiveness today.

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It is important to note several factors that seem to surround our trade partnerships today. Since the signing of the free trade agreement and the subsequent NAFTA negotiations, Canada has become a prominent player on the international trade scene. Thanks to the foresight of a previous government, Canada has recognized the importance of free trade in today's global economy.

Without the original free trade agreement Canada's ability to secure its place in the vast North American marketplace could have been lost forever. Thankfully the once hotly debated issue of free trade has even been accepted by many groups and individuals adamantly opposed to it in 1998.

• (1630)

Because of a previous government's initiative Canada's main objective of having secure access to the American market is now a reality and this bill increases that access. With it comes certain consequences.

Since the American economy is considerably larger than our own, we have found ourselves at times willing to trade away reasonable access to the American market in return for little or limited access. This has caused some to decry that free trade with the U.S. is really only a form of managed trade.

There are examples where the government has failed in this area. The reason lies in the tentative nature in which Canada approaches invoking trade remedies and the lack of progress in negotiations surrounding this topic. Granted, this can create difficulty for certain industry sectors. However it is part and parcel of holding such open access to the American market, a position which many other countries would certainly relish.

The facts are undeniable. Canada's exports have grown from \$105 billion before free trade to \$245 billion last year. American imports have also grown substantially, from \$92 billion to \$210 billion. Overall, Canada's trade surplus has grown considerably, reaching the \$40 billion level last year. Furthermore, free trade has catalysed significant growth in productivity and has promoted economies of scale. The result has yielded greater Canadian competitiveness in export merchandise.

This bill though deals with the service sector and follows the World Trade Agreement reached last February in Geneva. When one studies a bill like this, it is useful to know the context in which it was signed. The World Trade Organization agreement saw Europe and the United States allow greater foreign control of telephone service companies thereby catalysing competition and construction of the international networks, thereby following the philosophy of the federal trade agreement and ensuring that Canadian firms have market access to the larger international markets like the United States.

In turn, the government has had to end monopolies held by two Canadian companies in key sectors. Teleglobe Canada's monopoly on overseas telecommunications will end in October 1998 while

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Telesat Canada, which now controls all domestic long distance satellite phone service, will see its monopoly end in March 2000.

Private sector industry officials state that these types of concessions were necessary, given that the North American market is heading in the direction of open access enabling Canadian firms to partner with others to offer international services. Furthermore the increase in international market access will also benefit telecommunications equipment manufacturers in Canada, some being in my own riding.

I find it interesting that the government is willing to advocate the privatization by the previous Conservative government of Teleglobe and Telesat Canada. At the time the former opposition party argued that we would lose our identity if the privatization process continued. This is another example of the Liberal government's ability to read public opinion polls and change sides on an issue depending on how it will play with the public.

Given the fact that the government is now supporting and furthering the policy of the previous government, our party will support Bill C-17. I look forward to having further discussions on this bill in committee.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, once again I cannot resist commenting.

We have had Tories standing in the House today talking about how they do not like monopolies and how they are encouraged by these liberalizing trade initiatives. However, they still have people out and about in my province who are in favour of monopolies.

As a matter of fact, Harvey Andre, who used to be the government House whip and was also in charge of Canada Post, still believes in Canada Post and to this day writes letters to Calgary publications. He said that Canada Post should have an exclusive monopoly and that nobody else should be able to deliver mail in the country, that if there is a courier within a city that can deliver mail overnight for 19¢, they should not be allowed to do it. As a result, Harvey Andre was in support of disallowing the city of Calgary to deliver bills more cheaply than Canada Post could do it. As well, Harvey Andre supports Canada Post using Purolator Courier to subsidize its competition against United Parcel Service and Federal Express as private couriers.

• (1635)

I wonder whether or not the Tory members in this House today support the monopolies that Canada Post enjoys and uses to subsidize, driving its private competitors out of its industry.

Mr. David Price: Mr. Speaker, if the member looks a little bit further than that, we are looking a little further down the road as we always have done.

One thing is a little scary. We have come a long way. The hon. member is sitting in the House here. Luckily he is not the government. That would really be a scary thought.

The bottom line of the whole thing is that it was the Tory government that did start the process toward privatization. I do not think anything else need be said on it.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that unlike my other colleague in the Reform Party, I do not really have any PCs running around writing letters to the newspaper and so on in my riding, not to say that there might not be at some stage but there is certainly not right now.

I am pleased to see that at least those PCs who are here in this House are talking more and more about taking away these monopolies.

I mentioned earlier that I was in the telecommunications industry prior to becoming a member of Parliament and was directly involved with the CRTC and Teleglobe. Anyone who was directly involved in that industry can see the tremendous benefits that have occurred from deregulation.

The prices of telephone calls for example. We see advertisements now on television where calls can be made to anywhere in the country on Sunday for 10¢ or 5¢, or whatever it is. Certainly in the early 1980s it would be something like \$1.60 a minute. When we go back those 15 years or more we can see that it was really a tremendously expensive exercise.

These deregulations benefit ordinary people, the average wage earner tremendously. I was very pleased to hear from the content of the speech that at least the Tories are starting to see that taking monopolies out of existence is a good idea.

Mr. David Price: Mr. Speaker, this is a scary thought in that I am having to agree with Reform, but I guess there again the bottom line is that we did start the process.

Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be splitting my time with the hon. member for London West in the discussion on Bill C-17, an act to amend the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act.

We have heard the legislation before the House is a necessary step toward implementing the GATS agreement on basic telecommunications and liberalizing global telecommunications. That agreement covers more than 69 countries with more than 90% of the world's \$880 billion telecommunications market. It liberalizes basic telecommunications services which includes voice and data but not broadcasting.

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It is a good deal for Canada. It will dramatically expand the \$880 billion world market in telecommunications services, creating a demand for Canadian products and services. That will lead to more high quality jobs and economic growth.

Telecommunications are vital to Canada and have always been, ever since Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. Canadians have gone on to become leaders in the telecommunications industry.

In Canada we already have in place the world's first coast to coast commercial microwave network, the world's longest fibre optic communications network, the world's two longest competitive cellular networks, the world's first national digital microwave network, and the world's first domestic geostationary satellite telecommunications network.

It is easy to see why the telecommunications industry is an essential component of the Canadian economy. It employs some 115,000 people and accounts for 3.36% of our GDP. These are high wage jobs with average weekly earnings that are 44% higher than in all industries combined. Telecommunications is also a pivotal enabling technology that is increasingly an integral part of all types of businesses and public sector agencies.

• (1640)

The bill now before the House continues the liberalization of Canada's telecommunications market begun more than 10 years ago. We have already seen the benefits of that domestic liberalization for Canadians and Canadian telecommunications companies. Now we will see them in the international arena.

One of the government's key objectives during the GATS negotiations was to gain more access to foreign markets for Canadian telecommunications companies. That goal was achieved. These companies will now have more secure access to markets like the United States, the European Union, Japan, and the developing markets of Asia and Latin America.

As part of the deal Canada will make a number of changes to its domestic regime. We have made the following undertakings.

We will remove all restrictions on the use of foreign controlled global mobile satellites that provide services to Canadians.

We will end the Telesat monopoly on fixed satellite services.

We will maintain our transparent and independent regulatory and competition regimes.

We will end Teleglobe Canada's monopoly on overseas traffic and its special ownership restrictions which prohibit investment by foreign telecommunications carriers.

We will allow 100% foreign ownership and control of international submarine cable landings in Canada.

We will however continue our overall foreign investments rules to ensure that our industry remains Canadian owned and controlled.

The agreement on basic telecommunications is also an international milestone. GATS which came into effect on January 1, 1995 is the first ever multilateral set of rules for trade in services. It covers almost all the service sectors, including with this agreement basic telecommunications services. The new agreement establishes a clear set of multilateral rules in a sector that previously had no rules. Licensing processes will be governed by clear rules and disputes will be resolved in a timely manner through the WTO dispute settlement process.

The WTO dispute settlement understanding, or DSU, provides a number of mechanisms to resolve disagreements, including consultations, panels and reports. The objective of this process is to arrange either the withdrawal of the offending measure or if that is impractical, compensation to the injured third party.

This dispute settlement process provides the safeguards needed to ensure that countries respect their commitments. It is this mechanism that underpins the entire agreement. Without it no participating nation could have confidence that the terms of the agreement would be respected. And without it no telecommunications company could have the confidence necessary to make investments.

The dispute settlement process also provides Canada with a guarantee that the improved access we have won to the U.S. market is secure. Under the agreement, reciprocity tests in the FCC licensing process will be severely restrained.

Canada has one of the most open telecommunications markets in the world but the government believes strongly that an open market is not just about ownership. It requires a commitment to clear, transparent and consistently applied ground rules that ensure access and fair treatment.

With this agreement Canada has secured the commitment and the many benefits the agreement will bring to Canadians. Canadian businesses and consumers will benefit from enhanced services provided by an emerging global telephone system by establishing a transparent and predictable framework for trade and investment in telecommunications services.

The agreement will create a demand for Canadian products and services as it opens the doors to foreign markets. This will support a strong domestic communications industry and ensure that Canadians will continue to enjoy excellent communications services at competitive prices.

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Given our many accomplishments in information and communications technology, there can be no doubt that Canada is poised to take full advantage of the newly expanded global markets in telecommunications services.

Technologies that are Canadian specialties are already creating whole new industries. Knowledge based industries are growing faster than any other sector in the Canadian economy.

As one of the most wired countries in the world, Canada has the communications and network infrastructure necessary to take full advantage of the information technologies such as electronic commerce.

The government consulted extensively with the telecommunications industry and with consumer groups before signing the agreement and found strong support for it. Now it will be up to Canadian industry to move forward in the global arena and take full advantage of the opportunities presented by this agreement.

In conclusion I urge the House to act quickly in passing this bill.

• (1645)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for those comments.

I think it is great that we have a gentleman who was a senior executive with one of the larger automobile manufacturing enterprises here in Canada.

I would like to ask him if he could articulate for us exactly how the new licensing regime will help the establishment, development and growth of small businesses rather than big businesses.

Mr. Walt Lastewka: Mr. Speaker, the act specifies that the controlling of the licensing is there to have an even playing field. As we change from a monopoly organization into a freer licensing factor it allows more people to get licences and have the same rules.

