



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, April 27, 1998**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 27, 1998

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

### NEGOTIATION OF TERMS OF SEPARATION ACT

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.)** moved that Bill C-237, an act to provide for a national referendum to authorize the Government of Canada to negotiate terms of separation with a province that has voted for separation from Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to speak in support of my private member's Bill C-237 which provides for a national referendum authorizing the government to negotiate terms of separation with a province that has voted to leave Canada.

Because the bill applies to any province voting to separate from Canada, today I want to speak about both Quebec and my home province of British Columbia. I believe that Senator Pat Carney was not wrong. There is a growing resentment in B.C. against the way central Canada runs this country, primarily to the benefit of central Canada.

Economic times are tougher now in B.C. than they have been in recent memory. One of the biggest contributors to these tough economic times is not the so-called Asian flu but Ottawa itself, a fact I will discuss this morning. However, regardless of which province might want to separate from Canada, certain conditions must apply.

My private member's Bill C-237 would set conditions which must be met before the federal government can negotiate with any province voting to separate. Because Canada is a democracy, which means ruled by the people, the first condition must be to ensure that separation really is the will of the majority.

My bill requires parliament to determine several conditions, including whether advance advertising for a provincial separation

referendum as well as the ballots themselves state in both official languages that a yes vote means becoming a foreign state, losing representation in parliament, losing Canadian citizenship and passport and losing the unrestricted right to enter, travel and work in Canada.

• (1105)

My bill challenges separatists to follow some rules. If they do, my bill requires Canada to hold a national binding referendum authorizing Canada to negotiate. It does not spell out what would have to be negotiated, but I presume it would include such things as that province's share of the federal debt, rights of way for highways, power lines, pipelines, cables, payment of future pensions, cost of transferring permanent buildings and return of portable assets like military equipment.

This bill would establish a framework in which both the people of a province voting to separate and all Canadians could have a say in the future of our country. It would also provide a basis in law by which everybody would know what is expected, including separatists, federalists and the international community.

This legislation deals with one of the most difficult aspects of separation, namely, what must be done about people in the province who do not wish to leave Canada. This government has stated in the past that Indian bands that vote to remain in Canada would have their wishes respected. Why would the same rights not be extended to other areas where people vote to remain in Canada? After all, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If Canada can be broken into pieces so can a province.

Therefore, my bill proposes that a referendum on separating from Canada should be decided according to provincial and electoral district. It requires that only those districts with a majority of votes to separate would be allowed to leave Canada. Some people will say that this is ridiculous, but I find it no more ridiculous to suggest, for example, that the Montreal region of Quebec might want to stay in Canada while the Saguenay region voted to leave or to say that the Victoria and Vancouver areas of B.C. might want to stay in Canada while the interior and northern regions voted to leave than it is to say that we can rip Canada apart, allowing Quebec to leave while Newfoundland and Labrador and the Northwest Territories remain in Canada.

Will this be easy? No, of course not. Separating parts of Canada or parts of a province to become a foreign country will be

*Private Members' Business*

extremely difficult. People who talk about separating have to know that in advance. I repeat that if the popular will can break up a country then the popular will can break up a province. After all, Quebec separatists claim to be a nation. They claim to be a country, so how can breaking up Quebec be any different than breaking up Canada? I want to emphasize that as a grassroots party Reform is well aware that only a small percentage of Canadians, whether inside or outside Quebec, want to see Quebec separate from Canada.

There was a statement concerning Quebec in the 1991 Reform Party green book which includes the following comment: "Our desire is to have a New Quebec as an equal and fully participating province in a New Canada". At that time Reformers were trying to change the Quebec question from: "Do you want to leave Old Canada?" to: "Do you want to be a unique, equal and fully participating province in a New Canada?"

The statement concluded:

Reformers believe that the more the people of Quebec and the people of the rest of Canada are involved in defining the New Quebec and the New Canada, the higher will be the probability that the two visions can be reconciled. This is because ordinary people everywhere want more or less the same things for themselves and their children—a safe environment, good jobs with good incomes, high-quality education and health services, respect for their personal values and cultural heritage, and the freedom to live their lives in peace and dignity.

I personally believe that most people in Quebec as well as those in the rest of Canada want those same things today, but politicians and governments which do not listen to the people keep getting in the people's way. One of the most outrageous topics on which politicians do not listen to everyday Canadians is the question of unsettled native land claims.

Today for the people of British Columbia, especially people in rural ridings like my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap, we see natural resource jobs grinding to a halt. For example, B.C. has half the mining jobs it had 10 years ago. Mining investment in British Columbia is too low to replace existing reserves. According to a letter from a group of mine managers, one of the biggest reasons for this sharp decline in mining jobs in B.C. is uncertain land title and uncertain mineral tenure.

• (1110)

Nobody is going to invest millions of dollars in a mining investment without a certain answer to one basic question: Exactly who is the landlord?

The same question hurts the forest industry. The same question hurts the aquaculture industry.

According to the Constitution, land falls under provincial jurisdiction. Nevertheless, federal policies require that questions about aboriginal title to land be settled by the supreme court. Many in

B.C. say it is time for B.C. to demand that the highest provincial court must be the court to decide questions of land rather than the supreme court.

The federal government seems totally oblivious to the enormous impact which the Delgamuukw decision of December 1997 has had on B.C., where 110% of its land mass is claimed by conflicting Indian bands, but the entire population lives on about 5% of the land.

Moreover, the entire provincial economy is based on natural resource jobs which are being choked off by unsettled land claims combined with increased expectations raised by Ottawa politicians and the supreme court.

When B.C. joined Confederation, one condition laid down was that it must set aside land for Indians in the form of Indian reserves. Setting aside those Indian reserves fulfilled all of B.C.'s responsibility to the Indians living there according to the terms of union.

However, Ottawa expects the people of B.C. to bear enormous additional costs in settling native land claims. Currently on the table are 50 treaties, with the Nisga'a treaty widely seen as the prototype for the others.

Ottawa is now expecting the people of B.C. to supply 20% of the cash costs and 100% of land treaty settlements.

A couple of summers ago my wife and I had the opportunity to visit with the Nisga'a and to talk with them firsthand. We saw the land surrounding the Nass River inland from Prince Rupert, which will form the land settlement of 1,930 square kilometres, plus \$190 million in cash, \$59 million for interest or inflation, another \$122 million for their new highway, \$100 million to compensate commercial interests like forestry, fishermen and big game guides for loss of their tenures, \$21 million for the Nisga'a commercial fishery and unspecified millions to underwrite the cost of Nisga'a self-government.

Additionally, other forest companies in B.C. pay substantial amounts to the forest renewal fund from which the Nisga'a already receive about \$2 million a year to reforest their lands. Funding will continue after the treaty but the Nisga'a will not have to contribute.

What will the taxpayers of B.C. and Canada get in return for this extremely generous settlement? No extinguishment of aboriginal title and a statement that the treaty is not final.

Yet this government, and this Prime Minister in particular, have said that the costs of about \$2 billion to compensate all victims of hepatitis C from tainted blood are so huge that they threaten the very future of medicare. Fifty unsettled B.C. native land claims times \$2 billion apiece is 50 times as great an amount as that for those additional hepatitis C victims.

*Private Members' Business*

This government figures that the land claims are okay while the law-abiding citizens who get sick after receiving tainted blood must go to court to try to get some help. Why the double standard? Does anybody remember that there are as many additional B.C. treaties from bands which have not started the long process of negotiation?

To a westerner like myself it is crystal clear. Central Canada, namely the two provinces of Ontario and Quebec, exercise absolute power and control over this country because of their population numbers and the total ineffectiveness of today's unelected and unaccountable Senate.

Let me provide a short list of other major offences Ottawa has delivered to B.C. For example, the softwood lumber deal was a poor substitute in accepting quotas and tariffs for lumber going to the U.S. despite the NAFTA. The first big hole is now obvious in new tariffs and quotas being imposed on us by the U.S. on pre-drilled softwood.

Another example is that Bill C-68 has been forced upon us regardless of the important role of rifles and shotguns in the rural western lifestyle.

Endangered species legislation was put forward and no doubt will come again soon. It makes little or no effort to compensate farmers and ranchers, the forest and mining industries for the cost of protecting species.

Canadian Forces base Chilliwack was closed. It was the only land force base in the most earthquake prone region in Canada with a significant population, including millions of international tourists each year. An official language policy that ignores freedom of speech has forced a great cost in British Columbia where the most common language after English is Chinese although in my riding it is German.

• (1115)

B.C. gets no protection from an immigration department that imports literally thousands of criminals into British Columbia who prey upon law abiding citizens while our own MPs hear accusations of bribery interfering with legitimate immigration.

The government has disbanded the ports police throwing costs into Vancouver area municipalities and making it easier than ever for illegal drugs and weapons to enter B.C. Taxes to support the so-called have not provinces have helped drive businesses out of B.C. including high taxes on gasoline. As for fishery policy one could easily devote more than one speech to the federal idiocy of a race based aboriginal fishery with no help to the salmon negotiations with the U.S.

This is the short list of reasons why I think it is possible my own home province of British Columbia may start talking seriously as Quebec has done about separating from the rest of Canada.

Up until now B.C. has not played the separatist game of trying to get special favours or it will leave. On the contrary western Canada voted for the Reform Party to make changes inside the system. However many people are becoming fed up with how little the government respects its commitments to get out of provincial jurisdiction and to rebalance the federation so there would be no need for any province to separate.

Therefore we need new rules in place to govern how separatism could take place so that everyone understands them. This is a must. This uncertainty has to end.

I will summarize at the end of the hour.

**Mr. Paul DeVillers (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to Bill C-237.

In the 1997 Speech from the Throne the Government of Canada committed itself to modernizing our federation and to ensuring that as long as the prospect of another Quebec referendum on secession exists debate is conducted with all of the facts on the table.

The federal government has acted accordingly since then. This approach will allow all Canadians to face together the challenges of the 21st century. With this objective in sight the Canadian government needs a responsible government to ensure there is a clear understanding of what is at stake in the type of unilateral secession that has been advocated by the current Government of Quebec. Such a unilateral declaration would be a deeply irresponsible and impractical act. It would pose serious risk of economic and social disorder particularly within Quebec and would have serious consequences for the rest of Canada.

In any democratic society clarity surrounding the key issues of the day is vital. The very core of democracy is the respect of the rule of law and within that the ability of citizens to make informed decisions about their future.

[*Translation*]

Much confusion surrounds the legal status of a possible unilateral declaration of independence. In order to clarify the legal aspects involved, the Government of Canada referred three questions to the Supreme Court of Canada, and we are committed to respect the court's opinion.

[*English*]

Thus the reference was an appropriate and responsible course of action by the Government of Canada. It is appropriate and responsible for members of the House not to deliberate about the appropriate process for secession until the supreme court has rendered its opinion on the question before it.

*Private Members' Business*

[Translation]

Support for sovereignty has dropped; this drop was probably brought about in part to the efforts made by the Government of Canada to clarify what is really at stake with the secessionist option. As the premier of Quebec once said "The conditions required to win a referendum have vanished".

Recently, a poll conducted for the Council for Canadian Unity showed that 61% of Quebecers would vote no to the referendum question in the 1995 referendum and 38% of those who voted yes would have voted differently if an economic union could not have been concluded with the rest of Canada.

• (1120)

In addition, an Ekos Research Associates Inc. poll conducted in March shows that only 11% of Quebecers are in favour of outright independence. A SOM poll released in March shows that more than 62% of Quebecers are opposed to Premier Bouchard holding another referendum. Finally, the poll sponsored by the Council on Canadian Unity shows that 50% of Quebecers agree, while 36% disagree, that a region should be allowed to remain a part of Canada if that were the wish of a large percentage of its population.

All these figures go to show that Quebecers want to remain Canadians and do not want to have to choose between their two identities. This is why the sovereigntist leaders have no choice but to foster confusion and ambiguity. And they were quite successful at it, since polls consistently show that more than a third of Quebecers still believe that, should sovereignty be achieved in Quebec, they would continue to be represented by members of Parliament in the House of Commons.

That is why this government has decided to counter the sovereigntists' propaganda with clarity and use every means at its disposal to ensure that Quebecers and Canadians in general are well aware of the irreparable consequences of secession.

Our primary duty and our responsibility as a government is to ensure that our federation keeps responding better and better to the needs of all Canadians. Our government has established mechanisms to strengthen our economic and social union. This union is based on our bonds of solidarity, compassion and openness, which, beyond our linguistic and cultural differences, unite us from coast to coast. This is the very basis of our federation.

[English]

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Government of Canada has undertaken initiatives to make the federation work better for all Canadians.

Let me give a few examples of the numerous steps we have taken in this respect. Thanks to the Constitution Act, 1982, we were able to effect two constitutional amendments bilaterally to modernize Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador's education system.

There has been inclusion of public sector procurement, excluding health and social services, under the agreement of international trade. The federal government has now signed job training agreements with nine provinces and two territories. Intergovernmental negotiations are under way to develop a more concerted and co-operative approach to social policy reform. There is also the harmonization of existing federal legislation with Quebec civil law and the development of the national child benefit system.

These are the sorts of initiatives that demonstrate to all Canadians, including Quebecers, that the federation can and does evolve to meet changing needs.

[Translation]

Our efforts have been productive. The deficit has been beaten, and we can afford to make some choices and to invest in the future. Quebec is also overcoming its own deficit, which is something to rejoice about. Last week, the New York credit agency Standard & Poor's raised Quebec's credit rating. It pointed out that the decreased popularity of sovereignty had something to do with this adjustment, since it had reduced political and economic uncertainty. One hopes the Government of Quebec takes careful note of this.

Canada has much to offer. Its economic foundations are solid and it is an exceptional place to live, invest and do business. Canada is a success from all points of view, and we are the envy of the entire world. We must make an effort to continue the progress that has begun and to make this country an even more remarkable place in which to live.

Canada was not created by magic; it is the result of a joint desire to live together. Our country has been built by generation after generation of Canadians, and it deserves to remain united so that future generations may continue to benefit from the efforts and visions of the builders of this country.

• (1125)

[English]

We must focus our energies on building Canada, not on dividing it. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs recently told students at the faculty of law at the University of Ottawa:

Canada is not a perpetual constitutional dispute; it is a principle of caring, one of the greatest that humanity has invented—We must remain together and improve further this—generous federation that is our common achievement.

As we stated in the Speech from the Throne, the single most important commitment of the government is to keep Canada united. It is what we are committed to accomplishing through our

initiatives to clarify what would be at stake in the unilateral secession and to modernize our federation.

For all these reasons I cannot support Bill C-237.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is quite clear that no member of the Bloc Québécois can support a bill such as the one introduced by the Reform Party. Even though the government says it will not support this bill, that is in fact exactly what it is doing.

My remarks will be directed in equal measure at both parties and I will return to a few of the points made by the parliamentary secretary in his speech. I am surprised, moreover, that the minister, who is always right, is not here himself to speak on this topic so dear to his heart. He has been strangely silent for some weeks now.

I will begin with what the member for Okanagan—Shuswap said were his bill's objectives. He said that he wanted to describe the conditions that had to be met before a province could become sovereign, even pointing out that there was growing support for such a move in his own province, British Columbia. We all know perfectly well that there is a sort of race on between the Liberals and Reformers to see who can adopt the toughest policy towards Quebec and thus boost their political ratings.

Having seen the Liberals come out with a very hard-line Plan B, a reference to the Supreme Court, and flirt with partition, and not wanting to be left behind, the Reformers, with this bill, are now very clearly supporting all the partitionist actions in Quebec. Never has a political party gone so far. Liberal members must surely be amused to see their colleagues taking matters a little further than they have, although ultimately they are echoing the same sentiments. They have encouraged this discourse.

They say that their primary objective is to ascertain the real will of the public. They want to make certain that this will is clearly understood, clearly identified and clearly gauged, as though Quebecers were incapable of making their own decisions about their future, of determining if a given approach is clear and understandable.

These people claim that we are incapable of understanding what happened in the 1995 referendum because, if we had, so many of us would not have voted yes. This is the assumption behind everything they have done.

The Liberals are saying that they are going to look for a new way, and use the Supreme Court as an authority in deciding whether Quebecers exercised their judgement properly. The Reformers are saying that another way has to be found. Today, they have come up with two new approaches.

### *Private Members' Business*

It is the House of Commons that will determine in legislation whether the process was clear, whether it was acceptable, and whether people were properly informed. However, such determination will not be made only by the House of Commons, but also by another institution. Indeed, our dear senators will also determine whether the process was clear and understandable to all Quebecers. The first problem with this is that the government would have to first find and then repatriate the senators, so they could be in the Senate to review the issue. This alone would imply some rather extensive delays. Who knows, if a referendum were held during the winter, perhaps senators would hold their meetings in Mexico. This issue will have to be taken into consideration. As I said earlier, it is all a matter of finding out who is prepared to go the furthest.

However, the bill includes some positive elements, and I will mention them immediately, because there are very few.

There is a thought process currently taking place in Canada, particularly outside the Liberal Party and the Reform Party. That process concerns the possibilities of a partnership between Quebec and Canada. What kind of relationship will it be?

Even the Reformers' proposed legislation shows that a thought process is taking place on possible and eventual ties between Quebec and Canada. For the first time, Reformers do not question the fact that Quebec could use the Canadian dollar, otherwise they would obviously have mentioned it.

• (1130)

There was talk of the possibility of using some other Canadian instruments, but there is no longer any mention of the Canadian dollar, thus recognizing that sovereignists were right all along, as we already knew, along with most of the credible people who expressed their opinion on this issue.

Second, while the bill recognizes the democratic rule of 50% of the ballots plus one vote, its interpretation is very distorted, since it is based on electoral districts and not on the whole territory.

This means that, according to the logic of Reformers, I should no longer be here. Indeed, since my riding voted yes in the last referendum, it should be part of a sovereign Quebec made up of all the ridings that voted yes. Let me say in passing that this would be true for many regions in Quebec, including the riding of Sherbrooke and including the Prime Minister's riding. There would be a serious problem. The Prime Minister would no longer be in his present riding.

**An hon. member:** That would be fine.

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** That might just be fine, but there would be a serious problem.

*Private Members' Business*

The title of the bill was a step in the right direction, but there is a contradiction between its title and the bill itself. It is entitled "an act to provide for a national referendum to authorize the Government of Canada to negotiate terms of separation with a province that has voted for separation from Canada".

It refers to a province and not various regions, parts of territories, and so on. However, further on in the bill, the approach changes and becomes much more radical, like that of Guy Bertrand and other excited Quebecers who are in a lather over this issue, incited by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Now the Reform Party is giving it its full support.

One very negative aspect of this bill is that a federal party is not just flirting with those who favour partition for Quebec, but sleeping with them too.

As I said at the start of my remarks, what bothers me the most is all the baggage. The bill states the following at page 3:

(2) If a province holds a separation referendum and the Question is answered in the affirmative, the Senate and House of Commons shall determine whether

(a) the question that was put was a simple and direct question—

They are even going to decide whether a majority of people voted affirmatively in the riding. Do they know there is a chief electoral officer in Quebec? Do they know that elections and democratic exercises are governed by Quebec laws? Do my Reform colleagues know that? Where do they live?

**An hon. member:** They do not know anything.

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Our own laws deal with this. The quality of democratic exercises even serves as a standard around the world.

Do they know that we also have, on political party funding, something that will not be found here in this House? Do they know that the provisions of referendum legislation permit the yes and the no camps to spend about the same amount? Do they know that?

Do they know that, normally, people should not intervene in these referenda with money from Ottawa, which comes and meddles in a process where Quebecers are deciding their future? No. According to their rules, Quebec's future will be decided here in Ottawa, either by the supreme court, or the Liberals, the Reform members, Senate friends appointed by the Prime Minister. And we should say to Quebecers: "Don't worry, some wise people in Ottawa will take care of properly defining our future".

This is a bit too much, and we have had enough of all these approaches, of this race against the clock to determine who will play the hardest.

This morning, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs arrived with a series of highly partisan

polls. Did members notice that several of them were conducted on behalf of the Council for Canadian Unity?

Every one here knows what the Council for Canadian Unity is about, but perhaps not all our viewers do. This council's purpose is to ensure that Quebec will never be sovereign, to keep Canada as it is, in a permanent, unchangeable status quo. It is becoming a federal propaganda tool. They took a few elements of a poll and threw them in our face this morning.

But let us take a closer look at reality. Let us take a somewhat historical perspective. In the 1960s, I was not yet born, but from what I heard, there were a few sovereignists in Quebec. There was the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale. There were a few groups, and no one talked about a movement of over 10% of Quebecers. During the 1970s, a political party was born. At first, it was the Mouvement souveraineté-association, and then it became the Parti Québécois. Support began to increase, and soon reached 25 or 30%.

The first referendum, the first time where intentions were measured in a referendum was in 1980: 40% of the people said they were in favour of sovereignty, or in favour of giving the government a mandate to negotiate sovereignty and then come back before the people.

• (1135)

Later, in the 1980s, after this referendum was defeated, we were told there would be no more talk about sovereignty, it was over, archaic, and so on. Fifteen years later, we had another referendum and 49.5% of people voted yes.