This is very important in this agreement. There are a number of things in this agreement which are trying to put forward an even playing field. By having an even playing field this allows other entrants into the marketplace.

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, in principle I suppose one would agree but I am asking myself the question that the bill does not in any way suggest how these licences will be granted, what the parameters will be and how the actual way in which these licences will be given. How could this then create a level playing field when nobody knows exactly what the licences will be or what the guidelines will be as to who gets licences and what the conditions of the licences will be?

Mr. Walt Lastewka: Mr. Speaker, one must understand that once the act is passed there will be total consultation on this

subject. Licensing is not unique to Canada. In fact, the U.S., the UK and the European Union have licensing agreements today and they apply them.

Therefore under the CRTC we would be consulting with the stakeholders and coming forth with the most effective licensing arrangement at the lowest costs. That is always an item which is close to everybody's heart, to make sure that fees are very low and only for the implementation of the licensing. Those consultations will follow and the licensing rules will be established.

Mrs. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since this is the first occasion in this Parliament that I have had a chance to speak, I wish to congratulate the Speakers and to say that I will co-operate and respect this office and this Parliament.

I also take the opportunity to thank very strongly the voters in my riding of London West. I appreciate their support and I will continue to work with the dedication and the integrity and I hope the intelligence that they so richly deserve.

I would also like to point out that as we work in this capacity as parliamentarians there is a price in our families. I want to thank my husband and my children and also say to my colleagues across the floor of the House that I hope that throughout this Parliament I can continue to treat them with the respect and courtesy that any member of Parliament deserves.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of Bill C-17 which supports the government's strategy to make Canada a leader in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. Our overarching goal is to connect Canadians, to make Canada the most connected country in the world and to ensure that all Canadians have access to the information highway and the new economy which it supports.

The Minister of Industry has correctly identified this as perhaps the single most important action that the government can take to ensure our success in the knowledge based economy and I believe we all know that in our own ridings.

Underpinning any strategy to connect Canadians to this new economy is a competitive dynamic telecommunications industry. This is a very vital sector to the Canadian economy. It produces already 115,000 high wage jobs, high intelligence jobs, jobs that are in all our sectors across this country. It accounts for 3.36% of our gross domestic product and I see this growing.

• (1650)

If we take these necessary steps to encourage this industry's growth, we can take on the world. If we do not, we can sit back and watch international competitors take our share. There will be no more high quality jobs, no enhanced communications services, no new economy. I know that is not where Canada wants to be.

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We are not sitting back. As a government we have moved decisively over the last four years to continue the liberalization of Canada's telecommunications sector. I want to review some of the steps we have taken.

The liberalization began in 1984 with the licensing of competitive cellular telephone service. It moved forward with the privatization of Teleglobe in 1987 and Telesat in 1992, and still it advanced further with the introduction of long distance competition in 1992 and the passage in 1993 of a new telecommunications act.

The process has continued over the last two years with the licensing of competitive personal communications services in 1995 and local multipoint communications services in 1996. Further in 1996 the government set out its policy and principles for the convergence of cable and telephone services, creating one of the most competition driven policy regimes in the world.

This legislation marks the latest stage of this liberalization and clears the way for Canada's participation in the GATS agreement on basic telecommunications which was concluded last February. The agreement covers 69 countries with more than 90% of the world's \$880 billion telecommunications market. It covers basic telecommunications services, voice and data, but not broadcasting.

The immediate purpose of the legislation is to implement those changes to Canada's regulatory regime that are necessary. The longer term objective is to foster competition, one of the government's top priorities in this area. We are already a world leader in this sector and we will get more of that market share when we widen it up with very visible rules.

Competition is not an end in itself. We need competition because it fosters innovation and innovation leads to the development of new products and services, more choice at cheaper cost for consumers, Canadians, voters, the people in this country who deserve this, and it creates jobs and economic growth. Still a longer term objective of fostering competition is to ensure Canadians have the advanced technologies they need to gain access to the knowledge economy.

Over the past four years we have developed and initiated a plan to ensure that Canada does take full advantage of these technologies. We are building an information highway where all Canadians can connect at a reasonable cost. We have created those conditions needed to encourage the private sector to build this information highway. Hardware and software developers and suppliers and content developers are now among the fastest growing industries in this nation.

Opening competition in telecommunications services is an important part of our strategy as a government. We know the best and fastest way to build the infrastructure for the knowledge based economy is through open competition. By developing a national strategy for the development of this infrastructure, the government

will enable all Canadians to find new opportunities for business, learning and communicating with one another. This can only be good.

Canadians want us to move forward quickly to secure for them the benefits of a new economy. The government is working on a number of fronts to do this. For example, we will have high level talks at the OECD conference on electronic commerce coming up in the fall of 1998. Electronic commerce is not only central to a modern knowledge based economy, it is also the foundation for future growth and job creation.

By creating the best environment for electronic commerce, Canada will become the world leader in this emerging field, generating increased investment in electronic networks and growth in areas such as electronic transactions, multimedia products and online services. The OECD Canada conference ensures we can support, participate in and influence the creation of an open, transparent multilateral electronic commerce regime. The government is also working toward using electronic commerce when doing business with its own clients. By being a model user the federal government can encourage the private sector and other levels of government to adopt the technology. But it does not stop there.

• (1655)

As part of our national strategy, the government initiated a number of programs to ensure that Canadians acquire the tools and skills from the earliest age that they need to prosper in this new economy. These include computers for schools programs through which government departments, businesses and institutions donate surplus computer equipment and software to schools. It includes the student connection program which enables university and college students to help small businesses learn to use the Internet, as my colleague suggested. The community access program connects and will connect every rural Canadian community with more than 400 people to the Internet by the year 2000. And how could we forget the SchoolNet program which connects all our 16,500 schools and 3,400 public libraries in Canada to the Internet.

Across this country students, teachers, professionals, business people and just Canadians are using these facilities because we have to ensure Internet literacy and move forward into the next century which will be different than the last century. The government is going online itself making government services accessible to people wherever they are, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is being done in every department and agency in this country.

None of this would be possible without telecommunications infrastructure and those supports for it. We cannot have that infrastructure without a strong, dynamic telecommunications industry. This bill before us today is a necessary step toward giving our telecommunications sector service companies the keys they need to open the doors to the new world, the world market of vast proportions. Once that door is open we can rely on Canadian

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expertise, Canadian entrepreneurship in all our ridings to do the rest.

The result will be better telecommunications services. An infrastructure will support us in the next century. I suggest we are on the information highway and we will move forward on that highway together.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have been both exhilarated and disappointed today. We have before us a bill that on the one hand is being exalted as the greatest development that will advance the causes of technology and communication that has ever hit the floor of this House. It has given members of the government the opportunity to brag, to extol the virtues of how much they are doing to get Canadians on to the information highway and to make sure that all communities and all Canadians everywhere will be connected to this information highway.

At the same time these very same people recognize that there is not the capacity in Canada to do that right now. It is a noble goal, we all agree, and I support that, but the interesting thing with regard to this bill is that it has brought together two things that I submit do not belong together in the same bill. Whatever connection there is is tenuous at best.

We have one bill with two parts. The first part deals with amendments to the Telecommunications Act and the other part of the bill deals with amendments to the the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act. Those two things are completely separate. I submit that it would have been very much better if the government had submitted two bills, one which dealt with amendments to the Telecommunications Act, the other which dealt with amendments to the Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act. It would have been far more successful and far more logical.

The issue behind this bill is to recognize the principle involved. There is not much doubt or argument about the basic principles of increasing competition, expanding the ownership possibilities of telecommunications vehicles and ending monopolies. It is rather encouraging that the Liberals, who tend to govern from the top down and intrude into business, have seen this as a major principle.

• (1700)

It is about time that Canadians recognized that government does not have all the answers. Yet within this very bill, we are reverting to government regulation and control of business.

I want to hearken back to the Information Highway Advisory Committee. This committee started with one set of recommendations in its first volume and then it came up with a second volume in which it began to implement things. One of the principles which

the committee stated very unequivocally in the first report which it presented to the Minister of Industry was that the origin of the capital of a particular business, particularly a business in telecommunications, ought not to be so much the concern of the government, but rather the concern should be how that capital is applied. Is the capital applied in such a way that meets the economic and social goals of Canada? If the capital does those things it does not matter where it originated.

We need to focus very carefully and clearly on what it is we want to achieve in any legislation, particularly in legislation that deals with such a pervasive issue as telecommunications, the linking of people talking with one another through electronic means.

Two parliamentary secretaries expressed great pride in how broad the consultation had been on this bill. I do not know with whom they spoke. I have a report from an Internet service provider which arrived about five minutes ago. In fact, the report is from the legal counsel to the Internet service provider. He makes this observation:

I am concerned that this bill empowers the CRTC to declare that something is a basic telecommunications service, without any criteria to define "basic", and then subject the service provider to a licensing regime. This licensing regime overturns the previous scheme of the Telecommunications Act in a fundamental way. The previous act—the one now in force—says that anyone may operate as a Canadian carrier who satisfies ownership criteria. The new one subjects every service that the CRTC wishes to regulate to a comprehensive scheme of licensing.

The key phrase is whatever service the CRTC wishes to regulate. This is a major departure. It is an intrusion into the operation of telecommunications such as we have never seen before. It was never a part of the Telecommunications Act.

When the Minister of Industry gave his speech in defence of Bill C-17 we were all enamoured by his commitment, by his seriousness and by his total support for the development of telecommunications and the whole business of innovation, science and technology developments and the application and commercialization of new ideas. He used the telecommunications business as an example of how this could be done. I congratulate the minister for doing that.

However, the minister failed to comment on one aspect of the bill which is an intrusion into the affairs of business. We have to get serious about that.

I want to refer directly to the mandate of the CRTC. The CRTC is a body with administrative and quasi-judicial authority. This is no itsy-bitsy committee whose members get together every once in a while to talk to one another and have a good time, go out for a beer or a coffee or whatever. This is a quasi-judicial body that can bind businesses or individuals and can determine how much you and I pay for our telephone rates. It can determine who will be the supplier of the pipe or the line or the fibre optic or satellite

communication or wireless. It has the right to determine these kinds of things.

• (1705)

The CRTC has been given a brand new mandate and authority it did not have before. It has been given the authority, in clause 3, the new section 16, for new powers of licensing.