If we look at it from a historical perspective, not according to some poll conducted yesterday or the day before yesterday, we see that Quebecers' willingness to take their destiny into their own hands is on the rise. Their number is increasing day after day, year after year. It is an irreversible trend, which explains why Reform MPs and Liberals alike are so panicky.

Since I have only 30 seconds left, I want to say this to members of the government party and Reform MPs: our desire to choose and decide our own future is not negotiable. Whether they like it or not, Quebecers are going to choose their own future. They said it very clearly. Our specialist on polls should look at those conducted in February, during the reference to the supreme court; they show that over 80% of people think it is for them to decide, not the court, not the Reform Party, not the Liberal Party, and certainly not the Senate.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member from Okanagan—Shuswap.



*Private Members' Business*

I have had a chance to look over the bill. It seems what we have wrapped up in the bill and in the member's comments is a unique combination of all the various complaints the member and his party have about Confederation and about the nature of the country.

There are positions in the bill reflecting the Reform Party's position on the Senate and on free votes. In the member's speech we heard about land claims and about B.C. separatism. The member has made it very difficult for people to support elements of what he said and elements of the bill because it carries so much baggage with respect to a whole lot of other matters. Clearly it carries a lot of political baggage in terms of what the member had to say when he was speaking in defence of the bill.

I am not sure, having read things over, whether this is to be a referendum before the government negotiates terms of separation or whether what the government negotiates would be put to a national referendum. It appears to have elements of both. It is not clear exactly where this referendum would take place. This is one of the problems with the bill.

One does not want to speak in principle against the notion that any significant constitutional change might in certain circumstances be put to a referendum. Certainly after the experience of the Charlottetown accord where Canadians had their first experience in voting in a referendum on constitutional change it would be very hard not to have significant constitutional change in the future without Canadians participating in that way. Whether one thought that was advisable or a tradition that should have developed, this is a tradition that has developed. It would be very difficult for the government to do otherwise.

I am not sure the bill is the mechanism by which that might be achieved. It is not a votable bill. If it were it would go to committee and there would be an opportunity to do some work on this sort of thing. Clearly the member seems to be saying, and I think a lot of people would agree, there is work to be done on this.

I sense a contradiction between what the member is saying now and what I understood his party to be saying in an earlier debate in the House. They were uncritically supportive of the view that the supreme court is going to figure all these things out. The government is being more consistent, not necessarily right, in opposing the member's bill. The member to some extent speaks for his party. However, this is Private Members' Business so I cannot assume that. Maybe he is only speaking for himself in this respect. But he supported his party's position and seems to be saying this is a matter for the courts in so far as support for the supreme court reference. On the other hand he is saying we should have legislation to deal with this.

• (1140)

I am not sure where the referendum comes in but I find it hard to imagine a situation in which a government, having negotiated

reasonable terms of separation with a separating province, would have to go to a national referendum, knowing what I know about politics. Even if a very good arrangement had been negotiated, it would be very difficult to put such an arrangement to a referendum because there would always be someone or some group of persons who might be able to point to something in the negotiated settlement that would threaten to scuttle it.

It is in that sense that I ask the member a question. In a theoretical way is he, in creating a process whereby secession or separation as he is suggesting in this bill, not guaranteeing that a separating province would eventually be driven to a unilateral declaration of independence? Would this bill not set up a process that would make it almost impossible for any agreement, not to be reached, but to be approved?

I also find it very disturbing that the member would talk about the spectre of separatism in British Columbia. It is well and good to talk about alienation, anger and legitimate grievances. Many of the things the member spoke about I can certainly understand and share his feelings.

The case needs to be made, and many people are making it, that this country needs more attention paid to what is going on in western Canada, particularly in B.C. Our media has central Canadian glasses on. This has been aggravated by the regionalism of this parliament. The fact that the government is almost entirely from central Canada does not help.

However, this is something all the political parties have to address. To the extent that as political parties we try to build our political fortunes on regional alienation, we contribute to the problem. There is a bit of a conundrum. On the one hand we want to give voice to the anger in our regions but we do not want to represent it in such a way as to contribute to the fragmentation of the country. It is part of the art of politics and something that has to be done as well as can be.

Finally, the parliamentary secretary talked about Canada being a generous federation. I agree that if Canada were a generous federation it would be more worthy of being kept unified. I also agree that Canada has been a generous federation. However, I would argue that one of the things that threatens this country now as much as any determination on the part of my Bloc Quebecois colleagues or the PQ government in Quebec or anything like that is the breakdown of the social democratic consensus that existed in this country from the 1940s through to the 1980s.

The breakdown of that by a variety of forces, circumstances and policies adopted by this government and previous governments is every bit as much a threat to Confederation as anything being put forward by separatists, although obviously they are much more clearly a threat at the political and symbolic level. I am saying that at the social and economic level there is this other threat to

*Private Members' Business*

Canadians' sense of themselves as being part of a caring community that they feel is worth defending and that many Quebecers might feel is worth continuing to be a part of.

• (1145)

I think of the cutbacks the federal government has been responsible for in terms of federal transfer payments to the provinces. The federal government is now only paying something like 15% or 20% on medicare and perhaps it is as low as 10% depending on the figures that we believe. When it comes to the cost of health care I do not know how any member on the other side has the nerve to talk about this being a generous federation.

We see what this government has done in terms of unilateral secession. We talk about unilateral secession. There is unilateral federal withdrawal from cost shared programs, from programs which in some senses were initially imposed on the provinces and certainly were initiated by the federal government. It is something which we supported and still do. But if we are going to continue to have those programs then we have to restore much fuller federal participation in those programs. Government members cannot get up day after day—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am afraid I must interrupt the hon. member. Time has run out.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to speak briefly to Bill C-237 introduced by the Reform Party member. Having listened to him, I think that the member is experiencing major frustration. I urge him to carry out a rapid consultation and do something positive for the country, not something negative, as he is with Bill C-237.

What is surprising in this bill—once again we see the dichotomy of the Reform Party—is that there is recognition for a referendum in Quebec or in the other provinces while, in February, indignant Reformers said that they did not recognize the right of the people of Quebec to decide their own future. In Bill C-237, they say that now they have the right. Once again, we see that the Reform Party is inconsistent and never on the same wavelength as the rest of the country. We will see this in the next election.

What is surprising about Bill C-237 is that it is a negative bill. It sets out on paper the Reform Party's position on how to legally split up the country. It is the same with the Liberal government opposite. They want to establish standards on how to carve up the country, taking matters to such an extreme that there is now a criterion involving gauging results riding by riding. This is unprecedented.

They say that Quebec, British Columbia, or any other province, has the right to consult its population as to whether it wishes to remain in the country, but the bill goes further than that. It does not say that the province has to be the one consulting. It says "a referendum or question put to the electors", meaning that a riding dissatisfied with its lot in the country can decide to change country. That is what is idiotic about the bill.

It makes no sense. They are saying that it is possible to divide Canada, tear it apart, divide provinces, and they are no longer necessarily limiting this partition to a country or a province, but are now talking about regions. This is nonsense.

In this bill, if the aboriginal peoples decide to change country, no province or parliament can stand in their way. All that can be done is to hold a national referendum to set the rules. If the James Bay Cree decide to join the United States, they will be able to do so easily with this bill. No legislation or supreme court reference can prevent them.

What this bill does is to give the country's regions, rather than its provinces, the right to fight with each other and to split off. This goes so far that it makes no sense. What we have here is a pizza parliament. Given the frustration of the Reform member and of other parties in the country, if such a bill were to be passed, we could be looking at a "puzzle Canada", with discontinuous stretches of country here and there. That is what Bill C-237 is about.

• (1150)

Constitutional stupidity goes that far. It is totally crazy. I can understand the Reform Party, though. They will never be in government in this country, united as it is today, so they say: "We are going to collect bits of ridings here and there across the country and make ourselves a little republic of our own". That is what Bill C-237 is about.

If the member had anything else in mind, he should have consulted the other parties, taken a look at what has been happening in Parliament in recent years and been more positive in his approach.

The principle of ridings goes far beyond that. If we support a national referendum, we must apply the same rule to ridings. What would happen if Quebec or, say, Prince Edward Island decided to separate? A national referendum would be held to put the terms of the separation to the people of Canada. What would happen if Quebec ridings voted no? It does not wash.

Can we not talk positively about the country and stop trying to sour relations? I want to say something, with much respect for my Bloc friends. They are my Quebec colleagues. There are, however, two separatist parties in this House. One is French speaking, the other, English speaking. That is the reality of this Parliament. We

are going to have to give priority to the things that count, like putting bread and butter on the table.

The Reform member is right about one thing. There are indeed problems in certain parts of the country. I agree with him. However, why waste our time introducing twisted legislation and telling the Supreme Court and the whole world that regions can separate? There is no support for the big bad separatists in Quebec. But there is also a secessionist movement in British Columbia.

Talk about the country is negative. The most negative thing about this country is that there are people who cannot make ends meet. Some people are poor and dying of hunger. All the Reform Party wants is to introduce bills to blow the country apart. This is the way to resolve a lot of problems.

What we say is that there should be a more positive approach in this Parliament. Members should stop trying to dragooon people into their movement and introducing bills proposing ways to break up the country. That is bunk. A country is not a marriage. The difference between a constitution and a marriage contract is that the marriage contract sets out the conditions for divorce. A constitution makes no such mention.

So, the idea is to include in a constitution the rules that would apply in case of a divorce. But a constitution is not a marriage contract. The bill goes too far. We favour a constructive approach. If they wanted, Reformers could do the same.

Someone close to the Reform Party listed 10 reasons why Quebecers should vote yes in a future referendum. His approach was somewhat sarcastic. Reformers are constantly adding fuel to the fire. The Liberal Party has failed to try to put out the fire. But again today, the Reform Party is trying to add fuel to the fire. This must stop. The best way to destroy a country is to introduce legislation such as Bill C-237.

Where in this bill is the will to maintain a united country? There is no such will. This is the Reform Party's approach. The Liberal Party does not fare much better. There are other problems. Again, Parliament will have to start discussing positive things.

It is true that the government does not introduce a lot of bills. It hides from the public a surplus of \$6 or \$7 billion in this year's budget, because Liberal ministers want to spend this money, and I can understand that.

But why not talk about positive things to promote the common good of Canadians and Quebecers, instead of telling people in some regions of Quebec, such as Montreal Island "If you vote no in a referendum, you will remain with us"?

On the other hand, the democratic nature of the vote is recognized. The Reform Party was in favour of the recall. The whole

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democratic issue is important. We must have an elected Senate, we must do this and that.

• (1155)

Reformers want to ensure the constitutional issue is recognized in Quebec. They want to ensure Canada is divided. They talk about partition in Canada. They do not recognize the Quebec province as a whole any more. They take what they need and let go of the rest. This is what Bill C-237 is about, this is what the Reform Party is about. It is a separatist party.

If they want to have the opportunity to change their label, they should introduce far more positive bills: hold a hand out to British Columbians, to Quebecers. They know that from history.

They should come and visit Quebec. I invite them to do so. There are also regional frustrations in that province. In my riding, there are regional frustrations, but one thing is clear: we want to work positively to improve this country and Quebec. People should stop saying it is always Ottawa's fault. We must take our future into our own hands.

There remains a credible alternative to this government and to the constitutional issue, and it is here in this corner of the House.

[English]

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, to summarize, we have heard a bit about this bill, but more on partisan politics from a number of parties in this House.

I would like to remind members, especially the separatists, that when they talk about sovereignty they play the politically correct game. They tone it down to try to confuse the people in this country. Let us understand that what they actually mean is separation, not sovereignty association.

I also address the Conservative Party in the House. We got into this mess because of two parties basically. We are here today because of the Liberal government and the Conservative government. I remind the Conservative members exactly where Mr. Bouchard came from. He came right out of their ranks, straight from the Conservative Party. They should remember that.

We get fed up with the political correctness some people say we have to operate under, that we should not bring these types of bills before the House and to leave it up to the Senate to make the decision. I have great concerns about that. This is supposed to be the highest political office in the land. When we do not have the intestinal fortitude to take these problems face on and come up with answers to these questions, then we are in a sorry state in this country, when we back down from problems like this instead of facing them and trying to use them for other reasons.

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I would like to repeat what Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow said the other day. He warned the federal government last week at the annual meeting of the Council for Canadian Unity that it needs to take provincial demands much more seriously than it now seems to be doing. It must continue to rebalance the federation.

At the unity conference the results of a CROP poll conducted earlier in April were announced. It stresses my point. In Quebec 75% described themselves as being very attached or somewhat attached to Canada. The poll showed that many Quebecers remain confused about what separation from Canada would mean. Thirty-seven per cent of those polled in Quebec said that Quebec sovereignty and an economic partnership with Canada would not mean that Quebec would leave Canada and become an independent country. This is in Quebec. Twenty-nine per cent said Quebec would still elect MPs to go to Ottawa; 39% said Quebecers would keep Canadian citizenship; and 36% said Quebec would still be a Canadian province.

It is time that this place put the rules in place of exactly what we are talking about when provinces and people want to talk about separation. Let us come here and do the job we were elected to do. Let us clear this confusion up and get this settled instead of it costing us millions and millions of dollars every year on the same issue. Let us put some rules in place for a change. Let us do our job.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. The order is dropped from the Order Paper.

Orders of the day.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[English]

### CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1998

The House resumed from April 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I think you would find unanimous consent to allow the ministers to speak in this debate later today for the normal time of 20 minutes for speeches and 10 minutes for questions and comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill C-32, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The Reform Party has always supported the concept that all Canadians deserve to live in a clean and healthy environment. The key to protecting our environment is to ensure a co-operative attitude. Without co-operation no piece of legislation will achieve its purpose.

In order for environmental goals and targets to be met it is essential that an open dialogue representing social, scientific, technical and economic considerations be held. The successful development of any project requires consideration for all these aspects.

It is important that we never lose sight of the role played by public consultation and participation. With the recent signing of the environmental harmonization accord the time has come for all levels of government to work with each other to ensure that environmental issues receive top consideration.

In 1988 when the original Canadian Environmental Protection Act came into force, now simply referred to as CEPA, the goal of the legislation was to protect the environment and in turn protect human health.

CEPA intended to fill regulatory gaps where they existed in the legislative framework with particular attention being paid to the issue of toxic substances, when and if to ban them and how harmful they can be to our health and our environment.

CEPA has also played an international role. Canada has always tried to play an important role in the international arena and whenever international environmental treaties are signed, international obligations ensue.

This piece of legislation touches and affects several acts, including the environmental contaminants act, the oceans dumping control act and the clean air act. The legislative review that began last parliament was part of a mandatory review of the administration of this act. The review resulted in the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's holding hearings which resulted in a report of recommendations.

The old bill, Bill C-74, died on the order paper and never made it through the House, the reasons for which I will delve into briefly. Now a revamped version has been tabled under Bill C-32.

This rather extensive piece of legislation, 230 pages in all, provides measures for the protection of environment and human health as well as pollution prevention. Other sections deal with the

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management of toxic substances, the virtual elimination of releases of substances determined to be the most dangerous, and the partnerships needed to achieve the highest level of environmental quality. This last section is particularly important because without strong co-operation between varying levels of government, science, industry and environmental sectors no amount of legislation will safeguard our land, keep it in good health and preserve it for our children and their children to enjoy.

Among the changes made to CEPA, Bill C-32 includes the provision to implement pollution prevention, new procedures for the investigation and assessment of substances and new requirements for toxicity assessments, new provisions respecting fuels, international air and water pollution, motor emissions, federal and aboriginal land protection, the proper disposal of wastes and other matters at sea and the safer export and import of waste.

Should Bill C-32 be enacted it will provide for the gathering of information for research and the creation of inventories of data, the publishing of objectives, guidelines and codes of practice, new powers for inspectors, investigators and laboratory analysis, many environmental protection alternative measures as well as civil suit action guidelines.

The differences between the old bill and Bill C-32 are not overwhelming.

• (1205)

Bill C-32 contains minor amendments that appear to work in favour of the bill. That is not to say the bill has no shortcomings.

However, these concerns can and must be addressed by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. One area of concern lies with the issue of jurisdiction.

Looking to the Constitution for help in this matter is fruitless. Environmental jurisdiction is not definite in the Constitution.

For years now much duplication and overlap between different levels of government have left us with the relatively ineffective system in dire need of fine tuned co-operation.

Since the 1980s environmental protection has been expanded at the federal and provincial levels. The result has been a great deal of tension between the provinces and the federal government that has been taken to the highest courts in this land.

Last September the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Ottawa has a right to enact legislation to protect the environment. However, the supreme court also made special note that the federal government was not to take this as a *carte blanche* to run all over the existing provincially run areas of the environment.

This holds true with an important aspect of Reform principles. Very often some government affairs are best carried out at a closer level to the people of this nation.

While it is true that environmental issues transcend man made boundaries, if the provinces are properly carrying out their environmental duties, there is no reason for the federal government to interfere.

Federal-provincial co-operation is essential to ensuring that environmental policies are carried through. If the recent signing of the harmonization accord between the federal and provincial environment ministers is any indication, perhaps we are well on our way to ensuring a partnership rather than an adversarial approach to environmental protection.

The resources required to adequately protect our environment and consequently our health are vast. Clearly such a huge task should be shared by all levels of government.

I would like to emphasize and take this opportunity to mention municipal involvement. Municipal levels of government are closest to the people.

Canadians deal with their local city councils on almost a daily basis and we should encourage grassroots participation in safeguarding our environment.

Getting back to the problems between federal and provincial jurisdictions over the environment, a clear understanding must be achieved in order to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication.

Reform blue book policy clearly supports the establishment of clear federal-provincial jurisdiction over environmental matters.

It is important to keep in mind that every dollar saved in the administration of the environment would be better spent toward such areas as pollution prevention, viable alternative energy systems and waste management, to name a few.

Bill C-32 contains some amendments requiring co-operation between the federal and provincial governments in an attempt to show support for the harmonization accord signed in St. John's, Newfoundland earlier this year.

CEPA's preamble sets out a shared responsibility for the environment. Here is an important step toward true harmonization and cost effective environmental protection.

This alone, however, hardly is enough. It is imperative that CEPA spell out that the government will discharge its responsibilities by working co-operatively under the federal-provincial-territorial Canadian-wide accord and subagreements on environmental harmonization as agreed to in principle by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

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Safeguards are in place to ensure that no one province steers the direction of the federal government vis-à-vis any international treaties. The federal government must be cognizant that many international treaties will require provincial implementation and that provinces should be able to take part in any implementation strategies.

Bill C-32 empowers the minister with the control of the movement of non-hazardous solid waste to or from the United States. Usually waste management falls under provincial jurisdiction and this is one area that could cause tensions between federal and provincial levels of power.

This is one section that may need to be reworked. In the area of accountability, it is interesting to note that CEPA allows for the creation of a national advisory committee. Unfortunately the committee structure compromises its accountability to Canadians.

The members of the national advisory committee are appointed by the minister without any provincial involvement, and this is not acceptable.

The lack of accountability may cause this committee to act as a political vehicle to promote the minister's agenda rather than a national vehicle to ensure provinces and territories are fairly represented in the decision making process.

This brings me back to my first point, the importance of a fair and open consultation process for the public, especially in the development of regulations and additions of new substances. Reform has always supported the principle of grassroots participation. We are dedicated to public consultation and policy development, especially when we are dealing with an issue that knows no boundaries such as the environment.

• (1210)

Eventually we all eat from the same earth, drink from the same water and breathe the same air. In short, we are all in this together, so the best way is a co-operative way because we are all affected by the environment in one way or another.

I am not impressed with the lack of formal consultation processes in CEPA. During the last parliamentary session over 100 concerns were raised regarding CEPA and there are still areas of concern that need to be addressed especially in the area of consultation.

For example, Bill C-32 needs to ensure that all draft regulations and guidelines are released for public comment 60 days before the minister formally releases the assessment. It is unfortunate that too much is left to the minister's discretion.

Another example of this is the environmental registry. Access to the registry should be open and the form should be clearly announced. Bill C-32 leaves all this at the minister's discretion. This secrecy is not justifiable.

Another questionable issue is the lack of requirement to print the final text of all agreements in the *Canada Gazette*. I am unclear as to why this is not a required practice. I ask that the minister allow all final texts be published in full and easily accessed through the Internet.

One more area of concern is the lack of adequate time given to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development to review proposed administrative and equivalency agreements. As a member of this committee I have twice witnessed the fast track approach taken by the environment minister, once to push through the harmonization accord and second to pull together a very last minute and rather hasty position on Kyoto.

Now more than ever Canadians are fed up with the old way of doing business. Canadians are demanding accountability from their government. I remind the environment minister that this means no more dealings behind closed doors. Canadians want transparency when it comes to conducting business dealings.

One more area required for sound policy decision making is reliance on sound scientific principles. It is imperative that legislation reflect the right choices to protect our environment and not for political gain, as has been the case. CEPA and many decisions made under this legislation need to be supported by sound scientific study.

One area where the old bill has serious problems rests with the minister's ability to bypass section 65 and overlook the requirements set out in the risk assessment determination on toxic substances.

I am quite certain Canadians would not be impressed to find out this bill gives the environment minister unlimited powers to bypass science in her decision making. This is one of the critical reasons Reform, environmentalists, industry and many Canadians cannot support this bill. Perhaps this was one of the reasons for its demise in the last parliament. Further study will be required to assess whether the unlimited powers section has been properly addressed.

It is odd that the word toxic is not defined in Bill C-32's preamble considering there is an entire section devoted to controlling toxic substances. This section may allow substances to be defined as toxic without the necessary scientific evidence needed to prove toxicity.

It is rather frightening to think this may be yet another section giving the minister or parliament authority the ability to arbitrarily ban substances.

Another concern is the provisions to provide for toxic assessment consultation fail to require that qualified experts from government, academia and industry are full partners in the assessment process.

Another controversial section of the bill is the national ban on substances banned in other provinces or industrialized countries.

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Such a policy could abandon risk assessment as a basis for prioritization and chemical control when it is the standard accepted internationally and by the science community.

This policy could also undermine the necessity of requiring a science basis for decisions. It is critical that the role of science be clarified so that science forms the basis of decisions made under CEPA. This needs to be spelled out clearly.

Another key issue is enforcement which is critical to environment policy. The Reform Party has many clear positions on enforcement. Reform blue book policy clearly supports the principle that the polluter should pay for its pollution controls and that this be stringently enforced in an unbiased manner and that penalties be severe enough so polluters will not consider them a licence fee to pollute.

Reform also supports fines and jail sentences for officers and executives of companies violating environmental laws.

• (1215)

The biggest problem with CEPA is its lack of enforcement. When CEPA was proclaimed 10 years ago the Conservative government bragged that it introduced the toughest environmental law in the western hemisphere. Yet this has proven to be quite the exaggeration.

One of the principal concerns regarding this act is inadequate funding for enforcement. The department simply does not have the resources to ensure that the requirements of the act are fulfilled. The environment department has had almost two-thirds of its budget slashed since the Liberals came to power. No matter how tough the minister makes the act it will make no difference unless the department has the resources to enforce the legislation.

What must be emphasized more than enforcement is the operative word compliance. It is always better to follow the carrot over the stick approach. A law must have the capacity to enforce its regulations. Yet it will be more effective if it can deter individuals from breaking the law or, better yet, if it can encourage individuals to follow the law.

Other areas of enforcement contained in Bill C-32 also need to be examined and possibly amended for improvement. For example, the right to sue provisions contained within the bill may be improved if amended so that the government is made a mandatory party to any suit.

Whistleblower protection contained in the legislation may also require expansion to include whistleblower protection for workers who report breaches of the law and bad environmental practice not just to inspectors but to the public and through the media. Pollution

is a public issue and workers should have the right to publicize it without fear of sanctions.

Despite the many needed areas of improvement, some of the other improvements to Bill C-74, which is now Bill C-32, include improved time lines for adding new substances that have been assessed and added to the domestic substance list. Pollution prevention planning guidelines have been further developed in the new bill. Recognition of voluntary instruments has also been added.

Section 51 has been amended to ensure that pollution prevention virtual elimination and environmental emergency plans can only be required by the minister for substances that are on the list of toxic substances.

Greater flexibility has been provided in the preparation of pollution prevention plans to keep with the policy objective that the plan does not become akin to excessive regulatory burden.

Many changes have been made to Bill C-32, formerly Bill C-74, to make it more acceptable to the public. There are still areas of concern that need to be worked out. Canadians have waited a long time for the government to pass meaningful realistic environmental legislation.

Especially after the fiasco with Kyoto, I am hoping to see our government get away from its empty rhetoric and destructive political agendas and move toward something more realistic and acceptable to Canadians that will truly benefit our environment. I hope we never again have to witness such an embarrassment as the lack of formal consultation and the lack of an implementation strategy prior to set targets like we did with Kyoto.

On a more positive note it appears that there has been sufficient progress with Bill C-32 to make it a plausible alternative to the existing legislation. Depending on further analysis of the bill, as long as the progress made on the bill is not lost in committee and some revisions are made to tighten it up there is a good chance the official opposition may support the bill.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Lethbridge on his thorough review of Bill C-32 and for his commitment to the pollution pay principle as well for the way he stressed the importance of enforcement.

At the beginning of his speech the hon. member for Lethbridge made reference to one specific section, which I was not able to take note of quickly enough, that in his words needs to be reworked. I wonder whether he could perhaps amplify on that part of his intervention.

Also the hon. member for Lethbridge spoke about the importance of sound science and the desirability of spelling out the role of science. I would be interested in knowing how he would propose to spell it out within the context of the proposed Bill C-32.

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**Mr. Rick Casson:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the chairman of the environment committee, for being here to listen and to pose some questions.

• (1220)

When we are talking about science we have to be sure that we consult with the scientific and academic communities on all issues to get a good cross-section of existing science. We did this somewhat with Kotow at the environment committee, as the member knows. The best people from across Canada came to explain what they felt was the situation. There were people speaking for and against the position the government was taking.

We have to make sure that grassroot Canadians, the scientific community and industry all have an opportunity for input to assess and debate the science the government is using to base its positions on.

We should open up the debate to make sure we are looking at all angles, to make sure it is an open-minded discussion and not a preconceived look at science by the government. Indeed all areas of concern should be brought before us.

One of the problems we saw in the past on the environment committee when we dealt with Kotow was that some people told us global warming was not happening, although the majority said it was.

We have to take all that information and put it together in a position that would force the government to have a better look at it and maybe come at it from a couple of different angles to ensure that what gets put into legislation is indeed the science that community is putting forth.

**Hon. Charles Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the member for Lethbridge. In his speech he made reference to the discretionary powers given to the minister, indicating that he found these powers to be too wide.

Is the member for Lethbridge in a position to indicate in which way he would propose to reduce the scope of the discretionary powers of the minister in Bill C-32?

**Mr. Rick Casson:** Mr. Speaker, one of the areas in the bill where we would like to see some change made is the proposal to put in place an advisory committee. Members from the provinces, the aboriginal communities and the departments of the environment and health will sit on it. However, from what we can read in the bill the minister will appoint these people.

One way to ensure membership of the advisory committee and possibly others who will be reporting to the minister is to allow the provinces to appoint the members who will be sitting on the committee reporting to the Minister of the Environment. If we do

that we would somewhat get away from the fact that the minister could appoint some members to the committee who are favourable to the government position.

We want a little more accountability so that the provinces would be interested in taking part and being able to put forward their best person instead of the minister appointing the entire advisory committee.

**Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a feeling of pride that I join in the debate on Bill C-32, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The tabling of the bill on March 12 fulfilled an important election commitment as referenced in our platform document "Creating Opportunity". As we promised in the Speech from the Throne last fall, the health minister, the co-sponsor of the legislation, and I are taking another step in protecting the health of our children.

As members know, the legislation was a long time in the making from the excellent work of the standing committee in 1995 through to the government's response in Bill C-74 and now in Bill C-32.

The committee's intent and the government follow-through has been consistent: renew and improve the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to better protect the health of our children and grandchildren from the threat posed by toxic substances.

• (1225)

When I was appointed minister of the environment in June 1997, I chose to concentrate my efforts on four priority areas that would bring Canadians a cleaner and healthier environment in the next century. The priorities are clean air, clean water, conservation of nature and meeting our Kyoto commitments on climate change. These are not just my priorities. I believe they represent the wishes of each and every member of the House and the Canadians we all serve.

I and Canadians need tools to reach our goals. We need faster action to reduce the threat from toxic substances. Canadians want more information and a voice in environmental protection. Business wants a predictable framework in which to operate as green industries that prosper economically.

The renewed and strengthened Canadian Environmental Protection Act responds to those needs and demonstrates leadership by providing Canadians with the tools they want and need for environmental protection.

The current CEPA has supported significant achievements. Under the current act Canadians have achieved concrete environmental improvements including the reduction of specific toxins



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such as dioxins, furans and PCBs. We have taken action on known carcinogens such as benzene in gasoline.

As well in recent weeks I have announced a series of initiatives that would better protect human health, give Canadians cleaner air and water, protect nature and meet our climate change objectives.

Among them are, first, an intergovernmental agreement last Friday in Toronto to implement early action and to develop a national implementation strategy to ensure that Canada meets its climate change goal; second, improvements to the air we breathe through the reduction of up to 85% of emissions of particulate matter and toxic metals such as arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury from heavy oil and coal fired plants by 2003; and, third, by presenting Canadians with options to reduce sulphur in gasoline which causes respiratory ailments in our children and the elderly. The government will announce this fall the new sulphur level for gasoline which will bring about cleaner air. Fourth, Canada was the first country to ratify the 1997 amendments to the Montreal protocol which shows our dedication to reducing methyl bromide, one more substance which depletes the earth's protective ozone layer.

I have been able to take these actions by using the current legislation but more needs to be done. Our environmental problems are becoming more complicated. We need new modernized legislation to deal with emerging issues and to integrate new solutions. Pollution prevention and the ecosystem approaches to sustainable development must be incorporated into legislation.

The proposed act before the House of Commons reflects the greater understanding, giving us new tools to protect our health and the environment. It tackles toxic substances and puts the most dangerous ones on the path to virtual elimination. Strengthened legislation for toxics is crucial to clean our air and our water and to protect our health.

*[Translation]*

Under the renewed legislation, pollution prevention will become a national objective. When the original act was enacted, most of the environmental protection efforts focused on pollution management through last-resort solutions.

We must, however, prevent pollution and not worry about it once there has been a leak, a spill or harmful emissions.

Toxic substances affect the health of Canadians. PCBs and other harmful substances have been found in the breast milk of mothers in the Arctic. Urban smog makes our children sick, the number of children hospitalized for asthma having increased by 27% for boys and 18% for girls. According to Health Canada, one person dies every day from air pollution in the greater Toronto area.

• (1230)

*[English]*

The renewed legislation will control air pollution, including urban smog, more effectively. Among other things it will allow for regulations requiring cleaner fuels and tougher emissions standards for new motor vehicles. In addition, for the first time, the federal government will be able to set emissions standards for other types of engines such as those used in lawn mowers and off road vehicles. Getting toxics out of the environment will mean cleaner air.

Clean water is also an objective of the legislation. Canada borders on three of the world's oceans. We are also stewards of 9% of the world's available freshwater. These are enormous responsibilities, ones which I do not take lightly.

The new Canadian Environmental Protection Act will provide a means to help fulfil our stewardship responsibility and to meet our goal of cleaner water for Canadians. It puts in place a process for quicker assessment of toxic substances to identify those that need to be eliminated or controlled, together with strict deadlines for action.

We know that pollution does not respect borders. Whether toxics reach our waters in effluent or are transported by air, getting them out of our environment will mean cleaner water. New provisions in the act will provide a framework to take action on Canadian sources of water pollution that affect both our country and other countries.

We know our wildlife is being poisoned by toxic substances in our air, land and water. Last summer I saw for myself the effect mercury poisoning is having on loons in Nova Scotia. I want an environment safe for loons and all other species, including human beings.

The renewed Canadian Environmental Protection Act will put in place an ecosystem approach that recognizes the fact that all components of the environment are interdependent. It means we have to look at the whole picture and make the link between our actions and their effects on nature and us.

That is only a brief description of how the renewed Canadian Environmental Protection Act will help to make our air and water clean and preserve nature. In all cases the new act will focus on preventing pollution before it is created. It will shift the focus from cleaning up toxics to stopping them from getting into the environment in the first place.

The environment is a shared legacy. It is beyond the ability of any person, industry or government to solve environmental problems on their own. We not only need to continue co-operative international efforts but we need to build and continue domestic partnerships in order to achieve success. This includes partnership

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with the provinces, territories and municipalities and of equal importance, partnership with business and industry.

Business and industry are the ones with the tools and the know how to stop pollution and toxics from entering our environment. In addition to protecting the environment, pollution prevention is good for the bottom line. Ford Canada knows this. Its St. Thomas, Ontario assembly plant now uses 27 million fewer gallons of water and has reduced paint sludge by 500,000 pounds each year saving the company \$275,000 annually.

[*Translation*]

Good regulations promote innovation. Canadians and Canadian businesses just proved it. The new Canadian Environmental Protection Act will further stimulate innovation, helping our businesses to maintain their status as world leaders in the development of environmental protection techniques.

These businesses have been able to meet the challenge because they viewed it as an opportunity not only to make profits but also to become good corporate citizens who are aware of their social responsibilities within the community.

[*English*]

Business leaders want a clean environment just as much as we do. Some are members of ARET, the accelerated reduction and elimination of toxics program. These members reported recently that in 1996 emissions of a number of toxic substances such as zinc, benzene, lead and copper were reduced by over 5,000 tonnes, a decrease of 27% from 1995 emission levels.

• (1235 )

The 152 member companies of ARET are implementing the process changes and other measures to reduce these toxic substances voluntarily. They recognize that voluntary action can work with a regulatory regime such as provided by the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Businesses have told us that they want predictable regulations which protect the environment yet still allow for growth and prosperity. That is exactly what they are getting. In addition the renewed act provides many opportunities for consultations as measures are developed. When businesses clearly understand what the law demands of them, they can plan more effectively. This ensures a higher rate of compliance. Together we will put to rest the myth that good environmentalism precludes economic growth. The two are in fact mutually supportive.

For businesses that will not live up to their end of the partnership, the renewed act has strengthened the enforcement arm of the new legislation. We have expanded the powers of officials who are charged with enforcing the act.

Officials will have the ability to issue on the spot orders to stop illegal activity or to require action to correct a violation to protect the environment and public safety. They will be able to use environmental protection alternative measures to provide corrective action and penalties without the need to proceed with a lengthy court case. There will be a new sentencing criteria to guide the courts to take into account such things as remediation costs for damage.

We know that environmental problems respect no boundaries, provincial or federal. Their causes and solutions are rarely found within the borders of one jurisdiction. Tackling these issues requires action at local, regional, national and global levels.

[*Translation*]

Positive results will best be achieved by governments working together. This way, we can plug any holes in environmental protection and more effectively meet the challenges that the environment poses to the community.

We have learned from past collaborative efforts with the provinces that, on environmental issues, the best results are achieved through intergovernmental co-operation.

Through partnerships between governments, significant improvements were made in areas such as acid rain and ozone depletion. This renewed legislation is based on this reality and provides a framework for co-operation between the federal and provincial governments.

[*English*]

This legislation is not, as some have said, a federal retreat from environmental protection. It is consistent with the harmonization accord I signed with the provinces last January. I remind members that harmonization is about working together to achieve the highest national standards. The federal government has not given up its authority to act. The renewed Canadian Environmental Protection Act is proof of that.

Finally we come to the reason we are protecting the environment in the first place, the Canadian public. Canadians are telling me they are worried about the effects of pollution on their health and the health of their children. Nine out of 10 Canadians are worried about the effects that environmental problems are having on their children and grandchildren.

Greater public participation is key to protecting the environment. Canadians want to be part of the solution. They want more power to influence environmental decisions and stronger measures to ensure a legacy of clean air and clean water. The renewed act responds to their demands. It provides Canadians with more information giving them the tools to act in their communities.

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One of the ways that we will do this is through the environmental registry. The registry will provide comprehensive information on regulations and decisions made under the legislation. In addition, the national pollutant release inventory, an accounting of the releases of 176 pollutants from all significant sources, will continue to provide Canadians with information about the toxics in their communities. Under a new Canadian Environmental Protection Act this program would become a legal commitment for the government in an effort to provide Canadians with as much information as possible.

• (1240)

The current act safeguards the confidentiality of persons who voluntarily report illegal releases of substances. The new act expands this protection to cover all violations and protects federally regulated employees from discipline, dismissal or harassment for reporting violations in the workplace. In addition, to ensure the government does its job, Canadians will be given the right to sue if the government does not enforce the Canadian Environmental Protection Act where significant harm to the environment has occurred.

I stand firmly behind the renewed Canadian Environmental Protection Act not only because we committed to it in the red book, not only because I believe it is what Canadians want, but most importantly because it will protect the environment and the health of Canadians.

One day when my grandchildren ask me what I did, I want to tell them that I worked to ensure that the environment I left them was clean or cleaner than the one my grandparents left to me. I want them to be able to tell their grandchildren that the Canadian government and I had their health and their legacy in mind when we passed this renewed legislation.

This legislation and this portfolio is particularly timely for me. As I look forward to the birth of a new grandchild I want to be proud of the environmental legacy I pass on.

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her presentation and for being here today and for giving me the opportunity to bring up one of the points I made, which is the national advisory council.

As I read the legislation, and perhaps she can define it for me, it indicates she will be appointing all the members to the council. Would the minister allow the provinces to appoint them so that we could truly get a national scope to that council?

Also, is there going to be more responsibility for the municipal governments in Canada?

The minister mentioned stewardship and the fact that Canadians are good stewards of the environment. Will the minister be putting the concerns or the value of stewardship of the land in the upcoming legislation on endangered species? We know that we have stewards of the land across Canada who take very good care of it. Hopefully the value of proper stewardship will be reflected in that legislation as well.

**Hon. Christine Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the national advisory council, this is federal legislation and therefore the federal government appoints. The legislation will be going to committee. Certainly I am interested in listening to comments committee members will make in terms of how those appointments might be made for recommendation to the federal government.

We are hoping that we can have a wide and diverse representation in that committee. In that way it will as much as possible reflect the broad cross sector of Canadian interests.

With regard to the involvement of municipalities, municipalities are really within the provincial jurisdiction of responsibility. My personal view is the municipalities represent a grassroots level of government where we can most effectively produce some results on the environment. I am hoping I will be able, with the assistance of the provinces, to work very closely with the municipalities to achieve the results we need on the environment.

The hon. member asked a question about stewardship and the environment. Stewardship crosses over all environmental issues. It is my belief which is affirmed through polling information that Canadians in all sectors of our economy truly are concerned about the environment. They want tools from the federal government to help them, to assist them in making sure the environment is protected, whether it is water or air or our natural ecosystem.

• (1245)

The purpose and intent of my legislation is to put in place instruments with which I can work collaboratively with all levels of government, with all sectors in our society to protect the environment and to make sure we have the authorities there as well that when we see problems or abuses we are able to take prompt action.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I must express my amusement with the speech by the Minister of the Environment in which she refers to her environmental concerns.

She tells us that she wants to act before there are any ecological catastrophes and before our environment deteriorates. I might begin by reminding her of her government's terrible record as far as greenhouse gas reduction is concerned. I believe that this government's failure to meet the objectives of Rio is an obvious sign of

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its lack of desire to take these environmental concerns into consideration. That was my first comment.

Second, the minister had very little to say about the negotiations surrounding the harmonization process. I would remind her that, in principle, it was intended to eliminate potential conflicts between the provinces and the federal government. It was also intended to eliminate duplication and overlap.

I would remind her as well that Quebec refused to sign that agreement, for two basic reasons. First, it wanted recognition of Quebec's exclusive and overriding areas of jurisdiction within its constitutional rights.

It also wanted changes to the legislation, such as those in Bill C-32, to take the concerns I have referred to into account. I take pride in speaking out against this bill, simply because it does not address the concerns defended by the Quebec Minister of the Environment.

My question for the Minister of the Environment is a very simple one. When I look at the bill and the spirit of that bill I see that it calls for interventions at the national level, for instance those in clauses 139 and 140 on national fuels marks and clauses 152 and 150 on national emissions marks.

Does the minister not agree that her bill represents a direct attack on the provinces and an obligation for them to adopt provincial regulations, as otherwise the federal government will end up directly interfering with what Quebec can do in environmental matters?

[English]

**Hon. Christine Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, the answer to the last question is not at all. The federal government is here representing the interests of all Canadians. I articulated this very clearly in this legislation, in carrying out a mandate to protect all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

With regard to air, water and our natural environment, we work in consultation and in collaboration with other levels of government, including provincial, and I believe that is the way we can most effectively protect the environment. This government is committed to continuing to do so.

I was also criticized as a representative of the government with regard to our efforts on climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gases. As late as last Friday I had a very successful meeting with provincial and territorial counterparts from across the country. We discussed the very serious issue of climate change.

We all agreed we would support early action to reduce greenhouse gases but also that we would together develop a national implementation strategy so that together we can find the way to reduce greenhouse gases, to meet our target which is to achieve a reduction of gases to 6% below 1990 levels.

• (1250)

We want to reduce greenhouse gases to that level in the most cost effective way which means that we all must work together to find out where there is the greatest economic advantage to our achieving the reductions, recognizing this is an issue that will not only preserve, conserve and improve our environment but will represent very significant economic advantages.

With regard to the accord on harmonization I signed at the end of January with provinces and territories across Canada, with the exception of Quebec, I am still hopeful that there will come a day when Quebec will see that it is to its advantage as well to sign in with the federal government and all the other provinces and territories to understand that is the best way to protect our environment.

However, the principles and guidelines we signed into under that accord recognize the jurisdictions of all levels of government. It does not mean devolution of authority on the part of any level of government. However, the Quebec government was requesting not only in its words the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec in environmental matters, which we know is inadequate, but for the federal government to devolve its authorities to the province, and that we will not do.

We want to work in harmony with provinces and territories to protect our environment to the highest level but we each want to maintain our significant authorities to protect that environment.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-32. This is an important issue, because Quebecers must ask themselves whether the federal government is trying to apply an old formula to a new area.