It is very interesting what these powers actually are. These powers establish classes of licences. That is one thing it does. It establishes the classes of services that would require a licence. Now we are hitting on two sides. First, it tells us the kinds of licences we will have. Second, it tells us these are the service providers who will be required to have a licence. They may be the same but they may also be different. The act is completely ambiguous in declaring exactly what is going to happen in this area.

I would like to make several observations with regard to this ambiguity. What does this ambiguity permit? First, it allows the establishment of many or few classes. The more classes there are the more administration, the more distributors, the more ways in which you find the CRTC getting into various areas. It decides how many of these classes there will be.

Second, it allows the CRTC to establish classes on an arbitrary basis. It does not provide any indication of the conditions and guidelines to be used before a particular class of licence is established. This is a figment of somebody's imagination first and then it is how much can fit here.

It sounds like someone who is getting ready for a Ph.D. dissertation. He takes a particular position and says this is my hypothesis. Then he draws a conclusion and says that this is my conclusion. He wonders around until he finds enough evidence to prove his conclusion given the hypothesis, rather than deciding on the hypothesis and looking for the evidence.

This is very serious. That is the kind of thing that could happen here. Far worse than that, the classes of licences could perpetuate obsolescence. It puts into a straitjacket the conditions that qualify a business or service provider getting a licence in the first place. That is terrible.

We would not have the advancement in telecommunications if we had had these kinds of constraints placed on new service providers, with new ideas and new ways of applying the technology. We should look at this very carefully.

The CRTC may now establish the conditions for the licences. Not only can it establish the classes of licences, the kinds of businesses that would be required to have a licence, but now the conditions. These too have no guidelines.

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What will the conditions be? Will a service provider need a particular financial capability? Does it mean there has to have a particular concentration of ownership or if the ownership is too concentrated it will not get a licence? Will it be a coverage area that is involved or the range of services that will be provided? Then the question becomes is this a range of services that relates to the Internet? Will this be a service that will be on the information highway or could it be something that is independent of that? Will it have to do with the number of technical people who are employed by an organization or will a certain portion of the profits have to be placed into R and D? Are these some of the conditions that are going to be placed on the licensee? We do not know.

• (1710)

However, we do know that the government is already on record insisting that in order for a certain kind of business to operate it must commit a certain proportion of its earnings and revenues toward research and development. I do not think that is necessarily a bad requirement. In fact, we need far more research and development in this country.

Canada is well down the list of OECD countries in spending on R and D. As an industrial nation it does not fare well in the way that the government presents R and D. Government does not provide as much money to research and development as could be the case. Neither does private enterprise commit to research and development in the proportion that it should. We need that kind of commitment. For that to be a possible condition for a licence is rather difficult.

These are some of the questions on the business of licensing. However, there is an even more significant part to licensing. It is not only the people who will get the licences and the conditions of licences, the bill goes even further and states that the CRTC may establish conditions relative to circumstances of the licensee.

This raises all kinds of questions. Does this now escalate the problem above and beyond direct political and/or commission arbitrariness. Now we are not only determining the conditions but the circumstances that would be involved.

It could prevent certain people from entering the market by making regulations that are so demanding it would be impossible for them to ever get into the business. It is sort of like issuing a tender for a motorcycle and setting the specifications for that motorcycle in such a way that there would only be one possible manufacturer that could meet those specifications. These are very serious possibilities.

There is also the possibility of capriciousness, which is to set different conditions for one class of licence apart from another class of licence so that in one case it may be on a certain financial

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case, while on the other side financial basis will not matter, but the concentration of ownership will.

It could also bring about that those who would get a licence would be friends of the government, those who are friends of management or directors of the CRTC, perhaps people in a particular management structure. Who knows? This could possibly create different cost structures for different classes of licences. We do not know what the circumstances would be.

If we put those four things in the legislative provision of licences, we would begin to ask ourselves how could anyone truly and honestly and fairly administer such a system?

If I was a bureaucrat and I wanted to establish myself as a bureaucratic entrepreneur, that is getting more and more people to come under my supervision, I would use this kind of a system. It would mean that I could have the whole world before me. I could create the types of licences I wanted, the kinds of services that would get the licences and then I could determine the conditions and the circumstances. It would be possible to build an empire that would be so great that it would be absolutely impossible for anybody to do anything without first of all coming to me to ask "How will we do this?" It has tremendous and horrendous implications.

The bottom line question in all of this is that it does not increase flexibility. It is the very opposite.

• (1715)

Not long ago the CRTC stated in one of its publications that it wanted local competition, a development I heralded with great support at the time and still do. I think it is wonderful. A great thing has happened, and I think the bill moves away from it.

In 1995-96 the commission initiated four different public proceedings to put into place conditions for effective competition in the local telephone market. These proceedings deal with co-location, local interconnection, network component unbundling, local number portability and price cap regulation.

Co-location is intended to facilitate competition by providing competitors with the option of delivering their traffic to local switches over either leased or owned facilities.

Unbundling refers to the requirement that incumbent local telephone companies make available at tariffed rates elements of their facilities to which competitors would require access to effectively enter the local telephone market. This is a tremendous policy for the CRTC to develop. It is exactly what should happen.

Last night I had the opportunity to meet with a couple of entrepreneurs who were doing exactly that. They have put in the ground loops of fibre optic cable which now allows them to get into local telephone market. This will put them in direct competition

with the B.C. Tels and the Bells that have monopolies in these areas. Finally we have competition. That is absolutely tremendous and the CRTC ought to be commended for it. The legislation indicates what the CRTC did over here but gives it the power to frustrate what it had over there.

The CRTC goes on to say that another major element of the Reform Party was a series of adjustments to local telephone rates which stem from the commission's split rate based decision to bring prices closer to the true cost of providing service. This adjustment will produce artificial subsidies to residential local service that complicate the introduction of competition.

Implementation of a price cap regime will also give service providers more freedom to price individual services and to reap the benefits of productivity improvements.

This is tremendous stuff. In spite of that concern I have complete support for the other part of the bill which would change or amend the reorganization of Teleglobe Canada Reorganization and Divestiture Act. That should be moved forward expeditiously. Tomorrow we should do that if we possibly could.

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kelowna for his remarks. I know his preparedness as industry critic is always fine tuned.

I am sure that as the industry critic he appreciates the fact Canadians are becoming more and more connected. More and more people are using the Internet and programs like Strategis which has well over 2,000 hits a day. He appreciates the importance of telecommunications.

I want to ask a number of questions. If we are to deregulate and have more people in the telecommunications business, does he believe there should be a level playing field among the participants and that new participants should be allowed to come in with a certain approval requirement, or does he believe that it should be wide open?

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Madam Speaker, I believe the government's role should be to create an environment in which innovation and entrepreneurship can express themselves. The playing field should be level in the sense that an opportunity exists for all kinds of players to enter.

Let those who are particularly successful and good win the day. I do not think governments should decide ahead of time who should be the winner or who should be the loser. That is the difficulty with the bill.

In a short answer, my position is yes, let us let people go in and compete. We would not have the IBMs. We would not have the Apples. We would not have various other groups that have brought about all kinds of Internet service projects. We would not have them today if we had regulations that said they could not come in

unless they met some conditions. They came because they had a service. They came because the service met the needs of people.

• (1720)

The time has come for government to create the overall broad framework so that we can succeed in that environment and let the market decide who will provide the best service for the least cost.

Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time to debate this issue with the hon. member for Kelowna.

I want to make sure people understand that the proposed approach is not intended to restrict the entry of new players into the market or to exclude players. I understand the CRTC is doing some advance consultation now with the industry. Its objective will be to consult with the industry on what is required to have the rules participants will operate under.

This lesson has been learned in the U.S., in the U.K. and in the European Union. It is not any different from what we want to propose in Canada. If we are to have a level playing field we need the rules of the playing field and to let the industry decide what the conditions should be.

The government wants to do exactly that. It wants to make sure the rules are understood and the players can compete. Would the member for Kelowna disagree with that?

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Madam Speaker, I picked up a key phrase the hon. member opposite mentioned. He said we should let the industry determine. That is exactly right. Let the industry come into it rather than the government. I think he really believes that and that is why he said it.

That is not what the bill says. I wish the bill would say that. If he could prove to me that the bill says that I would wholeheartedly agree with him. The issue he has raised is the right one.

I would like to mention, because it is brand new, that he said the lesson has been learned and the CRTC knows it. Let me focus on what was said in the 1997-98 estimates that we are now working under. The mission statement reads:

For communication in the public interest we aim to help Canadians better understand how their values and diversity shape Canada's unique personality in the world. We do so by regulating our broadcasting and telecommunications industries in open, flexible ways to foster creative freedom and strengthen the prosperity of all our citizens.

Let us now read the mandate of the CRTC and compare the two statements. The mandate reads:

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The CRTC is vested with the authority to license, regulate and supervise all broadcasting undertakings within Canada and to regulate telecommunications commentaries that fall under federal jurisdiction.

It goes on. Is this not interesting? It has made a regulatory body its mandate but its mission is to help Canadians better understand their values and diversity and to have open, flexible ways to foster creative freedom and strengthen the prosperity of all our citizens.

It looks to me as if the regulation on the one hand and the mission on the other, if not in contradiction are certainly running in different directions.

If the lesson has been learned the CRTC should demonstrate it. It has been known for years that the CRTC has not been the facilitator of private enterprise and competition but rather the protector of monopolistic interests.

I am glad to see a shift here. I think it is good. I have raised the competitive issue before. I have talked about convergence before. That is a good idea. There are vestiges in the new provision for licensing ability that move the CRTC back further into the regulation. I think it is a backward move into the future.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for our colleague, the Reform Party telecommunications critic.

There is much talk in this bill about corporations. We have mentioned equipment manufacturers, providers of telephone services, cable distributors. We have also mentioned the consumer, who sees his bill regularly hiked up, but there is no mention of the person who is entitled to privacy. We do not mention the protection of personal information. Yet that is the flip side of the coin.

Only one side of the coin is being talked about now, allowing the industry to expand worldwide through deregulation. The flip side of the coin: what are the consequences or the potential ill effects for citizens whose personal information can be released all over the planet?

We know that the federal government has no legislation that really protects personal information once it is in the hands of private business.

I am therefore asking the Reform Party critic this question. What does the Reform Party recommend for protecting private information, identifying information, what does it have in mind for protecting the public from the misuse by businesses of information on each and every one of us?

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[English]

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, it is a superb question, one that is not addressed in this bill or in any other bill.

If he is asking for my personal opinion, I think that is one of the crying needs that must be addressed in the House as the electronics and telecommunications industry develops. We must guarantee the integrity, the privacy, the security of personal information and confidential information of a business nature. As we go to electronic banking, transferring funds from one organization to another via electronic means, the security of that information is paramount.

The time is ripe to bring forward that kind of legislation. In fact we should do it tomorrow morning.

I thank the hon. member for the question. I certainly support the idea.

Mr. Walt Lastewka: Mr. Speaker, I meant to address the privacy section in an earlier question but unfortunately the member walked out and I was unable to ask it.

It has been said in the House before that privacy legislation is something the government is concerned with. We are now studying it, trying to get a simple, flexible privacy of information legislation. Work is being done not only with the government but with the provinces to get as many provinces onside to come up with simple legislation to recommend to the House.

When the public consultations are completed I hope hon. members will be able to add to the government's consultations on the privacy section of the legislation that will be introduced in the House in due time.

I thank the hon. member for raising it. I am sure we will be debating it in committee.

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, when the government brings that legislation forward I hope it will have consulted widely, honestly and with integrity, and listened very much to the experience of the privacy commissioner over the last number of years. He has a lot of good advice to give us all.

* * *

• (1730)

DNA IDENTIFICATION ACT

The House resumed from November 3 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the referral to committee before second reading of Bill C-3.

Call in the members.

• (1800)

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

*(Division No. 22)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alarie
Alcock	Anderson
Assad	Asselin
Augustine	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bertrand
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Bigras
Bevilacqua	Blondin-Andrew
Blaikie	Bonwick
Bonin	Boudria
Borotsik	Brien
Bradshaw	Brown
Brisson	Bulte
Bryden	Caccia
Byrne	Canuel
Calder	Carroll
Caplan	Cauchon
Catterall	Charest
Chamberlain	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Coderre
Clouthier	Collenette
Cohen	Copps
Comuzzi	Cullen
Crête	Davies
Dalphond-Guiral	Desjarlais
de Savoye	De Villers
Desrochers	Dion
Dhaliwal	Doyle
Discepola	Drouin
Dromisky	Dubé (Lévis)
Dubé (Lévis)	Duhamel
Duceppe	Earle
Dumas	Eggleton
Easter	Finlay
Finestone	Fontana
Folco	Fry
Fournier	Gagnon
Gagliano	Gauthier
Galloway	Godfrey
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Châteauguay)
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Graham
Goodale	Guarnieri
Gray (Windsor West)	Harb
Guimond	Harvard
Hardy	Herron
Harvey	Ianno
Hubbard	Jennings
Jackson	Jordan
Jones	Karygiannis
Karetak-Lindell	Keys
Keddy (South Shore)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kraft Sloan
Knutson	Lalonde
Laliberte	Laurin
Lastewka	Lebel
Lavigne	Lefebvre
Lee	Lill
Leung	Longfield
Lincoln	MacAulay
Loubier	Mahoney
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Maloney
Malhi	Marceau
Manley	Marchi
Marchand	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Marleau	Massé
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	McCormick
Matthews	McGuire
McDonough	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McKay (Scarborough East)	McWhinney
McTeague	Mercier
Ménard	
Mifflin	

Private Members' Business

Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
 Mitchell
 Murray
 Nault
 Nystrom
 Pagtakhan
 Parrish
 Peric
 Peterson
 Phinney
 Pickard (Kent—Essex)
 Plamondon
 Pratt
 Provenzano
 Reed
 Riis
 Robinson
 Rock
 Sauvageau
 Serré
 Solomon
 St. Denis
 Stewart (Brant)
 St-Hilaire
 St-Julien
 Szabo
 Thompson (Charlotte)
 Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Venne
 Wappel
 Whelan
 Wood—217

Minna
 Muise
 Myers
 Normand
 O'Reilly
 Paradis
 Patry
 Perron
 Pettigrew
 Picard (Drummond)
 Pillitteri
 Power
 Price
 Redman
 Richardson
 Robillard
 Rocheleau
 Saada
 Scott (Fredericton)
 Shepherd
 Speller
 Steckle
 Stewart (Northumberland)
 St-Jacques
 Stoffer
 Thibeault
 Torsney
 Turp
 Valeri
 Vautour
 Volpe
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wilfert

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was not here when the vote was called, but had I been here I would have voted with my caucus.

(Motion agreed to and bill referred to a committee)

The Speaker: It being 6 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1805)

[English]

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP) moved:

That a special committee be appointed, pursuant to Standing Order 68(4)(b), to review the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with euthanasia and physician assisted suicide and that the committee be instructed to prepare and bring in a bill, in accordance with Standing Order 68(5).

He said: Mr. Speaker, on February 12, 1994 my friend Sue Rodriguez died at her home in Sidney, British Columbia. She died with the assistance of a courageous and understanding doctor who risked a term of life imprisonment for breaking the law, section 241 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

As many members of this House will know, Sue Rodriguez had fought with incredible dignity, strength and courage, to the Supreme Court of Canada ultimately, to change this law. She appeared before the House of Commons justice committee. She made a whole nation aware of this profoundly important issue.

While she may have lost ultimately by the narrowest possible margin of five to four at the Supreme Court of Canada, for many of us it was the words of dissenting Justice Peter Cory that resonated most powerfully:

The life of an individual must include dying. Dying is the final act in the drama of life. The right to die with dignity should be as well protected as is any other aspect of the right to life. State prohibitions that would force a dreadful, painful death on a rational but incapacitated terminally ill patient are an affront to human dignity.

While there may have been division in the Supreme Court of Canada, there was unanimity on one issue, that it was ultimately up to the House of Commons, the elected House of the people of Canada, to make a decision as to what the law should or should not state on this profoundly important issue. All the judges who considered this issue were unanimous on that point, the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the B.C. Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada.

NAYS
Members

Abbott
 Anders
 Benoit
 Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
 Casson
 Elley
 Forseth
 Goldring
 Grey (Edmonton North)
 Hart
 Hilstrom
 Jaffer
 Konrad
 Lunn
 Mark
 McNally
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Reynolds
 Schmidt
 Strahl
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)
 Williams—47

Ablonczy
 Bailey
 Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead)
 Cadman
 Cummins
 Epp
 Gilmour
 Grewal
 Harris
 Hill (Macleod)
 Hoepfner
 Johnston
 Lowther
 Manning
 Mayfield
 Meredith
 Morrison
 Pankiw
 Ramsay
 Ritz
 Scott (Skeena)
 Vellacott
 White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
 Chan
 Grose
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Debien
 Guay
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

I note that prior to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, starting in 1991 a number of other members of Parliament had raised this issue in the House: Bob Wenman, late Conservative member of Parliament from British Columbia, my former colleague Ian Waddell and my current colleague from Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar.

Following the death of Sue Rodriguez in February 1994, within days of her death, both the prime minister and the then justice minister, currently the Minister of Health, promised that there would be a free vote in this House on this important issue. Four days later the justice minister said: "I am sure that doctors could tell us that a number of people right now are facing terminal illness who would want to have a clarification". He went on to say: "We will have a free vote as soon as we possibly can".

[Translation]

The Minister of Justice said, and I quote:

I can assure you that we will find a way to introduce something in the House that will not be theoretical and that will be significant. If that means proposing legislative changes, so be it.

He added:

We will not sit on this. We will do it as quickly as we can.

• (1810)

[English]

Almost four years later we have finally achieved that objective of ultimately this House's being able to have a free vote on the issue. In May 1994 it was the national convention of the federal Liberal Party that passed almost unanimously a resolution urging the government to allow a free vote on this important issue.

As well in the spring of 1994, again shortly after the death of Sue Rodriguez, the Senate established a special committee chaired by a very distinguished former senator, Joan Neiman. The committee reported in June 1995, after having held extensive right across the country.

I want to pay tribute to all members of that committee for their work. It was a very important committee and an excellent report called "Of Life and Death".

Today MPs will have an opportunity following three hours of debate on my motion to vote on this issue and I thank my colleagues from all parties for the opportunity that we have been given for this vote, and it will be a free vote.

I want to explain very carefully and very precisely what this motion seeks to achieve. The motion does not set out the terms for new legislation. It calls for the establishment of a special committee of this House. Obviously it could be decided that the standing

committee on justice may be a more appropriate forum, but in any event it calls for a committee of this House to review evidence, certainly not to redo all the work of the Senate committee, to review the findings, the evidence and the recommendations of that committee and then to make recommendations back to this House.

Those recommendations could be very broad or very narrow. As I said, the Senate committee has already done much of the work in this area. The Senate committee was unanimous on a number of recommendations, including the importance of support for palliative care, pain control, and looked at the issue of sedation practices, the so-called double effect, withholding and withdrawal of life sustaining treatment and advance directives. It was able to arrive at unanimous recommendations for changes in those areas of the law.

Senator Sharon Carstairs, one of the members of that committee, tabled a bill last year, Bill S-13, which was strongly supported by Dr. Wilbert Keon, another member of the Senate and one of Canada's foremost heart surgeons. That bill would have clarified the Criminal Code with respect to a couple of key elements. What it would have done was clarify the practice of providing treatment for the purpose of alleviating suffering that may shorten life. It would also recognize explicitly and clarify the circumstances in which withholding and withdrawal of treatment is legally acceptable.

It may be that is as far as this special committee of the House is prepared to go. I would hope that the committee would go further and recommend comprehensive changes to section 241 of the Criminal Code, those changes that were supported by four of the nine judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, three of the seven senators on the special Senate committee, one of whom was Dr. Keon, and a substantial majority of Canadians in every region of Canada who also support these changes.

The Leader of the Opposition has stated that if a government bill were to be presented to Parliament, and presumably that would apply to a private member's motion as well, permitting physician assisted suicide under the conditions which he had set out in his consultation with his constituents, he would vote for that bill. That was because when he surveyed his own constituents he found that something like 82% of those constituents supported this change.

I want in urging the House to change the law to pay tribute to the many dedicated groups and individuals working for this change in the law, including the Right to Die Society and John Hofess, Dying with Dignity and Marilyn Seguin, groups like Goodbye, the Unitarian Church and many others.