It is an important issue for Quebecers, because they went through this before, in many areas. When the federal government gets involved in an area of provincial jurisdiction, it slowly changes the province's way of doing things, through the regulatory process. In doing so, it is supported by the Supreme Court, as I will show a little further on.

Quebeckers have the right and the duty to ask themselves whether this bill will ultimately allow Quebec to assume its responsibilities, and whether it will allow for the harmonious development of its territory and its environment. But such is not the case.

The federal government had two options regarding this legislation. The first one would have been to establish a harmonized environmental approach with the provinces. The harmonization agreement mentioned earlier might have given the impression that the government was headed in that direction. Unfortunately, it is now tabling the bill while invoking the fact that there is a harmonization agreement. However, it conveniently forgets to say that Quebec is not part of that agreement, and it forgets to say why

our province is not part of it. So, the federal government decided to go ahead with its legislation, even though it was not able to reach an agreement with Quebec.

We do not know what motivated such a decision by the federal government in this area, and in other areas in the past. We do not know if it is because of the undue influence of senior federal officials who want to ensure they have a future in the public service, or if it is elected people, who say in good faith, as does the Minister of the Environment, that the federal government must regulate in this area and get involved, because there are all sorts of problems and issues at stake.

The environment is a major issue, but getting involved in areas of provincial jurisdiction is not the right way for the federal government to fulfil its role.

The example of the greenhouse gases is very telling. We cannot ask the federal government to get involved in all sorts of areas, if it does not properly fulfil its responsibilities at the international level.

● (1255)

Contrary to what the minister might have said earlier, I did not get the impression that the working session with the ministers last week was a success. What the media reported was that Canada would have a hard time meeting its commitment and that some provinces had no chance of doing so at all.

This information was not reported by journalists. It came out in many of the statements by the ministers, including the minister from Alberta. The leadership the government was wanting to assume in this sector has amounted to lip service only up to this point.

They saved face in setting international standards and now, back home, they are wondering how they will go about it. As things were not solid to start with and the position of the Government of Canada was taken at the last minute, there is no consensus on this position.

The federal government cannot claim that the bill being debated at second reading has a strong foundation and that all governments in Canada support it, because Quebec, among others, has not signed the harmonization agreement.

We should understand the roles assigned by this bill. It refers to a national advisory committee comprising representatives of both Environment Canada and Health Canada and of each province and to the negotiation of agreements where consensus is not reached. Reference is made to two thirds in a number of decisions.

At this point, when they talk of two thirds, it means that Quebec, which has not signed the harmonization agreement and which may have other claims in certain sectors, may frequently find itself in

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the minority. It has, however, had significant environmental successes.

In the case of the objectives Canada may promote internationally, particularly with respect to greenhouse gases, much is due to the fact that Quebec, through its energy choices and its advantages due to hydroelectricity, is helping to make it possible to attain these objectives.

If, on the one hand, we make a positive contribution and, on the other, we lack the influence to act as we should with respect to our environment, it is obvious that Bloc members cannot approve this policy.

We consider it just as important to criticize the so-called double safety net. The federal government is arguing that, with two levels of government involved in environmental matters, the level of protection would be higher than if only one government was responsible.

We know this old recipe has never worked anywhere. What people want is to know who is responsible for environmental problems, so that they do not have to deal with two levels of government and two sets of regulations allowing polluters to slip through the net yet again.

The principle put forward by the federal government is not valid. It would have been much better to carry through to the end of the harmonization process in order to clarify roles. Before introducing this bill, the government should have made sure the accountability system was clear.

When people have to assess the actions of various governments with regard to the environment, they need to ascertain whether the government acted properly and protected the environment adequately.

If not, they need to determine why the protection was not adequate and what legislative changes are necessary, instead of getting entangled in the web of legal and regulatory fights which will be the direct result of the principle put forward by the federal government, namely the double safety net and the sharing of environmental responsibilities by both levels of government.

On January 29, 1998, Quebec refused to sign the harmonization accord. The accord is one thing, reality is another. It includes several cases of overlap which will lead to intergovernmental conflicts. This is one of the main reasons why Quebec did not sign the accord.

● (1300)

In the proposed accord, there was a willingness to recognize the various levels of responsibility, but Quebec was denied the place it deserves in this area. Obviously, at the time of Confederation, not much thought was given to the environment, which has become such an important issue today. It must be understood that Quebecers want to have adequate control over this sector.

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This issue is present everywhere around us. It would be irresponsible on the part of the Quebec government to allow decisions to be made at another level, especially since there would be overlap.

We think the federal government should have shown some good faith and goodwill before introducing this bill. Several pieces of legislation are slated for introduction and consideration in the near future, such as those dealing with endangered species, fisheries and environmental protection.

In view of the way the federal government has assumed its responsibilities in the past in the area of fisheries and in view of the present situation both on the Atlantic coast and on the Pacific coast, people may be reluctant to give the federal government too much power with regard to the environment, because a parallel can certainly be drawn between those two areas.

The lack of co-ordination in managing fishery resources has yielded terrible results that have threatened the survival of entire communities. Fishing had been their livelihood for several decades. Mismanagement of our fish stocks has forced the government to close down certain fisheries, which is an important blemish on Canada's record both nationally and internationally. This example leads us to say that, before introducing a bill such as Bill C-32, before amending the Environmental Protection Act, the government should deal with other problems such as endangered species and the fisheries. These are important areas where the federal government has not necessarily shown its effectiveness.

There are other irritants in this bill. Bill C-14 on water management is a perfect example of the contradiction that exists. In the harmonization agreement, the federal government says it will respect everyone's jurisdiction. This bill has been received negatively by all environmental stakeholders in Quebec.

There have been meetings about this. It is quite obvious that drinking water is under Quebec or provincial jurisdiction. The introduction of Bill C-32 has confirmed our apprehension that the federal government will be able to justify through this another intrusion into several areas where there are environmental impacts and that are, at this time, under Quebec's jurisdiction, because the Quebec government can claim this jurisdiction, or can demonstrate that it has taken relevant steps, that this matter is being debated in Quebec and that people want a made in Quebec decision.

Through this more comprehensive piece of legislation, Quebec's responsibilities will be further eroded and reduced. We will end up with repeated regulatory and legal squabbles over which government is right or wrong. On this point, I think Quebec's concerns are justified, and we have to speak on behalf of Quebeckers.

In the pulp and paper industry, the Quebec government introduced the industrial emissions reduction program. The federal

government may well feel the urge to take action in the same area. In the past, we have had to make representations. There is a paper mill in my riding. After my election, the first request made by the mill was this: Is there any possibility of eliminating duplication in forms to be filled out? Is there any possibility of avoiding having the two levels of government asking us the same thing?

• (1305)

Pulp and paper mills are affected by how rivers are managed. This is an issue that is linked to the environment, an area usually dealt with by the provincial governments in the past. Federal involvement in this area is not desirable.

In fact, when we say that Quebeckers are of the opinion that Bill C-32 intrudes in some of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, we are reporting not only the views of the ordinary citizens, but the views of the business community. If we want to ensure that Quebec will be able to react appropriately in the future in terms of being competitive, we cannot allow unacceptable environmental criteria to be set. We have to ensure, for example, that jurisdictional issues are settled and that our businesses do not have to abide by two sets of regulations, which is why we find the bill before the House very dangerous.

My colleague from Rosemont said earlier that the bill provides, among other things, for the possible creation of national emissions marks for fuels. This is in direct conflict with what Quebec or any other province can do in this area.

Environmental issues are very complex issues. Since this is the appropriate season, let me use as an example the migration of snow geese.

Migratory birds are covered under international law, which means that the federal government, in an area where it is entitled to act on international agreements, passed an act to protect snow geese. Nowadays, the population has grown and has a huge impact on agriculture, such an impact that a compensation package had to be developed for farmers who suffer losses when the geese eat the seeds they have sown in their fields.

Under this package however, farmers are not fully compensated. The federal government, which is responsible for the migratory birds legislation, has not yet found the means whereby, through the Canadian Wildlife Service, we could ensure the controlled management of geese.

It developed a model because it wanted to ensure the snow goose population to increase. It succeeded in this regard, but now seems to have lost control over the population. It seems to be going in a direction where there is a never ending increase of that population, to the detriment of our agricultural heritage.

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It would be important, in such an area, to harmonize action plans, but only after assessing the situation as a whole, and not through specific ad hoc actions that deal with the crisis on a yearly basis, but do not deal with the fundamental issue.

This is an example where, before giving the federal government the controls provided for in Bill C-21, we would want to know how it would manage the snow geese, which I give as an example, because we have some concerns about what passage of Bill C-32 could lead to.

In conclusion, I believe it is important point out that the political consequences of the passage of this bill are clear. If, for example, the Government of Quebec wanted to implement an environmental policy that would be positive and provide incentives, through tax credits, and the federal government were to adopt a punitive approach based on the Criminal Code, the Government of Quebec would have no choice but to comply with such a federal law because the supreme court, in one of its rulings—which was a very close one, five to four—has given a very wide interpretation and has given a very important national scope to the regulatory weight of the federal government on environmental issues.

• (1310)

This is a blatant example clearly showing that, like the leaning tower of Pisa, the supreme court always leans on the same side. In this case, a court appointed by the federal government arrived at a ruling by a very narrow margin, but however narrow the margin, this ruling gives the federal government almost total discretion and allows it to act as if it were the national government of Canada instead of the federal government. This is an important distinction.

In Canada, we have a federal government and provincial governments. But no one should lay claim to having a mandate as the national government, especially not in areas that are not under its jurisdiction. If the approach taken by a province, Quebec for instance, is very different from the course of action chosen by the federal government, we could end up with a serious lack of harmony.

This ruling allows the federal government to prohibit pollution and to regulate all pollution issues. The supreme court ruling is clear: in case of disagreement between the federal government and the provinces, the federal government will always win. That is why it is important that we, in this House, be logical and use common sense to prevent passage of this bill. It should go back to committee, or the minister should withdraw it, so that the harmonization agreement can really become a reality and that Quebec can make its arguments.

In an area like this one, which is the way of the future, this ruling shows once again how centralizing the Supreme Court of Canada

and the federal government are. It seems important to me that we send a clear message saying that jurisdictions must be respected and that henceforth Quebec should have control over its own environment.

[English]

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. I am pleased to address the House on this very important piece of environmental legislation, Bill C-32, a bill to renew the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, commonly known as CEPA.

CEPA is a comprehensive environmental protection and pollution prevention statute. Since 1988 it has been the cornerstone of federal environmental and health protection legislation. One of the most crucial components of the act allows for the control of toxic substances.

Many toxic substances do not stay put once they are released into the environment. Toxic substances such as mercury and PCBs have been found in the blood of aboriginal people in communities in the high Arctic located far from industrial developments. These substances are transported to remote and otherwise pristine environments by air currents and they can have long term adverse health effects on the people and the wildlife that breathe air, drink water or consume food that contain these substances.

Canadians are very concerned about the risks toxic substances pose to their health, their children's health and the long term sustainability of their environment. Certainly the residents of my riding of Waterloo—Wellington are concerned about these issues and I know that is true for all Canadians.

Bill C-32 helps to reduce or eliminate this threat. It is important to know exactly what that is. The good work already under way to identify and manage toxic substances will continue and the bill introduces innovations to allow more efficient and effective government action in carrying out these activities.

It also incorporates in the legislation key features of the federal toxic substances management policy which sets out precautionary proactive and accountable rules for dealing with toxic substances. Bill C-32 will ensure that decisions are based on sound science and will provide a management framework for dealing with toxic substances that is preventive and precautionary. Our aim is to take all reasonable precautions to reduce or eliminate the exposure of Canadians to these toxic substances.

• (1315)

Bill C-32 will impose new deadlines for the development of preventative or control actions. It will require that the ministers of the environment and health propose concrete actions to prevent or control the release of substances within two years of declaring a

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substance to be toxic. These preventative or control actions must be finalized within the following 18 months.

The goal of virtual elimination is new to CEPA. The Government of Canada recognized in its 1995 toxic substances management policy that our traditional approach of managing the release of toxic substances into the environment throughout their life cycle is not sufficient for certain toxic substances. These substances that require stricter management actions result primarily from human activity. They persist in the environment for long periods of time and they bioaccumulate, that is, the toxins are stored in the tissues of living creatures.

Every minute quantity of these substances may build up over time to levels that cause serious long term adverse effects to the environment or to human health. Once in the environment these substances will continue to damage our health and the health of our ecosystem over many generations, often through subtle effects on the endocrine, immune, reproductive and other sensitive biological systems. Virtual elimination is necessary to protect our health and that of the environment.

Bill C-32 allows for creative approaches in controlling toxic substances. This will achieve results faster and will provide greater flexibility. A reactive and control management approach is often costly and time consuming. In some circumstances traditional regulations remain the best solution. However, they are only one of several tools which Bill C-32 places at our disposal. These tools include pollution prevention plans, voluntary initiatives and economic instruments such as tradable permits to control toxic substances.

These new tools focus on environmental results rather than on the means by which the results are achieved. They give operators the flexibility to incorporate cost effective measures that suit their needs without the direct intervention of government, as long as the required environmental protection objectives are met. The result is oftentimes a greater reduction in toxic emissions than would otherwise be achieved through traditional regulatory approaches. Examples of such programs include the accelerated reduction and elimination of toxics challenge program that was launched in 1994 and a number of voluntary initiatives such as the Canadian automotive manufacturing pollution prevention project. The recent ARET report noted that in 1996 reductions in releases amounted to 5,064 tonnes, a decrease of 27% from 1995 emission levels. Participants have reduced their emissions by almost 21,500 tonnes, a 61% overall reduction from base year levels.

Canada can learn from the actions of other countries. Bill C-32 requires the federal government to review decisions and control actions on toxic substances taken by other countries to determine if they are relevant and applicable to the Canadian situation. The government will regularly review decisions taken by provinces in Canada or by member countries of the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development to ban, schedule for elimination or severely restrict toxic substances.

We have listened to the concerns of Canadians about toxic substances. This environmental legislation addresses these concerns. A strengthened CEPA along with other relevant federal legislation and our international environmental commitments provide the Government of Canada with the tools and measures needed to protect the Canadian environment and the health of Canadians.

[Translation]

The federal government will continue to look after the interests of all Canadians. It will lead us into the next millennium with vision and foresight.

[English]

I urge this House to support this legislation and to give it speedy passage in order to usher Canada into the 21st century.

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the member said that there are provisions in this bill to allow for creative measures to improve the environment. I would ask him to expand on some of those creative measures. I would also ask him where in this bill and what are the provisions for educating Canadians on environmental protection and how much emphasis his government has placed on education.

• (1320)

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I come from a municipality and a riding where in fact we take the environment very seriously, as do all Canadians. I was thinking about how important it is for the municipalities to have a role, for a watershed, often a conservation authority, to have a role, for the provinces to have a role and for the federal government to have a role.

Certainly in terms of education that is a key component. We as legislators need to ensure that people are aware, especially our young people, of the importance of the environment and what we as Canadians can do to secure it and ensure that we pass on to the next generation the kind of environment they should have, and rightfully so.

I encourage whatever efforts we can make to ensure that all Canadians, especially our young people, know precisely the kinds of efforts we need to make to ensure that our environment remains the best in the world.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have just heard the final remark by my colleague across the way, who wishes to pass on to the next generation a country with a clean environ-



ment. But, once again, I remind him that the federal government wants to play a leadership role when it comes to the environment and says it is doing its job. The problem is that the results are very different.

Unlike Quebec, the federal government has not even managed to attain the goals it set in Rio. There is a problem somewhere. It is therefore not true that objectives are reached more easily with a central, federal and paternalistic government.

The purpose of this bill is to give the law more teeth. That is what the minister and public servants are telling us. Existing enforcement of the legislation is lagging in this regard. I think that there is difficulty enforcing and implementing this legislation, and that there is a desire to give the federal government more ammunition. I think there is a problem.

There is the example of transborder movement of hazardous waste. Although there is legislation, it has not been possible to enforce it, with the result that Montreal has now become the black market centre for hazardous waste in Canada and even in North America. So there is a problem.

My question for my colleague opposite is as follows. The issue is not the level of government, but which level of government is in the best position to respond to requirements and to resolve the actual problems. Is that not the real issue? The issue is not whether it should be the federal or the provincial government, but which is in the best position to address environmental problems. In many instances, the provinces are in the best position to do so.

It must be remembered that the provinces are forced to meet their environmental commitments in addition to shouldering responsibilities that have been transferred from the federal government to the provinces. Will my colleague opposite not admit that the provinces are in the best position to address environmental problems?

[English]

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I listen in amazement to members of the Bloc speak to jurisdictional issues. It seems to me that the environment is of such grave concern and of such great importance to all Canadians that there is a role for all of us to play. There is a role for provincial people, there is a role for municipal people, there is a role for conservation authorities and there is a role for the federal government, and that is a very important role.

I heard earlier the hon. member opposite talk about a lack of good faith, when in reality the federal government, in good faith, is doing the kinds of things that are required for the betterment of our environment and is doing so in a way that benefits he and I and all Canadians, no matter where they live.

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[Translation]

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of working with the committee that revised the Canadian Environmental Protection Act in 1994. We spent something like 18 months listening to witnesses from all segments of society and all parts of Canada.

● (1325)

We travelled from one end of Canada to the other, including the Arctic regions. If today we are proposing certain underlying principles in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, this is precisely because of what we heard from many Canadians across the country.

Those underlying principles are as follows:

[English]

First there is pollution prevention, the idea that instead of curing we have to prevent; that if we can stop toxic waste which is the biggest assault on the environment before it happens then all of us are healthier.

There is the precautionary principle that we should always act as careful, prudent citizens, managers of the common weal. In that case I refer to one of my colleagues from the Reform Party who talked a lot about sound science. Let us wait until science is proven before we act. I would remind him that when Rachel Carson wrote her famous book, *Silent Spring*, DDT was being used all over the place. She did not wait for sound science to send warning signals.

When lead was being used in our gasoline, more recently, we acted to ban MMT because of the threat of manganese to the environment and to human health. In other words, we have to be precautionary. We cannot wait for proven science to act. We cannot wait until it is too late. That is why the thrust of our report has been to reverse the onus of proof.

Instead of us having to prove that a toxic substance is harmful to human health and the environment, it would be for the user of that toxic waste to prove that it was not harmful to the environment and human health. This is why we believe in the principle that the polluter must always pay, must always bear the burden. This is why we have also enshrined the principle of virtual elimination of the most hazardous toxic substances released into the environment so that there will be a burden on the polluter, on the user of toxic substances, to avoid using them if there is any notion at all that they could be harmful to health and the environment.

[Translation]

I was the Quebec Minister of the Environment when the first Environmental Protection Act was passed in 1988. I can state without fear of being contradicted that my repeated interventions to

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the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment are responsible for the inclusion of an equivalency clause in the act at that time, and I strongly believe in this clause.

The equivalency clause means the following: if a province has an equivalent regulation or act dealing with any issue covered by the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and if that province also has a complaint investigation system similar to that provided in the CEPA, the provincial regulation applies rather than the Canadian legislation.

This clause completely demolishes the argument of my Bloc Québécois colleagues that this act was completely exclusive. It is up to the provinces to establish regulations and a similar complaint investigation system. Then their act would apply.

There is an important role for the federal government in the entire environmental area. Today the Bloc Québécois spoke as if the Constitution prevented the federal government from dealing with environmental matters. Yet all the Constitution says about the environment is that all levels of government have a role to play.

As the government, the legal entity that represents us at the international level, the federal government has a predominant role to play in the environment. Moreover, this is what the Supreme Court stated in a ruling on the CEPA.

• (1330)

[*English*]

Therefore I think we should look at the present myth that there is no place for federal authority in environmental protection, that the federal authority should be lessened and reduced, or that the federal government should hide, should not be a leader, should not take leadership along with the provinces, municipalities and all other Canadians. We need a system whereby all of us are involved. The record shows that no one jurisdiction is strong enough to take care of the environment.

I have spoken to many environmentalists in Quebec, in Ontario, in Alberta and elsewhere who have signified to me that they need that safety net and that they need as many jurisdictions as possible to be involved in the environment because at the moment the environment has never been looked after as sadly as today. Everybody is devolving. Everybody is cutting back staff. Certainly the provinces are the major culprits in that case.

There was a case for instance in 1996 in Ontario, our largest province, our largest industrial base, when the minister invited industry to let her know what environmental regulations it would want to see in place so that they could do better business, more progressive business.

There was a deluge of answers from the mining industry that wanted to be absolved from regulations on toxicity and effluence. There was an instant answer from the chemical industry that said it wanted to be absolved of regulations concerning illegal dumping of hazardous waste. There were answers from this industry and that industry that said to get rid of regulations, that they would look after themselves.

There brings me to the second myth, that regulations are bad for us, that they are a hindrance to progress and advancement, and that suddenly we should get rid of them. Regulations have not been a hindrance to society's progress. They have been one of the major catalysts for creativity, for inventions and for progress in society.

The examples are around us in multiple form: the seatbelts that we use in our cars, the catalytic converters that we use in our cars, airline safety, registration of medical drugs, registration of pesticides and the control of toxic wastes.

Where would we be without these regulations? Where would we be without a regulation that says we stop at a red light? There would be chaos on our streets.