• (1815)

I note as well the issue is being debated in other parts of the world. In fact today we will learn the results of a referendum in Oregon. Earlier in the Australia Northern Territory Premier Mar-

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shall Perron courageously fought to bring forward a bill, only to see it ultimately overturned by the national parliament.

Why is it that I believe that the current law is profoundly cruel and unjust and must be changed? Let me first make it very clear that this is not a debate about choosing between palliative care on the one hand and physician assisted suicide on the other. I strongly support the unanimous recommendations of the Senate committee on this issue, which talked about far more resources for palliative care programs, national guidelines and standards, training of health care professionals, an integrated approach to palliative care and more research into palliative care, especially pain control and symptom relief. All of those are fundamentally important.

The best palliative care in the world cannot respond in all circumstances to all suffering, indignity and anguish. I note the Canadian Palliative Care Association has acknowledged that. It pointed out that in something like 16% of cases of terminal illness, the patients must be so sedated that they are "incapable of meaningful interaction with their families".

There were some patients, some terminally ill people, Sue Rodriguez among them, who did not want to live or to die that way. I argue that in those narrow circumstances in which palliative care cannot respond to the suffering, the pain and the anguish the issue is one of choice, fundamentally of personal autonomy, whether we accept the right of competent adults to decide for themselves how their lives will end.

As it now stands under the current law, the choice is either to continue that suffering and anguish or to be sedated into a state of pharmaceutical oblivion, or to find a doctor who is prepared to break the law and risk life imprisonment, as in the case of Sue Rodriguez, or if you cannot find a doctor, as we have seen tragically in some circumstances, to leave your own country. We saw that with Austin Bastable in 1996. We saw that just recently with my constituent, Mr. Natverlal Thakore, this year. You should not have to leave your country and your family to die in peace.

[*Translation*]

I find it particularly cruel and barbarous that Mr. Thakore had to leave his own country and his family to go to die in a motel room in Michigan with the help of a doctor he had probably never met. This is not acceptable.

[*English*]

It is time that we ended the hypocrisy in this area and admitted that assisted suicides are happening now. They are happening with no guidelines, with no review, with no safeguards whatsoever. Tragically, people are ending their own lives, committing suicide while still wanting to live longer. But they are doing it because they are afraid that when the moment comes at which they are totally

incapacitated, they will not be able to seek the assistance they desire.

The B.C. Persons with AIDS Society pointed out that this is a very serious concern within that community as well. Its spokesman said in his evidence before the Senate committee that people with HIV disease choosing assisted death as a medical option are being forced as a result of current legislation to seek backstreet euthanasia. He talked about violent methods of euthanasia such as heroin overdoses, razor blades, guns and suffocation using plastic bags.

B.C. social worker Russel Ogden has confirmed in his studies the widespread resort to assisted suicide among people dying of AIDS. The Ontario chief coroner has confirmed that many people are assisting in suicide in this province. Dr. Ted Boadway of the Ontario Medical Association stated at a Canadian Medical Association convention "Doctors are doing it entirely underground and entirely unrecognized, in great fear and anxiety". One doctor talked about how in his words "you can make a person comfortable with 50 milligrams of Demerol and you can make a person very, very dead with 500 milligrams of Demerol", and about giving a suffering, terminally ill patient a prescription for sleeping pills but instead of giving her the normal 12, he gave her 40 as she requested. It is happening now but in the shadows, behind closed doors with no safeguards. When people ask what about the slippery slope, those dangers are clearly already there.

• (1820)

Of course there must be strict safeguards in place. The Canadian Medical Association's committee on ethics made a number of recommendations, as did the Senate committee that studied this issue. These are some of the safeguards that have been recommended which I strongly support: the importance of a person's request; being informed, voluntary, enduring and free of any coercion; the importance of the physician ensuring the person is competent and not suffering from any disorder that impairs his or her ability to make the decision; exploring the reasons in detail in incurable illness and severe suffering; the physician not being compelled in any way to participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide and not in a position to gain in any way.

I will also respond briefly to some of the serious concerns that have been raised by people with disabilities and organizations representing people with disabilities, such as the Council of Canadians with Disabilities. They voiced very eloquently their fear that if legislation were brought in that in any way diminished the importance of their lives or devalued their lives, they would strongly oppose it. They are deeply concerned about some of the arguments they have heard around the Tracy Latimer decision.

I emphasize that what is being debated here is fundamentally different. What is being debated here is the right of a competent adult who is terminally or incurably ill to make that decision for

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himself or herself, not by another person, not by a doctor, not by relative, not by a parent but for himself or herself.

I quote from the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities that supports changes to this section of the Criminal Code. It states in its recommendation to the Senate "we support changes that would make it legal to assist in the suicide of adults who know and understand all of the support options available to them and who are physically unable to take their life without assistance". I was pleased that the coalition intervened in support of Sue Rodriguez in her struggle before the courts.

Some of the most powerful arguments for change in the law come from the families and friends of those who have lost a loved one in terribly agonizing circumstances. Following the death of Sue Rodriguez, I received literally hundreds of incredibly moving letters. I will share a couple of examples.

[*Translation*]

I got a letter from the son of Quebec author and actor Doris Lussier. His son is Pierre Lussier. He said:

Papa, do not let the politicians, barbarians by any other name, tell me that your horrible cry of mortal pain on the eve of your death, even unconscious, when we were far from your room at the other end of the corridor, was a sign of comfort. I shared in the agony of a charming, joyful, cultivated, reasonable human being, whom I loved more than anyone in the world, with no possibility of releasing him from his suffering as he so often asked of me. He was a total advocate of civilized death.

[*English*]

I could read from many other letters. I could read the letter of a man who wrote to me about his daughter who was in agony most of the time. He said that her jaw would sometimes dislocate when she yawned. She could not move her bowels so her sister had to evacuate her manually every second day. Several huge bed sores developed which never healed. She tried to kill herself by refusing to eat. Finally she had a stroke which prevented her from using her communicator and she spent the last few years of her life in total isolation wailing dreadfully, pleading for an end to her suffering. That is no way to die.

One of the most difficult experiences I have had to live with has been the calls and letters I have received from people who plead with me to find a doctor to help them. I cannot respond to that, but what I can do is to plead with this House to ensure that the law is changed so that we have humanity and justice.

• (1825)

In closing, I want to appeal to all members of the House. Palliative care in and of itself is not enough. Sue Rodriguez had superb palliative care. Let an all-party committee hear from Canadians on all sides of this issue, review the evidence and

recommendations of the Senate committee and then report back to the House with legislation to be voted on in a free vote.

It would be a tragic mistake to close the door at this stage to any further debate. Respected doctors like Dr. Keon, nurses and other health care workers, and most of all our own constituents, are asking that the law be, at the very least, clarified and hopefully changed to reflect humanity and justice.

In closing the debate on my previous bill in September 1994 I quoted the final words of my friend Sue Rodriguez and I want to honour her memory by doing so again today. She said:

I hope that my efforts will not have been in vain and that the Minister of Justice will introduce legislation into Parliament soon so that terminally ill people will have another option available, thereby permitting physician assisted suicide for the terminally ill.

May her courageous struggle and that of others who have made the same eloquent plea not be in vain.

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise before the House today in response to the proposal moved by the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas that a special committee be appointed to review the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with euthanasia and physician assisted suicide, and that the committee be instructed to prepare and bring in a bill.

As my colleagues in the House would no doubt agree, the subjects referred to in this motion raise very complex legal, moral and social issues that Canadians are increasingly concerned about, but remain clearly divided on.

A Montreal woman in a depressed state drowns her six-year-old son before attempting suicide. A Halifax doctor is charged with the death of a terminally ill cancer patient under her care. These are just two examples to illustrate the complexity of this issue.

The hon. member who moved the motion illustrated the human toll which this issue has taken on Canadian families. No one in this House would not be moved by these tragedies.

When we debate this subject we must examine questions ranging from the quality of medical care available to seriously ill and dying people to the moral questions involving a person's power to control his or her own life, and even the value of life itself.

[*Translation*]

Technological progress in recent decades has considerably improved our capacity to extend life and, in an aging society, the issues of care and treatment at the end of life take on ever greater importance.

Many individuals, professionals, organizations and associations have clearly expressed their concerns on this over the 16 months of hearings held by the Senate Special Committee on Euthanasia and

Assisted Suicide. In June 1995, the committee tabled its report entitled "On Life and Death".

[English]

The stated goals of the committee were to help the public to develop a better understanding of this very complex subject and to set the stage for a full and open national debate. The committee referred to its report as an initial step in the long process ahead for Canadians attempting to find solutions to the problems that it raises.

The issues raised by this motion, that is, euthanasia and assisted suicide, are profoundly controversial. It is clear that the special Senate committee was aware of this. I am sure we would all concur.

The Senate report raised a number of problems which must be carefully addressed. The committee had little difficulty reaching consensus on issues regarding medical and health care practices, such as developing national guidelines to address pain control and sedation, and the withholding or withdrawal of treatment. However, there were no such agreements among committee members when it came to dealing with the more difficult questions of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide.

Even in the case of the less controversial recommendations, I would suggest a great deal has yet to be done before we take any steps to consider amendments to the Criminal Code. Let me illustrate by way of example areas where further work is required.

Having heard and considered testimony from numerous health care professionals appearing individually or on behalf of numerous associations representing doctors, nurses and other professionals, the Senate committee report was unequivocal in its recommendations in chapters 3, 4 and 5 that urged the development and implementation of national guidelines and standards in a number of areas such as palliative care, pain control, sedation practices and the withholding and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.

• (1830)

[Translation]

These guidelines which seemingly have not yet been drafted, should help those who, every day, must make decisions or help others make decisions concerning palliative care and treatment.

Moreover, few Canadian provinces and territories have passed legislation on advance directives, generally known as living wills. Such legislation is important in order to recognize and support the participation of patients and their family in the decisions relating to medical care and treatment when they reach the end of their lives.

At such times, when critical decisions must be made, it is useful and less stressful for those involved to make these decisions if they know the patient's wishes.

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Until this work is completed, I think it would be premature to look at how the Criminal Code should deal with these issues.

[English]

Referring to the motion before us, while it is clear that I am of the opinion we should not be considering any amendments to the Criminal Code at this time, and I stress at this time, I would also suggest that attempts to do so are fraught with difficulties even when one purports to deal with subject matter upon which there is apparent agreement.