Today we have the myth that regulation is bad for us, that we should get rid of it and look after our own territory. This would be a way to chaotic non-enforcement of what really means the goodwill, the public trust and the common weal which government is supposed to look after. Its mission is the value system of looking after human health, protection of the environment and protection of basic values in society. The government is the trustee and guardian of this system. It can only do so if it has a background of laws and regulations which enforce in fairness and with reason.

We need a strong CEPA, an active and dynamic CEPA, and a steadily and ceaselessly enforced CEPA. We need a commitment that is there because Canadians need it and want it very badly.

Of all the issues facing us as we go into the next century, the environmental protection case has to be the most cogent. The environment is the defining issue of the next millennium. We need water. We need fresh air. We need a safe environment so that human health can thrive, so that our society can live in peace, harmony and knowing that tomorrow will be a better day. How can we ensure that if chemicals and toxic wastes are being released into our environment without protection and without regulation?

• (1335)

We need a strong CEPA, a dynamic CEPA, a very strong and effective presence of the federal government in environmental protection.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's dissertation by and large was mother-

hood. He is saying that we have to keep the world clean and protect our environment. I do not think anyone questions that.

I have a little problem, though, with his philosophy that it is only a benevolent and all powerful federal government that can look after the interest of the general public.

Surely in this day and age with the examples we have seen over the last 50 or 60 years in the world, or in Canada just within the last decade, of the results of federal benevolence we should go slowly in that regard.

However that is not the main point I picked up as a point of dispute. I really have a problem with people in certain branches of the environmental movement who use the argument that we can never be certain about anything before we take action, that we have to take a preventive stance even if we do not know what we are doing, just in case.

This reminds me to some extent of what might have happened in a medieval society where after a period of ongoing crop failures the finger was pointed at some poor old lady in a village and they said she did it, that it was her fault, that she cast an evil spell. They were not sure. They could not prove it so they played safe. The safest thing they could do was to burn her and not worry about logic. They did not worry about debate or, in the case of the hon. member's presentation, they did not worry about science.

What on earth do we have highly paid experts for? Why do we have universities? Why do we have research institutes if we are not to take seriously both the negatives and the positives of their work? Why must we get side tracked and say "It might be toxic. It might be dangerous. Therefore let's be sure. Let's get rid of it and do the science later?" That is a backward way of operating.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, this is what is called an absurd argument. I never made the case that without any signals or without any presumptions we should ban this and that. I never said that.

I said that the precautionary principle puts an onus on us to act when there is a very strong presumption. Of course we do not act when there is no presumption at all.

Let us take the case of endocrine disrupters in the environment. Many eminent scientists in the world are finding out that because of the toxic effluent being released in lakes and so forth fish life is being changed. There is a sort of sexual impact of great magnitude on populations of living species, including the human species.

Scientists in Scotland, Denmark, Canada and the United States have come to the same conclusion. Do we wait until the final proof has been given by all the scientists of the world, by all the scientific bodies?

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I remember the argument about global climate change. The Leader of the Opposition still believes in the flat earth society. Although 2,500 scientists have told him there is climate change, he does not want to believe it. They will wait until it is too late.

This is what we are talking about. We are talking about effective presumption and when there is presumption that we move and act before it is too late.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under the circumstances I will call the time expired. There is little time left and I see two members rising, but we will move on.

• (1340 )

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue debate on Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

I thank the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore for his comments on the bill last week. On behalf of my Churchill River constituents and the New Democratic Party we continue to be opposed to Bill C-32. The New Democratic Party is not opposed to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. We are opposed to Bill C-32 as it continues the Liberal policy of devolution and removal of federal responsibilities for environmental protection.

I will speak today on the need for a strong federal presence in protecting the environment. I will continue as my colleagues indicated at the outset last week to address the reasons for a strong Canadian Environmental Protection Act. My colleague made reference to *Silent Spring* by Ms. Rachel Carson as an alarm bell that man has continued along an unsustainable path. The book describes the losses we may face as a society if poor environmental practices, pollution discharges and ecological degradation were to continue unchecked.

As my colleague stated environmental protection is a requirement. Environmental protection is not an option. The original 1998 CEPA evolved because Canadians recognized something was wrong with the environment. There was growing concern about the presence of toxic substances in the environment and the adverse impact on the environment from a variety of pollution sources and industry contributing to environmental degradation.

I remind my colleagues that these concerns continue today. As mentioned by colleagues last week, the majority of Canadians believe more needs to be done to protect the environment. Science and technology have evolved to the point where environmental stewardship does not compromise profitability or contribute to job losses. As my colleagues stated and I shall repeat, going green does not cost jobs or decrease productivity, a principle that the New Democratic Party has stated time and time again in the House and across the country.

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As we embark upon the review and the restructuring of CEPA we should remember that recent events demonstrate there are environmental protection problems across Canada. As stated last week Canadians are fully aware of the Plastimets in Swan Hills, the abandoned contaminated sites that dot the landscape from coast to coast to coast and the spills and accidents, some of which could have been prevented.

In the north there are contaminants in mother's milk. What is wrong with this picture when entire food chains are contaminated and where thousand of square kilometres contaminated by man can be accepted as the way things are?

We are continuing to promote environment degradation through inaction and further studies. We have placed economics before the environment. Sustainable development is a theory, not an accepted and practised principle.

My colleague made specific reference to the only comprehensive review to date on CEPA, the report tabled in 1995 by the House Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. It was entitled *It's About our Health—Towards Pollution Prevention*. This massive report contains 141 recommendations to improve then Bill C-74, the predecessor to Bill C-32.

The Liberals refused the majority of the recommendations in the 400 responses received by the government during the public review. They ignored a consensus that more effort was needed to ensure the highest standards of environmental protection for all Canadians as a favoured response from the Liberal benches. This statement does not only relate to fact.

Recent environment committee meetings demonstrate that there is something wrong with basic environmental standards, never mind the highest environmental standards. The problem is not the lack of standards. It is the reality that standards on paper or in bills are not being followed, implemented or enforced. The New Democratic Party does not support a sole command and control regulatory framework as a sole parameter or measure for environmental protection.

• (1345)

Co-operative measures, including sharing responsibilities between provincial and territorial governments, indeed all government levels and local governments, to ensure environmental protection at the highest standards can be achieved. However, this government appears to fully embrace the devolution of environmental protection and the abandonment of environmental responsibilities.

Canadians have been fed a line by industry and provincial authorities that overlap and duplication are serious problems. There are limited examples that this is true. This was demonstrated by recent committee hearings which describe non-enforcement

and the lack of resources by any level of government to enforce entire sections of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

This pattern of federation devolution and no responsibility continues with Bill C-32.

As parliamentarians it is our duty to ensure that Canadians receive the environmental standards they expect, deserve and call for.

My colleagues, the Liberal government has demonstrated time and time again that the environment is not important "Let the provinces handle the problem; we will wash our hands clean of this responsibility". The New Democratic Party cannot support legislation that allows and condones further decreases in environmental protection.

The administrative duties section contains an alarm bell that we must recognize as dangerous. Clause 2(1) makes specific reference to "act in a manner of intergovernmental agreements and arrangements entered into for the purpose of achieving the highest degree of environmental equality throughout Canada".

We believe that this is a direct reference to the harmonization accord which was signed in January by the federal, provincial and territorial governments, with the exception of Quebec. This accord operates on a consensus basis where any province that protests against or declines participation with the environmental measures can effectively stop, delay or defer cautionary, preventative or proactive environmental efforts.

If a province that relies on a specific industry or economic sector decides to not implement environmental standards for specific toxics or limit an industry's discharge of greenhouse gas emissions for example, CEPA in essence can become null and void.

How can we ignore the calls by business and different levels of government for a level playing field when one province can decide that a lower level of specific standards is okay while a neighbouring province decides higher standards are necessary to protect the health and safety of its citizens and voters?

We are trying to limit job raiding and promote interprovincial co-operation. Why place this opportunity for squabbles on the table?

We will be embarking on a climate change program, we hope, and the country may be held hostage by one, two or three provinces, a grave environmental issue that will affect all Canadians, future generations and the entire planet.

Our concerns are shared by environmental organizations across this country. I expect we will be presented with numerous scenarios as the legislation passes through committee.

The non-protection course the Liberal government appears content to follow is included in various sections of the new act, as was the case in C-74, where specific outs and escape clauses are identified to provide the devolution authority this government

cherishes. The equivalent provisions in section 10(3) states: "The Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the environment minister, make an order declaring that the provisions of the regulations do not apply in any area under the jurisdiction of the government".

Members of Parliament and Canadians have been shocked by the reality that these agreements represent. Environment departments across Canada have been cut as a result of deficit battles and transfer reductions. The ability and capacity for environmental protection enforcement and monitoring has reached a critical level.

The federal government signs equivalency agreements with the provinces. The provinces do not have the resources to monitor, inspect and enforce and environmental standards continue to plummet.

The department of fisheries for example is still scrambling to provide water monitoring resources in Ontario after the province opted out of its partnering and harmonization agreement with that department. The fisheries minister has waived inspection responsibilities in several provinces and has not provided reports on enforcement although this is a regulatory responsibility. The provinces are not keeping DFO up to date. The impacts on ecosystems, such as those affected by aquaculture, are ignored by the federal government. Even though there is a memorandum of understanding, the federal government decides not to enforce fisheries regulations. These are a few of the many examples of the highest standards possible, the Liberal definition.

• (1350)

The environment minister heralds a partnering with Quebec pulp and paper effluent regulatory responsibilities. Lo and behold a few days after the ink is dry, it is reported that companies are being let off the hook. Over 20 offences were not being acted upon. We are paying that province to do our job.

My colleagues have mentioned improvements contained in the new Bill C-32. One colleague emphasized enhanced sharing of responsibilities for environmental protection. He obviously has not followed the committee's proceedings.

Through these committees, in the news, from corporate and provincial representation, Canadians have been fed a story of duplication and overlap, restrictive regulations, too much red tape, provincial responsibilities and jurisdictions, unfair representation as stated by my colleague.

Evidence presented over the past several months as Bill C-32 drew near is a direct contradiction. There are improvements in the proposed legislation, legislation which this government is more than happy to ignore and sign off. Regulations are not being enforced. Pollutants are being released. There are overworked staff

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and insufficient resources. These are the facts. Canadians should not be fooled by what the paper promises.

My colleagues, we need to proceed carefully. We must embark upon this further path of devolution and harmonization. We have the opportunity to create positive and constructive improvements in a new CEPA. We have the opportunity to stop the devolution and weaker environmental protection.

We must ensure that the loopholes for federalist escapes are closed. We must ensure that the checks and balance approach, the precautionary approach is maintained and not lost. We must revisit the outstanding issues and committee recommendations the Liberal government chose to ignore in 1995. We must consider the expansion of whistleblower protection to beyond the public sector and who we are trying to protect otherwise. We must acknowledge the need for improved toxic substance identification and phase-out, not limited by the Liberal example and points on paper, but by action. We must recall the promises made from the fanfare the previous environment minister made in reference to toxic substances, fast track one and two.

The bureaucracy needs five years to study less than three dozen carcinogens. This record must be improved to protect the environment and all Canadians. Sunsets must be included to stop these toxic substances. We must improve the capacity for identification and really fast track the carcinogens issues and toxicity of thousands of chemicals we face in today's environment.

We must expand the environmental registry to include real time access for community right to know, to avoid the Plastimets and the Swan Hills. We must ensure that the readily available information on pesticide use on Canadian lawns and in agriculture is provided and is not only industry based. We must revisit the ability for the environment minister to act swiftly and conservatively when confronted by environmental hazards, not to tie the minister's hands as presented in the new CEPA.

We must ensure that the recognition and inclusion of aboriginal participation in the proposed advisory committee includes opportunities for results, not just lip service. We must seriously consider an environmental bill of rights for all Canadians to provide equal footing for the polluters. We must debate the inclusion of such rights in the charter of rights and freedoms. This was the dream of author Rachel Carson.

The original CEPA followed a command and control regulatory framework. We acknowledge that this can be improved and should include voluntary measures but not as a mandate to pollute. Studies identified that compliance occurs when there is a strong regulatory process and the political will to enforce the said legislation. We must not follow the voluntary path. We must strike a balance between regulatory efforts, enforced efforts and voluntary measures.

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There are differences between the original 1988 CEPA and the 1998 CEPA. The different sciences, technologies, chemicals and dangers must also be acknowledged. At the same time effective environmental protection and a truly sustainable path are possible today. In many instances, such as industrial discharges, corrective measures and controls were not readily available previously.

• (1355)

We must ensure that a flexible yet strong continued federal presence in environmental protection is maintained to ensure the protection of the environment as it supports all species. Before the original CEPA the polluters polluted and the victims suffered and died. By victims we cannot consider man alone as the sole reason for our action. All species suffered, the wildlife, the flora and the fauna.

The original CEPA provided an ability to act to protect the environment, to levy fines, to expose the polluters and support sustainable development beyond this generation. Bill C-32 has strayed from the original principles to protect and to provide recourse. As parliamentarians we must ensure we return to the path which protects the environment first and foremost, a path which includes socioeconomic factors, but not at the expense of our future.

We have an opportunity to enter the next century as responsible citizens, as a society that recognizes the importance of our environment and as a country that enforces the protection of our environment.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Churchill River for his intervention. I would like to ask him to explain to this House the new and expanded measure which refers to citizens actions in this bill. This was actively advocated and advanced by the committee a few years ago, by the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. It seems to me that it is a feature in this bill which deserves to be highlighted. I wonder if he would like to give us some of his views on that particular aspect of the bill.

**Mr. Rick Laliberte:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the new CEPA has highlighted the citizen's right to know. In terms of opening up the dialogue and making the communities, the workers and the many industries involved aware is sometimes lacking. The report the hon. member has mentioned is a help. This was a major recommendation which was echoed by many respondents and in many submissions.

I must refer to the whistleblower legislation as well. The new CEPA limits itself to federal agencies and federal employees. It should be open to public input as well, the union members, dock members and industry members, the workers. It should raise awareness of the environmental impacts these industries or employers are practising. This is part of the citizen's right to know. This is not in the new CEPA and we should enhance that to protect our workers.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments will continue after Oral Question Period. There are almost eight minutes left.

It being almost 2 p.m., the House will now proceed to Statements by Members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### GIL ROBINSON

**Mrs. Claudette Bradshaw (Moncton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Gil Robinson, a constituent who has recently returned from working overseas for CESO, Canadian Volunteer Advisors to Business.

[Translation]

Mr. Robinson just completed two terms in Guyana. He was asked to improve the operations of a supermarket in Georgetown and to develop a strategy plan for another supermarket, in Linden.

[English]

For the Linden store Mr. Robinson established internal controls to correct a problem with theft, established an operations manual and changed the layout of the store. The Georgetown store was losing money due to excess inventory and high interest rates. Mr. Robinson trained staff in all aspects of food store management and established objectives and priorities.

[Translation]

On behalf of everyone in the greater Moncton area, I want to wholeheartedly congratulate Mr. Robinson for the remarkable work he has done in Guyana.

\* \* \*

[English]

### MINING

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, May 3 to May 7 in Montreal the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum will celebrate its centennial so the government is releasing a new stamp honouring mining. It would be better if it acted on federal issues which endanger mining jobs.

• (1400)

Unsettled native land claims make land ownership and mineral tenure uncertain. That uncertainty was made worse by the supreme court's Delgamuukw decision which raised expectations so high as to endanger settling native claims.

In B.C. alone 50 major land claims are on the table with more to come. Not knowing who is the landlord scares away investors. But Canada's high taxes along with an unfavourable tax structure as well as federal-provincial overlap of regulations also prevent opening new mines.

On the east coast the same negative federal policies combined with low nickel prices have delayed thousands of jobs at Voisey's Bay, Labrador.

It is past time that this government acted on House committee reports to protect Canada's 350,000 mining jobs and help promote new ones instead of just issuing a stamp.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HEPATITIS C

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during this debate, the national assistance initiative for hepatitis C victims put forward by the government was harshly criticized.

What has clearly emerged from this scathing attack was that the criticisms themselves did not focus on an issue of major importance: should governments give financial compensation to all those who are harmed not through anyone's fault but as a result of risks inherent in medical practice?

Although a large number of members from the opposition talk about our duty and our moral obligation to pay additional cash compensation, we have not heard much about the impact such compensation would have on the health system itself.

As the health minister clearly indicated in the House last week, the first moral responsibility of the government is to safeguard health insurance for the hepatitis C victims who will need continuous medical attention.

Despite its shortcomings, the Canadian health system is still one of the best in the world. This is why we should not threaten it by hastily creating precedents not based on solid strategic grounds.

\* \* \*

[English]

### NIAGARA RIVER

**Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recently the Niagara River remedial action plan received a sizeable grant under Environment Canada action 21. The grant will serve in the restoration of the Baden Powell park to its natural state as a carolinian forest and enhance the quality of our environment.

### S. O. 31

In itself this is wonderful news. However, it is important to note that more than 20 community organizations including the city, Niagara College, our park commission and many environmental and naturalist groups were instrumental in the realization of this project.

The Boy Scouts were the largest volunteer group and to date they have contributed more than 3,000 volunteer hours, a wonderful example of how communities working together are an inspiration to all.

Our youth with their enthusiasm and hard work are showing that we can make a difference and be part of the solution toward healthier communities and a better environment.

\* \* \*

### HEPATITIS C

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to join in the debate around hepatitis C and to speak to the fact that many of my constituents who have called me have focused on a couple of areas. One is the legitimate symptoms of the disease such as profound fatigue and the debilitating effects hepatitis C has on their health.

To rectify this situation human resources development has assured me that it will be introducing special training for medical adjudicators to increase their understanding of the progression of the disease and that the government is looking at establishing a special centre of expertise on hepatitis C to increase knowledge and understanding of the disease among Canadian health professionals.

The government is also aware that some individuals with hepatitis C have already experienced difficulty in receiving disability benefits—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford.

\* \* \*

### HEPATITIS C

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a letter from Olis Davies of Langley, British Columbia to the Prime Minister:

Dear Sir:

You seem to have decided which hepatitis C victims should be compensated, for a disease brought on us, through no fault of our own.

We had no control over the year we would be given a death sentence.

Perhaps, Mr. Prime Minister, you would feel differently had someone told you, when you had your illness—sorry, sir, we can't treat you, it's not the year for you to be sick.

All we have to look forward to is very little happiness and an early death.

Do you not feel compassion for the sick people, that up to this time, were loyal, tax paying citizens of Canada?

*S. O. 31*

We send money and help to other countries, why not our own Canadians?

Surely you can cut costs and unnecessary expenses, such as purchasing outdated equipment and unnecessary government spending.

Please! Let your Liberal members vote with their conscience and not force them to go against their better judgment.

Olis Davies

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support today the decision made by the Minister of Health and his partners from the provinces and territories with regard to the compensation of hepatitis C victims. Of course, the easy way for the minister would be to simply pay all those who are asking the government for compensation.

Opposition members seem to believe that moral superiority belongs to those who favour the easiest and quickest solution: offering a global compensation package today without thinking about the consequences it would have tomorrow. However, it is clear that moral superiority belongs to those of us, on the government side, who will oppose the motion.

We have chosen to oppose the motion because we accept the responsibility given to us by Canadians to protect the health care system that is cherished by everyone in this country.

I would like to conclude these brief remarks by congratulating the Minister of Health for having the courage of his convictions and for holding up in the face of harsh, misinformed and petty criticism from those who would want us to compromise the long term welfare of Canadian society for short term political gain.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**HEPATITIS C**

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in assessing the motion before the House on hepatitis C it is important that we look beyond the rhetoric to its real implication for Canadian society.

The opposition motion advocates that we remove any distinction between those who contracted hepatitis C from the blood system within the period 1986 to 1990 when risk reduction actions should have been taken and those people who became infected before or after this period.

The principles this government is applying for hepatitis C are clear, sustainable and responsible. They are the result of some very hard and difficult decisions. In looking at the question of hepatitis C compensation, the Minister of Health and his provincial counterparts had to work from some very broad terms of reference, ones I am sure the opposition would like to hear, ones which encompassed the entire health system.

The collective responsibility of the ministers of health is to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the system for all Canadians now and in the future. I urge my colleagues in this House—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

\* \* \*

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, a constituent writes:

I am 32 years old, married and have three young sons. I work hard, pay my taxes and I do what I can for my country. But in the last several years, I find it increasingly difficult to go to work and take care of my young family, because hepatitis C is sucking the life out of me. I am always tired and find it hard, if not impossible, to be a dad to my boys and keep up with my responsibilities.

Not knowing how much longer I will be able to work, or how many years I have left, it would be of great comfort if the government would take responsibility and compensate all victims of tainted blood so I could slow down and preserve my health.

I pray and trust that the Government of Canada will take responsibility and do the right and honourable thing.

Ed Neufeld, Winkler, Manitoba.

I implore this government not to let innocent victims like Ed Neufeld down.

\* \* \*

**PORT MOODY—COQUITLAM**

**Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise from my seat representing the riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of my predecessor who used to sit across the House, Mrs. Sharon Hayes. Mrs. Hayes was a strong candidate and we respect her reasons for leaving. We wish her, her husband and their family the best.

The citizens of my riding spoke loud and clear on March 30. They chose a party whose government speaks for all Canadians, a government that has eliminated the deficit and is practising strong financial management for the future of all Canadians. They elected a member with a long record of service to the community.

I am honoured to sit in a seat that belongs to the people of Port Moody—Coquitlam. I pledge to those who voted for me and the ones who did not that I am here to voice their concerns.



S. O. 31

[Translation]

**POVERTY**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, researchers from the University of Toronto's faculty of medicine recently published a study of mothers who have to rely on food banks to feed themselves and their children.

This study, commissioned by the health department, paints a gloomy picture. These women often have to deprive themselves of food so their children can eat. More than 26% of women who were interviewed said they had suffered from severe undernourishment during the last year. Seventy per cent of these women relied solely on social welfare to survive, and their meager income was just 52.8% of the amount needed to reach the poverty line.

• (1410)

The Bloc Québécois strongly denounces the political choices made by the Liberal Party and accuses the government of being largely responsible for the increase in poverty—

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

[English]

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, I am sure these statements are all very important to us. I would ask you to keep these little side conversations toned down.

[Translation]

Does the hon. member for Québec have anything to add?

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Scientists from the faculty of medicine at the University of Toronto have just released a study on mothers who depend on food banks to feed their children.

The study commissioned by the health department reveals a very alarming situation. In order for their children to eat, these women often go without food. Over 26% of the women surveyed said they had been seriously undernourished during the past year. Seventy per cent of them depended entirely on social assistance to survive and their meager income was only 52.8% of the amount needed to reach the poverty line.

The Bloc Québécois strongly condemns the Liberal Party's political choices, and accuses the government of being largely responsible for the increase in poverty.

[English]

**GLOBALIZATION**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, people around the world are recognizing the serious problems inherent in the current model for globalization. They are recognizing that the unfettered global marketplace is increasing social inequality and committing countries to a race to the bottom. People are demanding that governments live up to their responsibility to ensure that globalization serves democracy, equality and human need. Examples of the failure of the current model are everywhere. The Asia crisis has demonstrated that deregulated financial markets are a threat to sane and stable development.

Today at the MAI negotiations in Paris, the trade ministers of the 29 richest countries are discussing their publics' concern following an attempt to make the rights of working people and the environment subservient to investor rights.

Let the MAI die a well deserved death and let us seize the opportunity to explore ways of ensuring that globalizing markets serve the common good and not just the interests of the wealthy global elite. We call on this government to live up to its responsibility and engage the Canadian people in a debate about concrete ways to advance our values of social justice and equality in the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Mercier.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SASKATCHEWAN FRANCOPHONES**

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last Saturday marked the 10th anniversary of Bill 2 in Saskatchewan, an act abolishing French as an official language. Representatives of Franco-Saskatchewanians, who are 20,000 strong, but only 6,000 of whom still speak French at home, came to Ottawa looking for help.

However, the heritage minister refused to meet with them. She claimed the president of the Fédération des francophones de Saskatoon, Richard Nadeau, is a friend of the Bloc Québécois. Again, according to her, the people protesting against the Liberals' UI reform were separatists masquerading as unemployed workers. In fact, in the opinion of the heritage minister, you either belong to the Liberal Party and wrap yourself in the flag or you are nothing but a separatist.

The heritage minister is trying to discredit a representative of the francophone community in Saskatchewan so as to downplay the urgency of this community's situation.

*Oral Questions*

Francophones outside Quebec are only of interest to her when she can use them as weapons against Quebec sovereignists. Respecting their rights is secondary.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HADASSAH WIZO**

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today Canadian Hadassah Wizo honoured women in public life. Hadassah Wizo is marking its 80th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the birth of the state of Israel by creating a fund to provide a scholarship in women's studies at the University of Ottawa.

For 80 years the incredibly talented women of Hadassah Wizo, a grassroots network, have represented the spirit of volunteering in this country with special emphasis on women and children and their health and education needs. Over the decades Hadassah Wizo has evolved from a project called Youth Aliyah during the second world war to remove Jewish children to safety in Israel. Today its project "Women to Women" is helping abused women.

I congratulate and thank Hadassah Wizo, Canada's largest Jewish women's organization, for its contribution.

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**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the 18,000 people in the province of Newfoundland about to be thrown off the TAGS program are crying out for a sign of compassion from the federal government. Scientific assessment of the cod stocks seems to indicate that it will be quite a while before many of these people can return to the commercial fishery. Therefore it comes as no surprise when we read in the media that the Premier of Newfoundland has personally informed the Prime Minister that the Newfoundland economy cannot possibly absorb these people if the TAGS program is cut off cold turkey.

• (1415)

I call upon the federal government not to turn this issue into another hepatitis C issue. The federal government is responsible for the mismanagement of the cod. It has a moral responsibility to compensate the people in the fishing industry who have been affected by the shutdown.

We need a post-TAGS program and we need it now.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Prime Minister offered publicly and promised to bring up the issue of human rights in Cuba. In fact he said "I am not shy". But in a speech nationally televised across Cuba he failed to mention human rights even once. It appears that he would like to have that little chat behind closed doors where Cubans and Canadians will not hear a word of it.

Why were human rights not at the very top of the Prime Minister's public agenda? Why so shy?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the hon. member's question because if there is one thing the Prime Minister is not it is shy.

I am confident that the Prime Minister did put human rights at the top of his agenda, along with the other items on the agenda expressed by the memorandum of understanding that we have with Cuba.

Certainly I am confident that human rights is an important consideration of the discussions the Prime Minister is having.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, any discussions the Prime Minister may have had were a pure embarrassment for Canada.

Human rights was not the only thing the Prime Minister was silent on yesterday. He just stood there as Fidel Castro compared the peaceful economic sanctions of Cuba to the Holocaust. During the week in which we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the state of Israel, this disgusting comparison must not be allowed to stand.

I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister, will the government do today what the Prime Minister should have done yesterday and condemn Castro for these disgusting remarks?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have been engaged now for a year and a half in a very active dialogue with the Cubans on a variety of human rights matters. We have actually seen some progress made. I know that members of the Reform Party would not be aware of it because they do not attend to human rights matters.

The purpose of the trip is to advance that file, to make progress in these areas and to ensure that we make the case, as has been made over the past several years, that we need the Cubans to establish themselves as adhering to a fundamental set of international standards on human rights.

*Oral Questions*

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the economic peaceful sanctions against Cuba right now may be questionable foreign policy, but they are not the Holocaust, they are not genocide and they are not the use of biological, chemical or nuclear weapons, as Fidel Castro said they were.

Let me ask the minister again, will he condemn Castro right here, right now, for the disgusting comparisons he made yesterday?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that nobody is endorsing the remarks of President Castro. The remarks he made are his remarks.

What we are saying is that it is time we started building some effective bridges into the western hemisphere so that the kind of transition and changes going on in Cuba can be reinforced.

The Reform Party is missing the whole point. The trip to Cuba is not to start a confrontation. The real purpose of the trip is to provide reconciliation.

\* \* \*

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been reported today that the government is ready to reopen its bad deal on hepatitis C. At least that is what the Liberal backbenchers are being told.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister, is the government in fact ready to reopen the deal so that all victims of hepatitis C will be treated equally?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our position remains the same.

A deal has been made between the federal government and all of the provincial governments and we feel this deal is one that deserves the support of the House.

We continue to believe that when the House votes on the Reform motion tomorrow it will vote to defeat the motion and will endorse the position of all the provincial governments which is a part of the deal with the federal government.

• (1420)

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe I should remind the Deputy Prime Minister that he is talking about things like a CPP disability plan for these victims, even though he knows that people have to line up for those plans. He is talking about medical plans for these people, even though health care provides those things.

He is offering not a single thin dime more to these victims.

Is it not true that he is offering these things just to keep the dissident backbench Liberals in check?

I will ask him the question again. Is he going to give equal treatment to all victims of hepatitis C in Canada: yes or no?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised by the nerve of the hon. minister talking about dissident backbench MPs after what his party did to Jan Brown and after what his party did to Jim Silye when they dared to say something different than the Reform Party line.

We have confidence in the fact that this deal is deserving of support—

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

**An hon. member:** It is time to retire, Herb.

**The Speaker:** I was having difficulty hearing the answer. I am sure we are as interested in the answers as we are in the questions. I will permit the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to finish his response.

**Hon. Herb Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I have made my point, that the Reform Party is wrong in the way it is asking people to vote on its motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government must use threats of expulsion and arm-twisting to impose its incomplete and unfair compensation program for hepatitis C victims on its own members.

Does the government not understand that it is on the wrong track and that its attempts to use threats to impose its views on its own members are plunging it further into unfairness and insensitivity towards those who are the victims of its negligence?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we took a government stand. It is a question of government policy and, tomorrow evening, government caucus members will be here to vote against the Reform Party motion.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised to hear the Minister of Health say that members will be here tomorrow to vote against the motion. That is perhaps the problem.

Has the Prime Minister not handled this very clumsily by turning the Reform Party motion into a government confidence motion, thus forcing members of his party to choose between the government and what is fair?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this agreement has the support of the Government of Quebec's health minister, Mr. Rochon. Does the Bloc Quebecois think that Mr. Rochon is not being fair?

It would be strange for them to speak against their friend, Mr. Rochon, in the House.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the president of the hemophiliacs' association said that it was absolutely disgraceful that the Prime Minister was turning the vote being held tomorrow, Tuesday, into a vote of confidence in the government.

Instead of turning tomorrow's vote into a vote of confidence, should the government not instead make it one of conscience and allow members to vote in accordance with what they really think with respect to hemophiliacs?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we do not think that Mr. Rochon's views in this area of policy are disgraceful. I reject the point of view expressed by the Bloc Québécois.

• (1425)

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is well aware that the reason we are questioning the federal government is because it has primary responsibility for Canada's blood supply.

Having first been the victims of the government's incompetence, are hemophiliacs now going to be victims of the Prime Minister's stubbornness?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, stubbornness on this point also extends to the Government of Quebec and to Mr. Rochon. I think the hon. member should address his remarks and his concerns to Mr. Rochon and not just to the Government of Canada.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is finally, if feebly, acknowledging that more needs to be done to compensate hepatitis C victims.

Will the government commit now to do the right thing as Krever recommended and compensate all victims of hepatitis C, or is this simply a new spin aimed at shoring up support to get the government through tomorrow's vote?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the position of the government has not changed. We spent time with the provinces and arrived at an agreement by which compensation is offered to those who were infected at a time when governments could have acted and did not.

We are compensating avoidable harm, in the words of the Prichard report of 1990. That was our position last week, it is our position this week and it is the right decision.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely absurd for the health minister to say, as he has, that fair compensation is a threat to medicare. The minister himself fought for full compensation at the cabinet table.

It is absurd for the Prime Minister to declare tomorrow's vote a matter of confidence. This is a theatre of the absurd.

Is it not true that this government will say anything no matter how absurd to avoid looking hepatitis C victims like Jo-Anne Manser in the eye?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during my many personal meetings with victims of hepatitis C, both before and after 1986, I have explained the approach taken by governments to this issue. I have explained it, as Premier Romanow did last Friday when he was here in Ottawa. The premier is of the hon. member's own party, the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. Premier Romanow said that it was a tough decision on a difficult issue.

However, as Premier Romanow said, reflecting the view of all governments in Canada, this is the right thing to do. If we are going to preserve a publicly funded health care system we should compensate in cash those who were harmed in a way that was avoidable had governments acted properly.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, on February 6, 1998, the Minister of Health wrote to Mrs. Eleanor Nelson of Ottawa regarding hepatitis C compensation.

The health minister wrote and stated "I wish to assure you that I have no desire to see Hepatitis C victims spend precious time navigating a maze of litigation".

Why is the minister now forcing those victims to hire lawyers in order to be compensated? This is absurd.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, because of the conviction which was expressed in that letter, I convened a meeting of provincial ministers. I had officials work hard getting at the facts of this case. The federal government provided the leadership necessary to pull together an agreement among all governments in this country.

As a result of those efforts and that commitment some 22,000-plus Canadians will not have to go to court if they accept the offer that we have made in compensation.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in the past 48 hours or so we have seen that the Liberal government is opening up a bit to more assistance to the hepatitis C victims.

I would ask the Minister of Health what he thinks of this, and if he can assure this House that the door is not closed officially forever, and that the Liberal government might offer other types of compensation to the hepatitis victims.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government's position has not changed. All of the governments in the country have reached a common accord.

We have adopted the same position, which is to say that we have offered compensation to those infected from 1986 to 1990, in order to reflect government responsibility. That is our position today, as it was in the past.

• (1430)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, 66 year old Laurette Sylvester from my riding writes "In 1981 I had a lung removed and had a blood transfusion and was infected with hepatitis C. All I am asking for is just and fair compensation".

Unfortunately there is nothing new for Laurette Sylvester today, not one thin dime. The government speaks of Canada pension plan disability benefits and home care benefits. Those are available now.

I want to know and Canadians want to know when the government will give equal and fair compensation to all hepatitis C victims?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have said that the position of all governments is that compensation should be paid when governments were at fault in the period when they could have acted.

I invite the hon. member to speak to his colleague from Macleod. Last Thursday during the debate on his motion the hon. member for Macleod agreed with our position. He said "I accept his point", referring to me, "that government should not pay cash compensation to people who are injured when there is no fault. No fault, no compensation, I accept". That is the position of the hon. member for Macleod. That is our position. That is the right position.

The fault was from 1986 to 1990. That is the period during which we are paying compensation, and I am glad my colleague from Macleod agrees with our position.

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there was a test in 1981 to prevent the plight of Laurette Sylvester, and the government knows it.

The talk of a new deal by the government this morning is nothing more than the political spin doctors trying to convince backbench Liberals that there is a lousy deal on the table, and that is the one the government has come up with. It is a bad deal. Hepatitis C victims do not need Liberal spin doctors. They need compensation now.

When will the government stop the rhetoric and announce a real compensation plan for hepatitis C victims?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the only spinning I can see from here is the hon. member trying to distance himself from his colleague from Macleod.

What we have done is to take the simple position. If we compensate people because they become ill, we will no longer be able to have a public health care system in Canada.

We have offered compensation for the period of time during which governments were at fault. The Red Cross and governments should have acted and did not. That is the principle, a principle with which the member for Macleod apparently agrees.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**FRANCOPHONES OUTSIDE QUEBEC**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Francophones outside Quebec are threatened; everyone except the federal government can see it. Again last week, the president of the Fédération des francophones de Saskatoon sounded the alarm on behalf of his community, which is being assimilated at a rate of more than 70%.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister not find it outrageous that, instead of replying to his arguments, all the government did in response to Mr. Nadeau's cry for help was to try to undermine his credibility?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are the ones who are systematically trying to undermine every francophone outside Quebec with their statements.

I recently heard the author Antonine Maillet reply to the leader of the Bloc Québécois "They want us to assimilate with Quebecers, while accusing us of already being assimilated".

That is what the Bloc Québécois said and what francophone leaders outside Quebec replied.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, why does the minister, who is himself a francophone, not answer the Franco-Saskatchewanians' question regarding their survival instead of being the mouthpiece for such demagoguery?

Will he continue to refuse to face the facts or is he prepared to recognize that francophones outside Quebec are the only official language minority whose survival is threatened?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must admit that the hon.

*Oral Questions*

member is right to a point. It is true that the remarks made by the Bloc are typical of demagogues; I am the first one to say so and I agree with him.

With respect to the assistance provided to francophones in Saskatchewan, in 1997-98 for example, the federal government committed \$4.2 million to the Official Languages in Education Program; \$3.2 million to school management; \$252,000 to French language services; and \$2 million to the Canada-communities agreement.

This funding comes from the federal government, not from the Bloc Quebecois.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

[English]

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Karen is a hepatitis C victim from Medicine Hat. She contracted hepatitis C from tainted blood in 1985, years after testing for hepatitis C was first available.

Under the imaginary new deal that was cooked up by the Deputy Prime Minister this morning, I am wondering how much compensation Karen will receive.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should remember that the government has one position. It was a position that was developed with all governments in the country. It is an offer of compensation of \$1.1 billion, to which we are contributing \$800 million, to the 22,000 victims in the period of 1986 to 1990.

The hon. member should also remember that we do not and we cannot compensate people because they become ill. If we did that we would not have a health care system.

We are offering compensation during a period where governments could and should have acted. That is the right thing to do.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a shameful position. It is a case of government negligence.

These are the facts. All the Deputy Prime Minister's so-called deal allows hepatitis C victims like Karen to do is to take advantage of health care services that already exist. Thank you very little.

Instead of a deal for Liberal backbenchers when will we see compensation for all hepatitis C victims, victims like Karen? When?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, if we were to do what the hon. member suggests we would not have a health care system for very long because we would not be able to afford it.

Second, the hon. member should talk about this issue with his colleague from Macleod, because the hon. member for Macleod last Thursday in the House accepted the point that governments should not pay cash to people who are injured when there is no fault. "No fault, no compensation, I accept". Those were his words.

The hon. member should talk to his colleague. He understands this issue. The hon. member should try as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ASBESTOS INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Following the recent decision of the Council of Europe to ban asbestos products, the situation is becoming increasingly difficult and the asbestos industry is asking the federal government to change its strategy.

Does the government agree that diplomacy has failed and that the time has come to file an official complaint with the WTO?

[English]

**Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I should point out to the hon. member that the Council of Europe has no legislative power to ban anything.

Canada continues to work with Quebec and with France to achieve a positive result. We have been asked if we are willing to take this to the World Trade Organization. At the appropriate time we will, but this is not the appropriate time.

We will continue to work through the channels we have started in order to obtain a positive result.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the question was simple and called for a straight answer. When does the government intend to file a complaint with the WTO?

[English]

**Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will have to make that decision when we feel the time is appropriate. We do not feel the time is appropriate yet.

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**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the health minister has chosen to quote my words in the House last week. He says that when there is no fault there should be no compensation.

*Oral Questions*

What did Justice Krever say about the fault of the federal regulator as it related to hepatitis C? He said that the federal government was negligent. That is fault from where I stand. That is why we want compensation for all victims of hepatitis C.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Krever report made it clear that fault on the part of the federal regulator was in January 1986 not insisting that the test be put in place.

The hon. member is caught by the facts of this case. Any fair reading of the Krever report makes it clear that it was January 1986 on that the federal regulator should have insisted that the test be put in place. The hon. member has said that we should not pay cash compensation except where there is fault.

I invite him, in view of his position and in view of the Krever findings, to withdraw his motion before the House.

• (1440)

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, let me go to the source himself, Judge Krever.

During the 1980s the federal bureau of biologics did not decide independently whether to use its authority. Instead it depended upon the Red Cross. In effect it made itself dependent on an organization whose activities it was supposed to regulate. That is why Judge Krever said to compensate all victims of hepatitis C without regard.

Why does not the health minister do exactly what Judge Krever said?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that in the statement he made last Thursday the hon. member has adopted the position of the government.

Our position has been that we cannot simply pay people because they become ill. The sympathy we feel for people who become ill is reflected in the fact that we maintain one of the world's best systems of health care and we provide them with that care.

When governments pay cash compensation, we have said, should depend upon an element of fault. The hon. member has agreed and in view of the position we have expressed I think he should withdraw the motion he has put before the House.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**B.C. MINE IN BLACK LAKE**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the B.C. mine in Black Lake closed, six months ago, the 250 former workers have been asking for a joint support program to help stabilize their

income. The minister continues to turn a deaf ear and is only prepared to fund so-called active measures.

Since only six of the 250 workers benefited from the minister's programs, when will he finally realize that active measures are simply not working in this particular case?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week I met with representatives from the mine that is unfortunately closed. Six former employees have already benefited from the active measures, while 40 to 50 are interested in training for other jobs. The courses will begin in August and September.

Our government was the first to take action following the mine closure, by allocating \$3 million for active measures designed to help these workers. There are other possibilities, and we will help workers, because they want to work.

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[English]

**NORTH KOREA**

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Co-operation.

Efforts are continuing worldwide to address the severe food shortages in North Korea. Could the minister tell us and the House what Canada's efforts are in this area?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has contributed almost \$15 million to the crisis in North Korea. This was the largest contribution of food aid to any country last year and \$2 million of that aid came directly from Canadians through the Canada Food Grains Bank.

We will continue to monitor the situation because Canadians care and want to help.

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**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there is one terrible undemocratic fact in the hepatitis C issue, and that is the government is whipping its members to do what is wrong and vote against hep C victims.

I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. What is the punishment for backbenchers in doing what is right in voting for hep—

**The Speaker:** I find the question, as it is put, is not in order. I see the Deputy Prime Minister standing to answer it. If he wishes to address himself to it he may. If not I will take the next question.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a hypothetical question. The vote has not taken place. I am confident the government's position will be upheld.

In any event the hon. member is out of order. I do not know how he can ask a question of a party whip.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not a hypothetical question to thousands of hepatitis C victims, is it?

Let me ask this minister of no compassion where in the government's throne speech, in its election platform or in the rules of the House, does it say they will whip their members to vote against their conscience?

• (1445)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Prime Minister if he wishes to answer.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, where in the Reform Party platform is it stated what they did to Jim Silye and Jan Brown?

**Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, reports out of the Deputy Prime Minister's office today pertaining to the hepatitis C compensation matter show that the government is really working hard to try to take the sting out of tomorrow's vote. I want members to know that the leadership of the Hepatitis C Society has said that such statements are meaningless and that the requirement for blood injured Canadians is still the same, fair compensation for all.

Will the government reopen the discussions and put in place an agreement that is fair for all blood injured Canadians?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all the governments of Canada have entered into an agreement that is fair. It reflects the reality that if we are going to keep a publicly funded health care system in this country and operate on the right principles then we should offer cash payments to people who were harmed in a way that was avoidable. That is the principle. That is the policy that underlies this position. It is a position that is shared by every government including the governments of British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

We have made an agreement and an offer to the victims based on the right principles.

**Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today in the House the member for Etobicoke—Lake-shore announced on behalf of the government a study of the way in which hepatitis C disease progresses. She talked about training adjudicators and setting up a centre for excellence. That is trifling

with the realities of blood injured Canadians. The blood injured do not need studies to tell them how the disease is progressing. They live with it each and every day.

Why is the government offering a dry twig to blood injured Canadians instead of an olive branch?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows it is not appropriate to offer cash payments to people because they become ill. I do not think anyone suggests we can run a country like that. We have offered cash payments to people who were harmed in a way that could have been avoided if governments had acted in a timely fashion. That is what underlies this offer of settlement.

As to research, it is in the interests of all victims of hepatitis C that research focus on treatments and cures if we could find them. It is in the interests of all hep C victims that we do what we can to improve the quality of treatment.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

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**ORGANIZED CRIME**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to organized crime, Canada's top cop is all talk and no action. Last November the solicitor general promised to introduce legislation to give police power to act on illegal financial activity. Recently he promised to bring bikers to their knees and eradicate organized crime once and for all. These are bold words. Six months later Canadians are still waiting. When will the tough talking minister live up to the rhetoric and introduce much needed anti-organized crime legislation?

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government introduced tough anti-organized crime legislation in the last Parliament. On Friday there were representatives of 50,000 police officers in Ottawa to work out the strategy. Today at noon I met with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. We are on the job.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, lots of consultation, lots of talk, no action. In its annual report on the international drug trade the United States state department singled out Canada as "an easy target for drug related crime and money laundering". It lists Canada alongside Columbia as a great place to hide illegal cash.

Will the solicitor general introduce legislation to give police the tools they need to fight organized crime? Will he do so before the conclusion of the sitting in June?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said in the House last fall when we introduced the first ever statement on organized crime in this place, we will be introducing that legislation.

\* \* \*

**TRADE**

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Economic growth is important to the peaceful resolution of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. Can the minister inform this House of the impact of the free trade agreement between Canada and Israel which was signed almost two years ago on the population of Israel including the Palestinian authority?

• (1450)

**Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. He has expressed a great deal of interest in this subject through his attendance in committee over recent months.

Canada has four free trade agreements and one of them is with Israel. As a result of the signing of that free trade agreement, trade has increased by 19%. I should also point out that goods produced in the West Bank and Gaza get equal treatment with goods produced in Israel.

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**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa once stood up for what was right and voted against his then Tory government on the GST. For the unpardonable crime of voting with his constituents, Brian Mulroney kicked him out of his party.

When it is time to vote tomorrow, will the Deputy Prime Minister allow the secretary of state to stand on principle, to do what is right and vote with all hepatitis C victims, or will he do what Brian Mulroney did and kick him out of the party?

**The Speaker:** I find the question to be out of order. It deals with party matters.

The hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT**

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in an effort to calm the members of the Reform Party, the Minister of Justice is prepared to ignore the recommendations of

the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on the matter of the Young Offenders Act and go so far as to propose publicly identifying young people aged 16 and 17 who have had run-ins with the law.

Will the Minister of Justice acknowledge that bowing to western intolerance and proposing to publicly identify young offenders do not serve the purposes of the law and do not help in rehabilitation, which she claims to support?

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned to think that the hon. member believes everything he reads in the paper. As I have said in this House many times before, the standing committee has prepared a thorough report on the renewal of the youth justice system in this country. This government will respond to that report in the coming weeks.

\* \* \*

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. The failure of a mining tailings pond in Spain this weekend near Doñana national park, a world heritage site, demonstrates that accidents can occur.

Canada has in place an oil spill response program funded by that industry. Can the Minister of the Environment tell Canadians what response program is in place for a tailings pond failure in Canada? Who would be responsible for the clean-up bill, industry or the Canadian taxpayers?

**Mr. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the soundest environmental records of any country on the globe. Quite frankly our mining industry is one of the most responsible, most proactive in the industry. We have a particular set of environmental standards under the environmental protection act and the fisheries protection act which I think leads to responsible behaviour. Most importantly, our companies are responsible. We are doing the right thing. We do the responsible thing.

\* \* \*

**THE ATLANTIC GROUND FISH STRATEGY**

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister of fisheries. Media reports indicate recently that Newfoundland Premier Tobin met with the Prime Minister a few days ago to make a case that the Newfoundland economy cannot absorb the 18,000 people soon to be cast off the Atlantic groundfish strategy program.

Will the federal government take its responsibility seriously? Does the minister of fisheries not see the pressing need for a post

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TAGS program? Will he give me a simple direct answer? What is it? Will there be a post TAGS program or no post TAGS program?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on many occasions in this House we have responded to the many dilemmas that are faced by the post TAGS situation.

I would agree with the hon. member that we have had useful input from the premier of Newfoundland in this regard as well as of course from Newfoundland members in this House. I would point out to the member that it is a complex problem. The measures announced by the government cannot be piecemeal or minor. I think that may have been some of the problems we have encountered in the past. In due course the member will receive the answer he is looking for.

\* \* \*

**CHILDREN**

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Children and Youth.

Well-developed children become successful productive adults who are better able to contribute to society's economy. Would the minister clearly outline what the government is doing socially and economically to promote early childhood development as a powerful investment in the future?

• (1455)

**Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government is currently engaged in a number of efforts to give children in Canada a good start in life by early intervention programs and prevention programs.

Starting this summer in July we are contributing \$850 million as a downpayment to low income families following with another \$850 million. This will add up to \$1.7 billion by the year 2000 in investments for children. We will also expand the head start programs. We are building a national children's agenda as well as a national child benefit with our provincial partners.

\* \* \*

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the government may be legally liable to all hepatitis C victims who have been poisoned by a government controlled tainted blood system.

My question is for the justice minister. Has her department estimated the cost of the government's legal liability to thousands of uncompensated hepatitis C victims who were poisoned by a tainted blood system under the control of the federal government?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his colleagues spent much of the last few weeks urging us not to take a legalistic approach to this issue. Now he is asking us for a legal opinion on liability. The member for Macleod put opposition very well last week.

The member for Crowfoot should know that we cannot pay cash compensation on the basis of illness. It has to be on the principle of fault.

We believe in making the offer we have to the victims of 1986 to 1990 with all the other governments in Canada. We have dealt directly with the issue facing governments.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ATLANTIC GROUND FISH STRATEGY**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Not long ago, the Prime Minister told us of a ministerial committee chaired by the Minister of Human Resources Development, which had been given the job of developing ways to provide support after the Atlantic groundfish strategy comes to an end.

Could the minister tell us which workers in the fishing industry are covered by these measures and what the eligibility criteria are?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have no announcement on this subject today. The hon. member is correct in that the Prime Minister did ask a number of ministers to look at the post-TAGS situation.

As we know, there has been a crisis in the industry. We set up a program that provided help over several years to those hard hit. The program concludes this August.

We are looking at various angles to see how we can help people and communities live comfortably afterward and return to the labour force.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health or as he might soon become known, the head sophist for Canada, given some of the arguments he has been making about hepatitis C.

Why does the minister persist in the deliberate confusion of the public health care system with the federally regulated agency that caused this problem? Will he give up this deliberate confusion and admit that there is nothing wrong or dangerous to medicare—

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, I have a little problem here with the word deliberate. I would ask the hon. member to please not use it in the future. I will permit the hon. Minister of Health to answer.

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is entitled to his view but we disagree. We are not alone in this. We say that if governments are to pay people because of sickness or illness and nothing more, then we will not be able to have what Canada uniquely has, which is a government funded public health care system.

The principle that should govern when it comes to the question when should governments pay cash to those who are harmed through risk inherent in the health system, is that payment should be made based on avoidable harm. Could we have avoided this? That is what the Pritchard committee said in 1990. We are following exactly that principle. This is not some vague, legal—

**The Speaker:** Final question, the hon. member for St. John's East.

\* \* \*

### FISHERIES

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of fisheries.

News headlines this weekend saw some scientists and environmentalists recommending that the cod as a species be put on the endangered list. In the end they listed cod as vulnerable. This would appear to mean that the cod stock is not yet ready for commercial fishing.

• (1500 )

Given that premise, will the minister please inform the people and the fishermen of Newfoundland what the alternatives are for the thousands of people who depend directly on the fishing industry? Would he please tell us?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has misread the committee on the status of wildlife in Canada's designation as vulnerable for cod stocks in the Atlantic. That in fact indicates that this is a matter of serious concern which I think is well recognized by every member of this House, particularly those who have read the report of the House committee on fisheries and oceans.

I think the member should also recognize that cod stocks are not a single mass out there, that are different stocks. There is the possibility of some fishing in some areas, for example on the south coast of Newfoundland, this year as there has been in past years.

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, that would bring to a close our question period today. We have three distinguished visitors with us.

### Tributes

[Translation]

### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in our gallery of Mr. Maïgari Bello Bouba, Minister of State for Industrial and Commercial Development of the Republic of Cameroon, and Mr. Claude-Joseph Mbafofou, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Cameroon.

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

[English]

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, I would also draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the hon. Lorne Taylor, Minister Responsible for Science, Research and Information Technology from the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

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

**The Speaker:** Today we are going to have tributes for two of our former colleagues who passed away, Reverend Bob Ogle of the New Democratic Party and Mr. Carlo Rossi of the Liberal Party. The first tribute will be for Reverend Bob Ogle. Our first intervener will be the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE LATE FATHER BOB OGLE

**Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I am extremely pleased to say a few words today about our former colleague, the hon. member for Saskatoon East.

[English]

Father Bob Ogle, as members know, after a 15 year battle with cancer died on April 1 of this year in Saskatoon. He was born on Christmas Eve, 1928. He was one of five children of Irish Catholic parents. He lived his early years in Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

In 1946, after graduating from high school, he enter St. Peter's Seminary in London. He was ordained a priest in Rosetown in 1953. The next few years were spent furthering his education and serving in parishes in Saskatoon and region. During that time he also founded the Catholic Centre in Saskatoon and the St. Pius X Seminary.

• (1505 )

In 1964 he went to northeast Brazil as a voluntary missionary where he was engaged in pastoral activities, organizing literacy, farming co-operatives and medical programs.

*Tributes*

In 1969 he co-ordinated a large scale relief operation and house building program following the disastrous floods in the Valley of Mundau in Brazil.

He came back to Saskatoon in 1970 as pastor of a large parish where he served for five years.

Following that he travelled to many countries in Africa and Asia to study development projects, concluding with the book *When the Snake Bites the Sun*.

He was elected as the member of parliament for Saskatoon East in 1979, was re-elected in 1980 and served until 1984.

I do not know that he could have survived the 211 seat tidal wave of the Tories in 1984, but knowing Father Bob he might just well have survived that campaign.

He is also the author of two other books, *North South Calling* in 1987 and *A Man of Letters* in 1990. In 1993 he produced a series of nationally televised retreats called "Ogle & Company" and continued to write letters and many articles for various newspapers, even as his health deteriorated.

He was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1989 and received Saskatchewan's Order of Merit in 1995.

Throughout the illness he showed remarkable courage and maintained interest and care for those close to him and for our global neighbours. A constant advocate and help to him through his political work and declining health was his sister, Mary Lou.

He is mourned by the Ogle family: Mary Lou, his sister; Marguerite Stevens of Qualicum Beach, B.C. and her daughters, Jennifer French, Francine Kebe, Marianne Kebe and Kathryn Kebe; his brother, Charles of Saskatoon and their children Shannon Barclay of Coleville, Sheila Anderson of Calgary and Kelly of Calgary.

Our departed colleague is mourned by Bishop James Weisgerber and the priests and people of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

Always close to his heart was the mission in Brazil and anyone watching this might wish to make a donation to the Brazil Mission Fund in care of the Diocese of Saskatoon, 100-5th Avenue North, Saskatoon.

Prayers for Father Ogle were said on April 5 at Holy Spirit Church and also at the chapel of St. Anne's Home. Funeral mass was April 6 at Holy Spirit Church.

Mr. Speaker, you and I will both recall vividly about 24 months ago when Father Bob wanted to meet with you about a dinner he wanted you to host to promote a better understanding of Canadians, of our media and the so-called developing world. Such was his eloquence that you hosted that dinner, which was a great success despite your early reluctance, if I may say so, to do so because of

cost reasons. No one could say no for long to our departed colleague and his many, many good causes.

One of his characteristics, which all colleagues who were here with him cherished, was his constant cheeriness in the face of adversity. No matter how much pain he was in he always had time for a friendly word and laugh with every one of us or anybody who might work in these halls. Only mutual respect and friendliness came from Father Bob.

A subject he and I never discussed was Mother Teresa, but I am certain she was a role model for him in his work in Brazil and elsewhere. She and Robert both did much that was, to use her phrase, beautiful for God.

All of us in this place and across the country and planet owe much to him. He will not be forgotten.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to my former colleague, Father Bob Ogle, the NDP MP for Saskatoon East from 1979 to 1984. I had the privilege of being elected at the same time as Bob. We were rookie MPs together in this House, although he was a fair bit older than me. We became good friends and that friendship extended beyond the time when he had to leave this parliament. As a matter of fact, I had occasion to visit him in January in Saskatoon, just a couple of months before his death. I was very glad to be able to visit him at that time.

• (1510)

As has already been stated, he had a long struggle with cancer and with other illnesses. If my memory serves me right, it was shortly after the 1984 election that he was given something in the nature of six months to live. Bob, even when he was health critic for the NDP, used to say that he was not all that fond of doctors. After the diagnosis he used to say that he was going to try to live as long as he could to prove them wrong. I must say that he proved them wrong time and time again by living until April 1, 1998, with all the illnesses that beset him.

Much of the biographical material on Father Bob has already been covered by the secretary of state, but I just want to note a couple of things. He left this House not because he was defeated, but because he was obedient. At that time the Pope made a ruling, to use speakership language rather than ecclesiastical language, that priests could no longer run for or seek elected office. I think at the time the Pope was trying to deal, for better or for worse, with priests who were running for office in the United States and throughout Latin America, but Bob was caught in that net, if you like.

There was never any doubt in his mind as to what he would do. He was a priest first and if he was ordered by the Pope not to run again then that was his first obligation, given his vows, and he did not seek re-election in 1984, something which a great many of us regretted. We felt at that time that the House of Commons lost a

great member of parliament and a great servant of the Canadian people.

But Bob never looked back. He went on to try to deal with the issues that were of concern to him in another way. It has already been mentioned that he had a passion for trying to develop the Canadian media in a way that made them more sensitive to developmental problems in the third world. He went to an awful lot of effort to try to set up a series of sitcoms that would reflect the problems people experienced in the developing world. He undertook a number of other endeavours in that respect.

I saw Bob, of course, not just as a fellow New Democrat, but also as a fellow Christian who was influenced by liberation theology and by the effect that the global economy and global capitalism was having on the poor in the third world. Bob was inspired by that and by his experience in Brazil where he saw what was actually happening to people. He came back here to embrace a political tradition that he thought was the most faithful to what he had learned there and what he had learned as a Roman Catholic priest. He applied that without fear or favour, even when it came to the NDP.

I would be remiss if I did not say this, and I think Bob would want me to say it, even though it might not make some people happy. Throughout his life he considered himself to be pro-life. He considered himself to be a foe of the enemies of life wherever he found them, whether he found them in Brazil, whether he found them in global capitalism, whether he found them in nuclear weapons or whether he found them in the phenomenon of abortion. He would often get up in this House and say that he was in favour of life and that caused him to take a view which he saw as consistently pro-life, being against nuclear weapons, being against an economic system that ground the faces of the poor, to use a biblical expression, and being against capital punishment.

We lost a great member of parliament in 1984 and we lost an even greater Canadian this spring when Father Bob finally succumbed to his illnesses.

On behalf of my colleagues I would like to extend our sympathy to his family and in particular to his sister, Mary Lou, whom I knew and who was a great support to him over the years. He will be greatly missed.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to Reverend Bob Joseph Ogle who served as the NDP member of parliament for Saskatoon East from 1979 to 1984.

• (1515)

As mentioned, he died on April 1 after a long battle with cancer. As a former MLA for the Rosetown—Elrose constituency, I had the privilege of meeting Bob Ogle on a number of occasions. He was

### *Tributes*

born in Rosetown. I am told in visiting there it was a very proud day for the town of Rosetown when he was ordained priest in the town of his birth.

Although he is best known in his native province, this great humanitarian's dedicated approach to human life and human justice gained him international recognition. His philosophy for which he was so respected can best be summed up by what he said on the day of his nomination, September 17, 1977:

I believe that all human rights are all of a piece; ignore one right and you jeopardize all the others. That is why a single issue approach to rights will not work. If we are really pro-life we have to protect human life, from conception through to death. This requires an active, lifelong concern for a just social system.

On behalf of my colleagues in the official opposition, and I well recognize all the members of this House, I pay my respect to a missionary, to a world traveller, to an author and a renowned Canadian politician.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with all of the parties in this House to pay tribute to Bob. I arrived here in 1984, and he left in 1984, so I did not have the opportunity to sit with him, but I have often heard reference made to the spirit of social commitment he brought to this House.

He sat here until 1984. A priest, he had to leave because the Vatican decided that priests should no longer be members of any parliament. Out of obedience to the Pope he gave up his political career.

His career was in fact four careers. First of all, he was an influential priest. He was also an extremely devoted missionary, a highly conscientious politician, and later a committed writer. He served in Brazil, Africa and Asia.

We remember his years in politics mainly for his committed defence of the right to life. He spoke often on euthanasia, capital punishment and abortion. He constantly fought for the right to life.

He also had a great belief in the media and felt they had a vital role to play in raising public awareness of social injustice. After his departure from politics, even during his serious illness, he continued to speak his mind regularly in the press.

He was the recipient of numerous honours in recognition of his abilities and commitment. These included honorary degrees, the Order of Canada and the Order of Saskatchewan.

He inspired numerous religious leaders in his home province and throughout Canada. The premier of his province said of him "He devoted his life to helping others, and acquired an international reputation as a man with a social conscience, committed to peace, justice and the fight against poverty", while church authorities in Rome commented that no one could better incarnate the vision and spirit of the Vatican II ecumenical council than Father Ogle.

*Tributes*

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I offer my most sincere condolences to all his family, his friends and his party.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus join in expressing our sympathy to the family of Father Bob Ogle, both his immediate family as well as his religious and spiritual family. Reverend Bob Joseph Ogle died on April 1 in Saskatoon after a courageous and hard fought 15 year battle with cancer.

• (1520)

The 69 year old priest was also a well known missionary, politician and author. In 1979 he became the first Saskatchewan priest to be elected as member of parliament representing the New Democratic Party in Saskatoon East.

Father Ogle is reported to have taken as his personal message a verse from Isaiah: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles".

His conscientious work as a priest and as a member of the House gives ample witness to his dedication to his beliefs and to the people he represented.

We give thanks for his service in the House. He did indeed fly like an eagle.

Our sympathies to the family of Reverend Bob Joseph Ogle.

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, from time to time I permit myself an intervention.

I served with Bob Ogle for a number of years. Every so often he would pop in when he was in Ottawa just to say hello. Perhaps I might tell you two little stories about him to highlight the kind of man he was.

When I became Speaker he wrote me a note asking if I would host a dinner, as mentioned by the hon. minister earlier. I was not too keen on hosting the dinner. I do not know if members know the term being cadged, but it is similar to being conned. He used to con me regularly. He was in my outer office and my secretary came in and said there was a person to see me, a Reverend Bob Ogle. I asked what he wanted. She said "I think he wants you to host a dinner".

He came in and he looked awfully healthy standing there. "Bob", I said, "how are you doing?" He said "I am dying". I said "You have been dying for the past 10 years. What is it you want?" He said "Seeing as it could be my last supper, will you host that dinner?" So I did.

There is another story about him. The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona mentioned that he was first and foremost a priest. When he was thinking of leaving we were over in the Confedera-

tion Building. I was not part of this conversation. It was reported to me. One member said to him "You know, Bob, you have been so successful here; you have been successful in everything you have been doing. How can you just leave? How can you just walk out like that?" He is reported to have said "I was not called to be successful; I was called to be faithful".

Bob Ogle was faithful to his principles. In my view he was a good priest. He was a good Canadian. More important I guess than all of those things, he was a good man and we as Canadians can always do with good men. We are going to miss him.

We will now go to tributes for another member who shared with us, Mr. Carlo Rossi, a member of the Liberal Party.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE LATE CARLO ROSSI

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the Easter break, we learned the sad news that our former colleague, Carlo Rossi, had passed away.

I had the privilege of knowing Carlo. Almost everyone was on a first-name basis with him. To all his colleagues in this House and the community at large, he was an affable man and a friend to all. Carlo was always there.