A year ago Bill S-13, an act to amend the Criminal Code, protection of health care providers, was introduced in the Senate and was later the subject of second reading debate in that house. The purpose of that bill as stated by the hon. Senator Sharon Carstairs who introduced it was to implement the unanimous recommendations in chapters 4 and 5 of the Senate report dealing with pain control and the withholding and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.

Senator Carstairs took great care to point out that her bill did not touch the more controversial aspects of the Senate report, that is, euthanasia or assisted suicide. Yet that bill itself was the subject of controversy and was not fully supported by the senator's fellow members of the special committee who had initially supported the recommendations in the first report.

In conclusion I would argue that it is premature, as moved by the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, to appoint a special committee when there has been in fact one that has studied the issue to review the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with euthanasia and physician assisted suicide or to consider the possibility of bringing in a bill when, as the Senate report demonstrated, Canadians are much too divided on these issues.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, may I have the consent of the House to split my time with the member for Macleod.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Mr. Speaker, a special Senate committee on euthanasia and assisted suicide spent over a year, from February 1994 to June 1995, studying this issue. It published a 250 page report in June 1995.

The Senate committee held 86 meetings and heard from 242 witnesses representing 92 organizations. It received 24 written submissions, listened to 12 witnesses by teleconference from Holland and received literally thousands of letters from concerned Canadians. The special Senate committee cost taxpayers more than \$250,000 not including the salaries of the senators and the staff assigned to the project.

The Senate committee recommended no changes to the Criminal Code offences for voluntary euthanasia, non-voluntary euthanasia

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and counselling suicide. The Senate committee only made two recommendations regarding the Criminal Code: that consideration be given for creation of a new murder offence called compassionate homicide; and that the Criminal Code be amended to explicitly recognize and to clarify the circumstances in which the withholding and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment is legally acceptable.

A special Senate committee has already spent hundreds of hours, spent more than \$250,000 and heard hundreds of witnesses, received thousands of letters and issued a 250 page report to the Senate in 1995. There is no need for the House of Commons committee to repeat this same process. Nor is there a need for taxpayers to shell out a few more hundred thousand dollars to do it all over again.

• (1835)

This motion presupposes that the special committee will agree that amendments to the Criminal Code are needed because the motion directs the committee to prepare and bring in a bill. If this motion is passed, it will require the special committee to introduce legislation even if the special committee's deliberations and debate and public opinion conclude otherwise.

The Criminal Code as it is currently worded provides crown prosecutors with a sufficient number of options when laying charges with respect to homicides. The changes recommended by the Senate committee are not the highest legislative priority for the general public. If a special committee is to be struck to draft any bill, Reformers say it should be a victims bill of rights. For these reasons, I cannot support this motion.

The motion proposed by the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas proposes to introduce a bill dealing with a very complex and emotional issue. Some Reformers feel this is a moral issue and should be handled using a process employed on issues such as abortion and capital punishment and on issues of personal conscience. We as Reform MPs follow a four step process to clearly state our views publicly and to ask our constituents to develop, to express and to debate their own views on the matter. Following that process, we seek the consensus of the constituency and support that constituency in Parliament.

For the record, here is my personal view on this issue. I believe in the inherent value of life and the need to protect the most vulnerable individuals in our society. While I respect every person's right to refuse medical treatment, I do not believe that any changes should be made to the Criminal Code offences of euthanasia, assisted suicide or counselling suicide.

However, I do support designating palliative care as a core service in the Canada Health Act and developing in co-operation

with the provinces national guidelines to govern the provision of palliative care services, including research, counselling and education programs.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to participate in this debate as a clinician, as a GP, as a guy who dealt with people at the end of their lives, and as someone who did surgery. This has had a very significant impact on my life. I do this with humility, recognizing that the ending of a life is a significant and important issue.

I would like to make sure that those watching understand what euthanasia is not. Euthanasia is not withholding unwanted heroics. Euthanasia is not advanced directives. Euthanasia is not unplugging resuscitation equipment that is unwanted or useless.

Euthanasia is active help to aid a person commit suicide, or active aid to end a person's life. Asking a physician to participate in that goes against everything I was taught in medical school.

Proponents say, and in fairness I listen to their arguments very well, that if we had strict guidelines, the process of doctor assisted suicide would be rare. I do not believe that it is adequate to just listen to those arguments. A good debater can make those positions well. I believe it is much more instructive to look at jurisdictions where this has been tried.

Holland of course is probably the best jurisdiction. I am taking my information today from a fairly new publication. It is the *Canadian Family Physician* for those who would like to research this for themselves, the February 1997 issue in which the Dutch experience was looked at scientifically.

Holland has a total population of 15 million, just about half of Canada's total population. The data that I am discussing today is from general practitioners just like me, doctors who see a broad part of family existence. The Dutch experience is as follows.

I spoke of criteria that would be used by the proponents. In Holland the criteria are as follows. A request for euthanasia must be voluntary. It must be well informed. It must be persistent. It cannot just be casual. There must be intolerable or hopeless suffering. There must be consultation with a second doctor so that one doctor would not make the decision in isolation. Finally, there must be a report to the authorities, a report to the coroner.

• (1840)

How rare is euthanasia in Holland? This is just GPs. This is not palliative care or surgeons that I am talking about. GPs permit about 2,000 cases of euthanasia per year. The most interesting thing about this scientific data is how often were the criteria followed. It is quite remarkable to find that about 180 patients per year were

euthanized without their personal permission. These were individuals who could have given their permission. It is quite surprising.

If we look at all doctors in Holland, substantially more than just the GPs, the numbers are even worse. This is from 1990. For those who would like to research this data themselves, it comes from the Remelink study done in 1991 by a justice in Holland.

For all doctors in Holland in 1990, 2,700 people were euthanized according to the coroners' records. This is following the criteria. But 1,040 were killed involuntarily by all doctors and not reported. Even worse, 8,100 were killed by deliberately using pain medication.

Here we have in a country half as populated as Canada, over 10,000 people euthanized in one year when only 2,700 were reported.

In Holland doctors have taken over end of life decisions. This has not become an empowering thing for the patient. I would conclude by saying giving the power of life to physicians is bad public policy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing here with an extremely serious matter that must be analyzed in the greatest possible detail. This is an issue that has been discussed for a long time.

I recall very clearly that during the 35th Parliament, this issue was raised several times by the member who tabled this motion and also by Michel Daviault, the Bloc Québécois member for Ahuntsic. That member went over the issue in great detail, made observations and addressed questions to the government on several occasions on this matter.

Just to remind you once again that it is not the first time that we are dealing with this issue in this House, on June 8, 1995, in a press release, he stated: "It is important that members examine these issues that concern all Quebeckers and Canadians and make recommendations before the House of Commons is called upon to vote on such sensitive matters".

At one time or another, the government will have to examine carefully this whole matter. With medical advances and given what is acceptable today, which may not have been acceptable yesterday and evolves over time, a responsible government, a government that wants to reflect the evolution of society, will have to get its act together and deal with this area of responsibility, this admittedly difficult issue.

I wish to take the opportunity to congratulate the member who tabled this motion. I know that it is an issue that he has been closely involved with. If there is a member in this House that can speak from experience, it is the member from Burnaby—Douglas. I

believe also, however, that this issue must be considered as objectively as possible.

What I find interesting in his motion is the fact that it gives parliamentarians an opportunity to study this matter in a non-partisan manner, with the help of scientists, doctors and families who have lived through such situations, and also in the light of our respective convictions. This is an issue that has social, economic, religious and moral implications.

• (1845)

All sorts of factors come into play, but this motion gives the government an opportunity to examine the issue and to take a real look at what could be done to arrive at a situation acceptable to the majority of Canadians and Quebeckers.

The present context is not an easy one. Some will say that respect for life is being used as an excuse to outlaw killing. I think they are right; that the dignity of human beings is not diminished by suffering. Others, however, will say that the respect for life and the right to die with dignity are personal values and that only the individual who is ill may decide. Legislating euthanasia and assisted suicide therefore poses many ethical problems. I think a committee could give very serious consideration to these ethical and medical factors.

Some news stories have advanced our understanding of this new problem. There was the case of Nancy B., Sue Rodriguez, and the most recent, which is still in the headlines, the case of Robert Latimer, a father accused of ending his daughter's life for reasons everyone has heard about. As we heard on the news, the decision is now under appeal.

There have been different interpretations in the media. However, some extremely important issues have been raised. Yes, the subject must be looked at, but I think it is so important that a very exhaustive study will be required before a bill can be introduced. The issue must be submitted to the House, studied and reported on even before those who will sit on the committee can draft a bill.

It is a complex task for a committee to study a bill. I participated in the review of the Young Offenders Act; the issue was not a heart-wrenching one but I can tell you that after six months, we had not completed the study and we were still pondering many questions.

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are related issues. We can easily predict that studying these matters will take a long time. I would not want the committee to be burdened with the task of drafting a bill.

That is why, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will table an amendment to motion M-123. I would like to see a committee struck, a committee to examine the matter, to report to the House, and subsequently, after the public pressure and the societal debate that it will have triggered in a still more structured way—because

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this will be referred to the justice committee of the House of Commons, with the assistance of the hon. member who will be able to attend—there will be a report that the House will examine and study. I believe that the government across the way, giving it the benefit of the doubt as far as its responsibility is concerned, will be able to respond favourably to the report which would be tabled by the House committee.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the word "64(4)(b)" and by substituting the word "105", by deleting the words "to prepare and bring in a bill, in accordance with Standing Order 68(5)", and by adding after the words "and that the Committee be instructed", the words "to report to the House".

• (1850)

All in all, this amendment is very legalistic, very much in lawyer's jargon, if I can put it that way, but it is aimed at striking a committee. The committee could examine the entire question in a very clear way, report back to the House, and then the government could follow up on it by bringing in a bill, which would be along the lines of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member's amendment has been taken on reservation. We will report back in due course.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in the debate tonight. This is an example of the House working at its best, where there is reasoned and intelligent debate. Certainly we will not all agree with the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, but who am I quoting when I say "We do not argue his right to stand up and debate the issue or argue his case. We certainly would not deny the member that?"

The debate reminds me of the abortion debate. I know there are at least a couple of members on this side of the House who were here during that debate in 1989. I was a member of Parliament at that time. I often say I am very fashionable because I am a recycled member of Parliament. I was here in a previous life in the 34th parliament and I spoke on that issue.

This reminds me of that debate. It was one of those issues that I do not think the government wanted to bring to the floor of the House of Commons. That was understandable. Obviously there were two sides to that debate as there are with this one. I think that is reflected in the supreme court rulings that have come down on cases like this one.

One of them is the Sue Rodriguez case the member for Burnaby—Douglas quoted. He was very much attached to that case and to Sue Rodriguez herself. I do not always agree with the member. Nor do you. Nor does the House. He took a very courageous stand in defence of his position.

Ms. Rodriguez died before that ruling came down but the fact that they ruled 5:4 on that case indicates that even the supreme court is divided on the issue.

Canadians are looking for parliament to give them guidance. It is incumbent on us to do that and to bring this issue before the House of Commons for intelligent debate. I do not support the idea of spending money on a committee. The Senate did that. The Senate struck its committee. A couple of the members have mentioned the cost of that study. It becomes very expensive.

The secret to the whole process lies right here in the House of Commons. All members of Parliament are going to be here. They are paid to be here. They are paid to stand and present their positions. That is what I think should happen. An intelligent, reasonable, persuasive debate should take place in the House. At the end of the day we will have taken our respective positions and will have had our say.

I want to define euthanasia. I am sure there are people back home, including myself until I took the time to study the issue, who are a little confused on what the term means. I will quote from a fact book that was put together for me and other members a number of years ago by the Campaign Life Coalition.

• (1855)

This is basically a definition that Canadians should hear. The original Greek meaning of the term euthanasia is easy or good death. Over time this meaning has been lost so that today an acceptable definition of euthanasia would be to act or fail to act so as to cause the death of a human being for the purpose of relieving suffering.

The victim is usually though not exclusively a chronically or terminally ill patient, not necessarily imminently dying. The person performing the act of euthanasia is usually but not exclusively a health care professional. The participation of the medical profession in these acts has led to the use of the term medicalized killing.

As well as the understanding of the precise definition of euthanasia it is important to be clear on which medically based decisions at the end of life should never be classified as euthanasia. It is important that we listen to this carefully because allowing a terminally ill person at the last stages of life to die a natural death is not euthanasia.

Where the situation is medically hopeless, a decision not to provide or continue extraordinary or heroic measures where such no longer offer any hope for healing is ethical, legal and consistent with standard medical practice. It is important to remember that. More important, it is also consistent with thousands of years of religious belief and practice.

The purpose is to examine present law to decide whether or not it should be changed. That is what the member is asking. We do not

disagree with that. It is just a case of bringing debate to the House of Commons and working through it in an intelligent fashion.

I am surrounded by members from all parties. To the right I have a few Liberals, to the left there are Reformers and there are a few Conservatives as well. The views of the respective individuals are interesting when we are engaged in discussion. There are some areas about which we fundamentally agree. There are some areas about which we fundamentally disagree.

This is the place where that debate has to happen. I urge all members to go home and do some research. In time hopefully this issue will come to the floor of the House where it deserves to be.

Earlier I mentioned the abortion debate which took place in the House. I remember as a member of Parliament at that time that I had to do some soul searching on the issue. I remember saying in the House that according to my definition if life begins at conception life should be allowed to continue. As a parallel to that, if we are talking about human life and we have accepted the fact that life is there, what right do we have as individuals to determine when that life should end? That goes back to the fundamentals.

We are talking about the continuation of human life or the termination of human life. It is no more fundamental than that. It is about life. It is about the preservation of life. It is about the continuation of life.

We have all had loved ones who have been terminally ill. I am sure many times the thought has run through the minds of many loved ones concerning whether or not there should be euthanasia.

• (1900)

At the end of the day I think most Canadians would say it is an issue worthy of debate. It is worthy of debate and it is worthy of consideration. Let us bring it to the floor of the House so that all concerned members will have a chance to speak on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The amendment proposed by the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm is in order. Accordingly, the debate is on the amendment.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could you tell me if I have three minutes or six minutes in which to speak. I was told the debate ended at 7.06 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): If the hon. member will begin, we will advise him of when he must end.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me express the deep respect I feel for my colleague for Burnaby—Douglas. His involvement in public life is worthy of the admiration of all Canadians. He defends his positions with the utmost courage and

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determination, but also with great respect. I appreciate that very much, as I am sure members on all sides do.

I think the hon. member represents the views of many Canadians. But I must say also that, if there is a consensus in our society not to artificially prolong the suffering of the dying through continued use of life support equipment, I do not think this consensus extends to assisted suicide and euthanasia.

[*English*]

Where I feel we should draw the line and where I disagree fundamentally with those who believe that assisted suicide and euthanasia should be a fact of life is with respect to the deliberate use of whatever means there are to terminate a life. Who are we to decide that we can terminate a life?

I could cite many cases if I had time. I could cite the case of my brother who was given up for dead a few years ago and who now lives a thriving life.

I would like to conclude by quoting from Drs. Herbert Hendin and Gerald Klerman:

If those advocating legalization of assisted suicide prevail, it will be a reflection that as a culture we are turning away from efforts to improve our care of the mentally ill, the infirm, and the elderly. Instead, we would be licensing the right to abuse and exploit the fears of the ill and depressed. We would be—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper. The hon. member will have the floor when debate resumes.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

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

MEFLOQUINE

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian troops in Somalia were administered the experimental drug mefloquine. Military doctors got the antimalarial drug because they agreed to participate in a prelicensing safety monitoring study. They ignored their commitment.

The Minister of Health was asked on October 20 if any action under the Food and Drug Act had been taken by his department against either the manufacturer who was responsible for supervising the safety monitoring study or the surgeon general who acted illegally in prescribing the drug.

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The minister and his department are responsible for the administration of the Food and Drug Act. They ignored the fact that military doctors used an unlicensed drug that commonly has neuropsychiatric side effects. It is a drug the World Health Organization has expressed concerns about, and I quote from a World Health Organization document:

Mefloquine is taken out of recommendations, based mainly on the concern about the neuropsychiatric side effects of mefloquine. Such side effects are relatively rare, but were considered a particular concern in military personnel.

• (1905)

The World Health Organization withdrew its support for the military use of the drug in April 1992, long before Canadian troops were sent to Africa. But this is not simply about whether the World Health Organization withdrew its support for the use of mefloquine by military personnel before soldiers were ordered to take it. It is about what the Department of Health did after learning the law had been broken.

The minister did not explain what action his department took in 1993 when it learned of the problems in Somalia. The minister did not explain why his department took part in a cover-up of the illegal use of mefloquine.

Officials in the Department of Health believed in 1993 there was a direct connection between the use of mefloquine and the death of Somali teenager Shidane Arone and the attempted suicide of Master Corporal Clayton Matchee.

The minister's reply to my question on the response of his department to the illegal use of the unlicensed drug in 1992 and 1993 was to tell the House that the decision to illegally use mefloquine in Somalia was based on the best evidence available at the time.

Wrong. DND ignored the law and ignored critical evidence from reputable source which I would be happy to make available to the minister. Furthermore, the minister asked the House to await the outcome of continuing investigations before coming to any judgment.

Officials at the Department of Health told us on October 20 and 21 that no research is being undertaken by either the Department of Health or DND. Can the minister tell this House whether his officials are mistaken or whether he was mistaken when he informed the House that there were continuing investigations?

A cover-up occurred at DND and in his own department in 1993 and 1994 as to the illegal prescription of mefloquine by the surgeon general and its possible connection to the attempted suicide in Somalia of Master Corporal Clayton Matchee in 1993 and the suicide of Corporal Scott Smith in Rwanda in 1994. These were Canadian soldiers who deserved better.

I hope this minister is not trying to continue the cover-up of this illegal use of the unlicensed drug or to protect officials who had licensed mefloquine in 1993 at about the time the notorious events in Somalia became public.

The licensing was done based on an incomplete safety monitoring study. Telling this House there is an investigation under way into mefloquine when his own officials deny any study is now under way does not help us get to the truth.

The Minister of Health did not acknowledge the drug was used illegally. Instead, the minister said there was an ongoing investigation. Presumably he is talking about an investigation that has been ongoing since 1993. If so, even the minister's infamous Airbus investigation did not take that long.

I would ask again whether the minister can tell the House whether his officials are mistaken or whether he was mistaken when he informed the House there were continuing investigations. Furthermore, I would ask that he document for the House what action his department has taken with regard to the illegal use of mefloquine by the surgeon general and the failure by the manufacturer to carry out a proper safety monitoring study.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the hon. member regarding the antimalaria drug lariam mefloquine and its availability to the Canadian Armed Forces in Somalia.

As he knows, lariam has been and continues to be used and recognized worldwide as one of the most effective drugs for the prevention and treatment of a form of malaria resistant to most other antimalarial drugs. Estimated at over 2 million deaths each year, malaria is one of the world's greatest killers.

Prior to its marketing approval in 1993, lariam was available to travelling Canadians through an open access clinical trial, referred to as a safety monitoring study. The study provided Canadians with early access to a drug where few alternatives were available and monitored potential side effects of the drug in the interests of patient safety.

• (1910)

In 1994 Health Canada took immediate and affirmative action when media reported claims of several incidents where lariam may have been involved in Somalia. The Department of Health requested the sponsor to provide all information and adverse drug reaction reports as required under the safety monitoring study.

[*Translation*]

According to Health Canada directives, researchers involved in clinical studies and attending physicians are bound to report without any exception any significant adverse reaction to drugs. The results of the monitoring study on drug safety, combined with

recent information in scientific literature, confirm the prescribing information approved by Health Canada for Lariam.

The decision to use Lariam as a first choice therapy is a matter of responsibility for the patient. It is for the prescribing physician to decide in consultation with the patient whether a drug's potential benefits outweigh the risks.

[*English*]

I am sorry I could not answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas.

FOREIGN AID

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on October 21, I asked a question in this House of the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the upcoming peoples summit, specifically the concern that many delegates from APEC countries who wish to attend the peoples summit to speak on issues of fundamental human rights, the rights of workers and the environment were refused any federal government funding.

I asked the foreign minister why it was that this explicit bar on the peoples summit, using federal funds to assist people from civil society attending the peoples summit, was in place. I pointed out the double standard and the fact that the federal government is spending something in excess of \$50 million for the APEC summit itself for things like security for leaders like Suharto and Cheung Chi Min and others and it is not prepared to provide the very minimal funding which has been requested to assist in the travel of delegates from APEC countries to the peoples summit.

At the same time I questioned the minister with respect to cuts in Canada's overseas development aid, shameful cuts which have led to our being severely criticized by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation and other international aid bodies. We have dropped from fifth place to eleventh place in the OECD.

Now that the Minister of Finance has triumphantly proclaimed that the deficit has been wrestled to the ground, I urged that the minister responsible for foreign affairs, the Minister for International Co-operation, cancel the proposed 8% cut, about \$150 million, which is planned for next April in Canada's overseas development aid.

Unfortunately the response to both those questions was completely unsatisfactory.

I point out that as well in the context of the upcoming APEC peoples summit my colleague from Yukon raised very serious concerns about the failure of the federal government to provide requested financial assistance to the APEC women's conference, this despite the commitment that was made by the secretary of state

Adjournment Debate

for women and multiculturalism at the conference in Beijing. The failure to provide proper funding has also led to the cancellation of the indigenous peoples forum.

The peoples summit is a tremendous opportunity for Canadians and for people in APEC countries to raise concerns about human rights, about workers rights, about the environment, and I want to pay tribute to the organizers of the upcoming peoples summit in Vancouver later this month.

I want to again appeal to the Government of Canada to honour its own policy, the policy of CIDA, which encourages the involvement of delegates from other countries in important UN conferences and other key intergovernmental and non-governmental fora. They have much to witness; workers from Hong Kong, for example, who will speak about the failure of the Government of China to respect workers rights. It just cancelled the laws passed by the Hong Kong legislature to guarantee freedom of association. It is important that we hear from workers there. It is important that we hear from workers in Indonesia and from others talking about the genocidal policies of Suharto in East Timor. Why are we allowing him to come to Canada when he is guilty of crimes against humanity?

• (1915)

These are some of the questions that I hope will be addressed at the People's Summit. I appeal to the government to provide the funding necessary to those who are coming—

Mrs. Claudette Bradshaw (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the People's Summit requested that the Government of Canada pay \$140,000 for the travel of Asia-Pacific NGOs to Vancouver.

After careful review the government decided that the best way to support the People's Summit is to provide funding support for policy discussions, not travel. And this is what we did.

The Government of Canada has provided \$195,000 to the People's Summit; \$170,000 to help cover in-Canada logistical and administrative costs related to the organization of the event; and \$25,000 to assist the People's Summit in developing an interactive Internet-based electronic conference that will provide a forum for an exchange of views.

The Government of Canada is the People's Summit largest contributor. It supports the People's Summit because it includes a broad base group of Canadian and Asia-Pacific NGOs and will feature discussions on topics such as women, sustainability, youth and free media.

As chair of APEC in 1997, Canada has done more than any other member to widen the scope of APEC discussions to include such questions.

Adjournment Debate

Canada has a longstanding tradition of supporting organizations involved in promoting human rights—an important Canadian foreign policy objective—and has always sought to ensure that APEC's activities are informed by the views of civil society, including academics and non-governmental representatives. Canada will continue to do so.

CIDA is already supporting several of the organizations involved in the People's Summit for their ongoing work in developing countries.

FISHERIES

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, on October 28 I had the opportunity to rise in the House and ask a question of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Quite frankly I thought the question was fairly simple. Obviously the answers were not quite as simple because they were not forthcoming.

I would like to give the House a little background. What I was referring to was the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. This corporation is based in Manitoba. It is fishermen operated and those people who ply their trade in the Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and northern Ontario are the stakeholders of this corporation.

The concept is fairly simple. The fishermen catch the fish, the marketing board markets the fish and sells them throughout the world and domestically. It has sales in excess of \$50 million on world-wide distribution. It is a typical board. It has a chairman that is elected. It has a board that is elected. It has no government subsidies. It works extremely well and it is self-sufficient.

It also has working for it a chief executive officer and president. The current president and chief executive officer has been with the corporation for 16 years. He worked his way up as controller, vice-president of finance and then became the president and general manager, which is what we would all like to do within our corporation. Everything is fine. This is where the sinister of music comes in because unfortunately the government has the ability to appoint the CEO under the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act.

Previous history showed that this particular CEO had extended to him contracts of two and three years. Unfortunately, in April 1997, just before the election, an extension of that contract was issued for only six months, which was a bit strange. After the June election the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced that there was going to be a new president and general manager and he would be Mr. Ron Fewchuk.

I asked a question of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and it was not that tough. My question was would the minister tell me what the qualifications of Mr. Fewchuk were. Would he also tell me if he consulted with the board and the chairman with respect to that appointment?

• (1920)

Well, I did not get an answer. What I got was some gobblede-gook but let me tell you what the answer is. The fact of the matter is that the qualifications of Mr. Fewchuk are that he did not run in that riding because he let another member, a fellow by the name of Jon Gerrard who is no longer with the Liberal benches, run in his stead. He retired as a member of Parliament.

Did they ask the board and the chairman? Did they consult with them? The answer is no, they did not consult with the board or the chairman. It was simply a matter of a political appointment.

My second question was quite simple as well. Unfortunately, now that they need a chief executive officer to actually do the work, they are going to retain the services of their current CEO and they are now going to have Mr. Fewchuk also as a CEO. They are now going to have two salaries. My question to the minister was would he simply tell me that the one salary of patronage would be paid for out of the budget of the minister of fisheries. Do not allow those salaries to be paid by the poor fishermen. All they really want to do is fish and make an honest living. I never got an answer to that question either and I hope I can get one this evening.

The problem I have with this is not just simply for the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board, but we are dealing with another bill right now, Bill C-4. The government is fighting to make sure that it has the ability to appoint the CEO. It makes me very nervous because quite frankly there were a number of defeated Liberal members in the last election. I am wondering which one of those will be appointed the CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I might say on Bill C-4 that what we are trying to do is come up with a bill which producers have asked for. They continue to want us to be able to appoint the expertise in marketing that we did under the last bill.

Is there no depth to the disrespect for a political opponent to which the member for Brandon—Souris will stoop for cheap political gain? The member opposite has nothing of substance to say. He reverts to an attack on the character of the individual in an effort to belittle the individual Mr. Ron Fewchuk.

Although I am responding to this question on behalf of the government in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Mr. Fewchuk happened to be my seatmate in the last Parliament.

Mr. Fewchuk as a member of Parliament was not loud nor bombastic. He did not use malicious comments to attract headlines like the member opposite is trying to do. He did not try to manipulate the media like the member opposite is trying to do. He held a quiet conviction and he did his job.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Fewchuk brings years of experience to the job of president and will serve the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation very well indeed. He is a skilled entrepreneur and former parliamentarian with diverse experience in business and local government. He has 18 years ongoing experience as a successful business owner-operator and 16 years experience as a commercial bait fisherman and outfitter. He has a long history of local leadership, including 15 years of elected service as reeve, deputy reeve and councillor of the rural municipality of St. Clements. He is well qualified.

[*Translation*]

PROGRAM FOR OLDER WORKERS ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 29 I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development a question in this House.

On October 29, we were three days away from the closure of the BC asbestos mine at Black Lake, where 300 workers were laid off on November 1. Their average age is 52. Of the 300 miners, 82% are over 50 and 36% are over 55.

What the workers, the employer, Jean Dupéré, and Louise Harel of the Quebec government want is a pre-retirement program for these older employees.

• (1925)

The minister insists on offering only active measures, namely the transitional job fund, measures for independent workers and the purchase of courses. Try asking Edgar Rousseau, 56, of Coleraine to take a course in electricity or soldering, for example.

Try asking Normand Cloutier, 56, an electrician who knows his job inside out, Louis-Philippe Roy, 56, or Maurice Grégoire, 54, an experienced dynamiter, to train for some other type of work. You will agree with me that, for these people, training would be totally meaningless.

The minister has no compassion for these workers. On October 27, 1997, I asked him a question in the House and he did not even dare to come to the defence of his government's treatment of these workers. Instead, he designated the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs has now replaced the Minister of Human Resources Development. In a few minutes, we will find out who this evening's stand-in will be.

Employees of the BC mine met last week with the Minister of Human Resources Development. André Laliberté, Gaétan Rousseau and Charles Lacroix from the Thetford region met with him in his office. They asked him for an improved POWA program. The next day, in this House, he dared to rise in his place and state that asbestos workers had told him they did not want the POWA program.

At that point, my colleague, the member for Rimouski—Mitis, tabled a letter in the House reminding the minister that the workers wanted an improved POWA program.

This minister has no compassion. Jean Dupéré, I remind the House, is prepared to do his share, a substantial share, he says. Louise Harel is also ready. Only the minister is refusing to budge. He is prepared to go as far as \$3 million in active measures. Does he not understand that forcing workers who are 55, 56, 58 or 59 years old, to sit in a classroom is not only unrealistic, but stupid coming from a minister who claims to manage this country's human resources?

It is not surprising—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation.

Mrs. Claudette Bradshaw (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is sensitive, open and always willing to listen to Canadians.

The federal government recognizes the difficulties experienced by Canadians who lose their jobs, particularly those affected by the closing of the mine in Black Lake, in Quebec. However, these layoffs cannot be covered by the Program for Older Workers Adjustment, or POWA.

That program was terminated last March because, among other things, it was not fair and equitable to older workers in Quebec and across Canada.

[*English*]

The Department of Human Resources Development Canada has changed its focus from passive income support to active measures in order to help workers reintegrate into the workforce. Provinces are also moving in that direction. Let me point out that the predecessor to the human resources development minister made a commitment to helping older workers adapt to the changing labour market and considered a variety of measures including income support benefits before concluding that active measures would best serve his client group.

I assure the member this decision was not taken lightly and we will continue to help Canadians affected by layoffs in the best way possible.

[*Translation*]

With regard to Lab Chrysotile, this is reflected in the generous offer of close to \$3 million made by our government to help the employees at the BC mine re-enter the workforce.

People will benefit from adequate active measures including self-employment, targeted wage subsidies and skill development, which will increase the employability of these people and help them re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible.

Adjournment Debate

• (1930)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed adopted. Accordingly, this House stands

adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.30 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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