I was privileged to know him before being elected myself to this place. As a police detective, he was a distinguished member of the Montreal Italian community. Carlo Rossi's name was already known in this House before he was first elected to this place in 1979 to represent the riding of Bourassa, which encompasses Montréal-Nord in the greater Montreal area. He represented this riding until 1988.

• (1525)

When I first set foot here as a new member in 1984, Carlo had just been appointed deputy whip. Like everyone who comes to Ottawa for the first time, I was a little lost. Carlo was there to advise us, to help us find our way and play our role as members of parliament. He did so with patience and eloquence.

What struck me the most during my first few months here, in Ottawa, was the fact that, as busy as he was as deputy whip—having been a whip myself for a number of years, I am familiar with the difficulties and time demands of such a position here on Parliament Hill—Carlo never forgot his riding. Not only did Carlo spend weekends in his riding, as most of us do, trying to be everywhere at once, but he managed to attend six or seven events between Saturday night and Sunday. He was everywhere. Even during the week, when he was asked to by an organization in his

riding, he would take the train to Montreal, but the next morning he was back here.

I think he was a truly remarkable member of Parliament, a member who not only took part in every debate in this House and fulfilled his responsibilities as deputy opposition whip, but also represented his riding well.

[English]

We all know Carlo had a tremendous voice. We all know how this House can be noisy, especially during question period. Despite all the noise, the voice of Carlo would just come out. Everybody, whether on the opposition benches or the government benches, would hear Carlo. Every Wednesday an hon. member leads in the singing of our national anthem to open the House. If Carlo were among us, he would lead that singing of O Canada. He was a good Canadian. He loved his family. He loved his community. He was very well respected. He loved this place and I am sure we will all miss him.

I had the privilege of meeting with him once in a while. Although he was no longer an elected MP, when he attended social and civic functions people and organizations would call on him for help.

[Translation]

We will miss Carlo. On behalf of the Prime Minister, my Liberal colleagues and I think all members of this House, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to his wife, Raymonde, his children, Chantal and Roberto, his grandchildren and all the other members of his family. We will all miss Carlo.

[English]

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is honoured to pay tribute to Carlo Rossi, who passed away April 11, 1998. Carlo came to the House of Commons in 1979. He sat as the member for Bourassa for nearly 10 years. In his previous life he was a dedicated police officer with a career distinguished by fairness.

His word was his bond in police work. I was fascinated to hear the story of how he would negotiate with hostages. If he had given his word to a criminal who had taken a hostage, that word was good. If he made a promise he stood by that promise. He brought the same basic rules of fairness to his work here in parliament. Members have told me that when he made a deal it was in fact a deal.

As a decorated police officer he brought a fresh perspective to parliament, a perspective that showed how closely he had dealt with both criminals and victims alike.

[Translation]

Mr. Rossi was an ideal politician, with his experience as a police officer and his life experience, without the restrictions imposed by

### *Tributes*

political parties. On behalf of my party I would like to extend our condolences to his family. This is a great loss to Montreal and to Canada.

• (1530)

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I had the honour and the pleasure of sitting with Mr. Rossi from 1984 to 1988. When I arrived here as a Conservative member in 1984 there were many of us, and I found myself sitting on this side of the House with the opposition.

When Mr. Rossi would rise to speak with his powerful voice, I must admit that he did not look like an easy person to approach. I saw him for a few weeks, without getting to know him any better. Then one day I met him in an elevator and discovered a totally different person. Here was a charming and very polite, distinguished and friendly man, interested in getting to know his fellow members of parliament.

Following that encounter I shared many meals in the cafeteria with him and also with his colleague, Mr. Malépart, who has unfortunately left us too. Mr. Rossi had been in the military and he also had a distinguished career as a police officer. He was feared and respected as a criminal investigator, and he was instrumental in capturing some very well known and astute criminals.

I also discovered that he was a man of culture. He sat on the culture and communications committee. His comments were very much to the point and all members, regardless of their political stripes, would listen carefully.

He was also very involved at the social level, perhaps as a result of the influence of his colleague, Mr. Malépart. I remember the fight that he led, along with his friend, Mr. Malépart, following the first Conservative budget regarding, among other issues, the indexation of old age pensions. When these two took the floor the House shook not because there were shouts, but because of the heartfelt arguments that were put forward, arguments that had been conveyed to them by the public in the numerous meetings and functions that they attended in their ridings.

War veterans chose Mr. Rossi as their spokesperson. At the time veterans had many demands about health care and other issues and they would always go to him because he was a former police officer. They recognized him as an honest and just man, as a man capable of standing up for them.

Mr. Rossi was also very comfortable with new Canadians. He was well known among Montreal's allophone population. He could speak several languages fluently, which is not the case of many of us here. He was very comfortable with all minorities from the Montreal region, and he had warm and frequent contacts with them.

On my behalf, and on behalf of my party and my colleagues, I wish to offer to his wife and two children my most sincere condolences. I also offer my sympathies to the constituents of

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Bourassa whom he served so well and to his party which he served so well.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to pay tribute to Carlo Rossi on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party.

I served in the House with Mr. Rossi from 1979 to 1988 and I remember him well. I remember the voice and I remember the lively heckling of which he was capable from time to time between himself and particularly other Quebec MPs of different political persuasions. We all know how lively that can be. Carlo Rossi was particularly good at it. He always had a sort of mischievous twinkling smile on his face whenever he was engaged in that kind of activity.

He is not someone whom I knew well but he is certainly someone whom I served with in the House. I pay tribute to his work as a member of parliament, to his work before he came here as a police officer, to his skill as a negotiator, and to his reputation as someone who was honest and fair and could be relied on in his work with everyone he dealt with.

I make special mention of the fact that as a police officer it was significant in 1987 when he changed his mind with respect to capital punishment. I remember that debate very well. It was a difficult but exciting time for the House of Commons. There was a free vote coming. It was a significant decision that the House was to make. People were under a lot of pressure one way or another, depending on which position they were already holding and depending on who expected them to do what.

• (1535)

Certainly Mr. Rossi was under the kind of pressure all of us were under, but as a police officer he certainly had an effect on the debate when he went from someone who favoured capital punishment to someone who opposed it. I pay tribute to him for that as well.

[Translation]

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative caucus wishes to express its most sincere condolences to the Rossi family.

[English]

He was known as a man who kept his word. His courage as a police officer in Montreal for more than 30 years and his dedication to the public service as a member of the House are examples to all of us. His community was always a priority.

In saluting the life of Carlo Rossi we recognize the support given to him by his family. That love and that support helped him serve the people of his riding, the city of Montreal and all of Canada

through his active membership in the House of Commons. We are grateful to them and to Mr. Rossi. Canada is a better place because of the contributions he made during his life.

[Translation]

We are grateful to him and to his family. Canada is a better place because of his lifelong contribution.

[English]

**The Speaker:** I guess it is a sign of my age but I served with both of the gentlemen who were mentioned earlier today. I served with Carlo Rossi. It was mentioned that he was a man of his word. Something that was not mentioned was that he was the chief negotiator for hostage takings in Montreal. Whenever there were hostage takings they would call on Carlo Rossi and he would go in and negotiate with the people. He was a man of great courage.

In 1972 members may recall the Olympics in Munich, Germany, when hostages were taken, citizens of Israel, and were shot almost summarily by terrorists. It was not known to me until one night when we were talking that Carlo Rossi was in charge of the security at the Olympics of 1976 in Montreal.

The hon. minister of public works mentioned Carlo's voice. Yes, it was a voice that carried. I recall one time, when we used to work out in the Confederation Building, that I heard someone singing Christmas carols. I went in to get changed and there was only one person there. It was Carlo and he was getting dressed. I said "Carlo, who was the fellow who was singing in here?" He said "It was me". I said "Come on, you can't sing like that".

About two weeks later I heard him sing Ave Maria at the Christmas party. I know many of you were not here at the time. It was such a beautiful rich voice from a beautiful and in many ways very rich man.

I am glad I had a chance to serve with him. You would have enjoyed him. He was a good member of parliament. He will be missed.

I on behalf of parliament give our most sincere condolences to his family.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### 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 two petitions.



[English]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 29th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to its order of reference from the House on certain statements attributed to members of the House in the March 8, 1998 Ottawa *Sun* that may have brought into question the integrity of the House of Commons and its servant, the Speaker.

\* \* \*

• (1540)

## VIA RAIL COMMERCIALIZATION ACT

**Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-394, an act respecting the commercialization of VIA Rail Canada Inc.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say this is a very timely bill but I would be incorrect if I said that. In actual fact it should have been introduced a long time ago.

VIA Rail loses hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The target it introduced in its latest annual statement indicated that it would be able to bring it down to about \$200 million a year. That is about as far down as VIA can get it. That is over half a million dollars a day. It is time we put an end to this.

It is timely in one sense. It seems ironic that I am introducing a bill that will seek to stop the erosion of taxpayers' money by over half a million dollars a day on the eve of the day that we are to vote on compensation for hepatitis C victims. The government is saying it does not have sufficient money. This might be a good way to take it toward that goal.

It has another effect, that is to prevent something that is very serious, a predator move by VIA Rail in the past against the private sector at a time when we are looking at public-private partnerships as a way out of things.

There is not tremendous detail in the bill other than to provide a directive toward its disposal. I leave it to the House and to the committee when it reaches the committee stage to add the details necessary for the betterment of all taxpayers.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for the very succinct intervention. I meant timely. I am glad he did not go into detail.

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

## Routine Proceedings

### PETITIONS

BILL C-68

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour of presenting five petitions similar in content from Saskatchewan residents of the five following districts: Weyburn, Wapella, Rocanville, Oxbow, Macklin and Cut Knife.

The five petitions have a cumulative total of 694 signatures. This will bring to 1,291 the number of signatures on petitions I have presented recently with respect to Bill C-68.

The petitioners point out that Bill C-68, which was by the way promoted partly on the basis of falsified data, will not impede the criminal use of firearms and will impose a major unnecessary burden on law enforcement officers.

They therefore call upon parliament to repeal Bill C-68 and all associated regulations and to pass new legislation designed to severely penalize the criminal use of any weapon.

### MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition from citizens of the Cariboo—Chilcotin constituency who reside in Williams Lake and 150 Mile House, British Columbia.

The petitioners request that parliament impose a moratorium on Canadian participation in the MAI negotiation until full public debate in the proposed treaty has taken place across the country, so that all Canadians may have an opportunity to express their opinions and decide on the advisability of proceeding with the MAI.

### KIDNEY DISEASE

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise with a petition from more than 500 people who support the development of a bio-artificial kidney project in Canada.

• (1545)

These petitioners work in such places as branches of the CIBC in Peterborough, the community credit union, the Leta Brownscombe Co-operative Homes, the Park Hill animal hospital and the Esquire hair salon.

These petitioners note that 18,000 Canadians suffer from end stage kidney disease. They recognize the importance of kidney dialysis and transplants for dealing with that disease but believe that those treatments are not readily available.

Therefore they call on parliament to work in support of the bioartificial kidney which will eventually eliminate the need for both dialysis and transplantation for those suffering for kidney disease.

*Government Orders*

## MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

**Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to present a petition under Standing Order 36 on behalf of a number of constituents of mine.

The petitioners call on this government to reconsider its position with respect to the signing of the multilateral agreement on investment. They are very concerned about this government's haste with which it is participating in discussions to achieve a much more globalized approach to our society. They are particularly concerned about the impact the MAI will have on health care, social programs, culture, labour standards and on the environment.

They call on this government to reject the current framework of the MAI negotiations and to seek an entirely different agreement by which the world might achieve a rules based global trading regime that protects workers, the environment and the ability of governments to act in the public interests.

\* \* \*

## STARRED QUESTIONS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful if you would call Starred Question No. 57.

[Text]

\*Question No. 57—**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:**

When the Deputy Prime Minister, in a statement made outside the House on or before November 15, 1997, indicated that the government's land-mines initiative could be the start of a global movement to spur the development of an instrument to ban firearms worldwide, was the Deputy Prime Minister stating the policy of the government?

\* \* \*

[English]

## QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the answer to Question No. 57 be made an order for return. This return would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Return tabled.)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1998

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development, be read the second time and referred to committee.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak this afternoon to Bill C-32, a bill that aims to prevent pollution and protect the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

We will recall that, on December 15, 1995, the Liberal government proposed revising the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The proposal by the Minister of the Environment at the time was the government's response to the fifth report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development entitled "It's About our Health—Towards Pollution Prevention".

This report set out the broad lines of a proposal to renew the federal government's main legislative measure on environmental protection.

The Bloc's position on this report was as follows: most of the recommendations supported the centralizing tendency of the federal government in environmental protection matters. I quote what the Bloc said at the time:

The Bloc Quebecois refutes the theory of the double safety net and contends that the environment would be better served if responsibility for its protection were given to one level of government only. The Bloc Quebecois firmly believes that the provinces, including Quebec, have greater knowledge of the specifics of their natural environment and are in a position to arouse the interest and encourage the participation of local residents, are more open to the claims of environmental groups, are able to conclude significant agreements with national and international partners and have indicated their desire to find solutions to environmental challenges and to contribute actively to sustainable development.

● (1550)

Bill C-32 was introduced at first reading on March 12, 1998. It is designed to renew the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

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This bill, formerly Bill C-74, which died on the Order Paper in the last Parliament, provides for a five year review, and time has already expired. I also remind the House that this is a promise contained in the Liberal red book.

With this bill, pollution prevention becomes a national objective. This bill replaces the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Among other changes are provisions to implement pollution prevention, new procedures for the investigation and assessment of substances and new requirements with respect to substances that the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health have determined to be toxic. The list of these substances is very extensive.

The bill provides new powers for investigators and new mechanisms for the resolution of a contravention. It also specifies criteria for courts to consider for sentencing. In addition, like the provinces and territories, aboriginal governments are provided the right of representation on the national advisory committee.

While, in theory, Bill C-32 recognizes the environment as a shared responsibility between the federal government and the provinces, in reality, this bill does not delegate any power to any province, including Quebec, which, of course, is contrary to what true environmental harmonization between the various levels of government should be.

Bill C-32 is designed to reinforce the federal government's supremacy with regard to environmental protection. Therefore, this bill opens the door to a duplication of federal and provincial powers. On this subject, the government even dares to hide behind the last ruling concerning the environment made by Ottawa's very own leaning tower of Pisa, namely the Supreme Court of Canada.

This leaning tower of Pisa considered a case involving Hydro-Quebec. I remind the House that this case has always been challenged by Quebec and that all the various courts who heard the case, including the Quebec Court of Appeal, concluded that the federal order was not valid. Only the Supreme Court of Canada, this leaning tower of Pisa, in its vision of unity, overruled the rulings made by Quebec courts.

Bill C-32 contains a number of new items. For example, it replaces the federal-provincial committee provided for in the current legislation with a new national advisory committee. This committee is made up of a representative from Environment Canada, one from Health Canada, one from each province and territory and up to six native representatives.

It will advise both federal ministers on the development of regulations, the management of toxic substances and other issues of mutual interest. The provinces will advise the federal minister through this national advisory committee. In fact, the bill provides for co-operation agreements on such activities as inspections,

investigations and the gathering of information for monitoring purposes.

The bill includes provisions for native governments, which will enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as the provincial and territorial governments, including the right to sign administrative work-sharing agreements and equivalency agreements with the federal government. Native governments will also have to be consulted over environmental issues affecting their territory. Up to six representatives will sit on the national advisory committee.

● (1555)

The bill also provides for better public participation and better protection for those who report violations of the law. These individuals will be able to take part in the decision making process by submitting to the environment minister comments or notices of objection following some decisions and to ask the minister to investigate alleged violations of the act.

These individuals can ask that their names not be disclosed. The legislation will protect employees who report violations of the federal legislation. Under the bill, individuals will be able to bring action for damage to the environment when the federal government is not enforcing the legislation.

With regard to public information, the law will no longer be limited to data published in the *Canada Gazette*. The law will create a new public registry containing all the environmental information published under the act such as rulings and regulations. This registry will supplement the National Pollutant Release Inventory set up in 1993.

As for prevention of pollution, it will become a national goal. The bill creates the authority to request pollution prevention plans in respect of substances listed as toxic under the act. Courts will be able to request pollution prevention plans or emergency environmental plans and research on the environmentally friendly use and elimination of the substances involved in the alleged offence.

The new act also creates a national pollution prevention information clearing house, which will enable the industry to share its expertise and technical know-how with respect to pollution prevention activities. Moreover, the new act provides for the setting up of a reward program recognizing the industry's voluntary efforts to prevent pollution.

With regard to biotechnological products, the bill creates a federal safety net and the authority to regulate the safe and efficient use of biotechnology for environmental purposes.

Regarding clean water, the bill seeks to protect the marine environment from land-based or airborne sources of pollution. It is also aimed at limiting what can be disposed of at sea by listing harmless materials; people wishing to carry out disposals at sea

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will have to prove it is the best solution possible and that what is to be disposed of in such a manner cannot be reused or recycled.

The federal government feels that the bill will allow co-operation with the United States and other countries in order to prevent or limit transborder marine pollution.

Bill C-32 will also increase the power of the government to regulate fuels and fuel additives. Imported fuels and fuels crossing provincial and territorial boundaries will have to meet certain requirements. The bill will give the government the authority to establish national fuels marks, thereby identifying those that meet the environmental criteria.

As far as international air pollution is concerned, the government wants to treat other countries the way Canada itself is treated. Should a country not give Canada rights similar to those granted to that country by Canada, the federal minister may intervene in the event of international air pollution.

To protect the atmosphere, Bill C-32 provides for the establishment of national marks for emissions meeting the standards. It contains provisions to limit emissions from motor vehicles in general, including pleasure craft, construction equipment, farm machinery, snow blowers and lawn mowers.

Also, the bill gives the federal government more control over the transborder movement of hazardous and non-hazardous waste, including household garbage.

• (1600)

I would now like to deal with this bill in regard to the environmental harmonization agreement, which is a crucial issue.

I would like to remind the House of certain facts. On January 29, 1998, Quebec refused to sign the environmental harmonization agreement proposed by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. During the meeting of the council, Quebec environment minister Paul Bégin refused to sign the agreement until the federal government agreed to meet the conditions set by Quebec.

Those conditions include recognition of Quebec's exclusive or at least primary jurisdiction in the areas assigned to the provinces by the Constitution, the firm commitment by the federal government to pass the legislative amendments required, and of course the adoption by Quebec and the federal government of a bilateral agreement on environmental assessments.

I would like to quote from the January 29, 1998 press release by the Quebec Minister of the Environment:

Minister Bégin also stressed that the declared intentions of the federal government as to the review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which review would lead to a significant increase in federal powers, contravene the spirit and objectives of

the environmental harmonization negotiation process, particularly that of preventing duplication and intergovernmental disputes.

This position of Minister Bégin reinforced the position taken by the Bloc Québécois in its dissenting report of December 1997. I will remind the House that, in its dissenting report, the Bloc Québécois opposed the report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development regarding environmental harmonization.

Hon. members will recall that on November 20, 1996, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment agreed in principle with the Canada-wide environmental harmonization agreement and with two subsidiary agreements on inspections and standards.

The subsidiary agreement on environmental assessments was negotiated during the winter of 1997. This agreement was to enhance environmental protection in a sustainable development context, while respecting each government's jurisdiction, in a more effective way. It was to have contained the general principles to be implemented more specifically through subsidiary agreements.

The Bloc Québécois has always supported harmonization between the federal and provincial governments when it would serve to eliminate administrative and legislative overlap and duplication between two levels of government. We therefore supported environmental harmonization so long as it did not serve to screen the federal government's continued meddling in provincial jurisdictions.

Harmonization must recognize the provinces' exclusive or at least primary jurisdiction in areas accorded them under the Constitution. The spirit of harmonization should be felt on the amendments the government will make to existing legislation.

The committee also made a number of recommendations. I will refer to a number of them.

The committee first recommended that ratification of the agreement and the three subsidiary agreements be postponed, first until all documents—the agreement and the 10 subsidiary agreements proposed—were available so the public would have a real opportunity to contribute and, second, until the committee's concerns and recommendations had been fully considered.

• (1605)

As we can see, there is already a little problem there. As for Recommendation No. 5, the committee recommended that the consensus requirement in the agreement and subsidiary agreements be replaced with a two-thirds majority vote.

With respect to these two recommendations, the Bloc Québécois said it believed it was premature for the federal government and the provinces to endorse the harmonization agreement and subsidiary agreements and for the committee to report to the House of

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Commons because we had not had the opportunity to observe any real desire on the part of the Liberal government to harmonize with the other provinces.

The Bloc Québécois expressed the opinion that it might be better to wait until the endangered species bill, the fisheries bill and the Canadian environmental protection legislation had been introduced. The Bloc Québécois added that we would be able to fully assess the harmonization agreement when considering these bills.

Before considering any new subsidiary agreements, the Bloc Québécois indicated it might be best for the federal government and the provinces to deal first with the three existing agreements on environmental assessment, inspection and standards. In addition, we proposed that the agreements be ratified by a unanimous vote instead of a two-thirds majority vote.

I would also like to touch on Recommendation No. 9. The committee recommended that a provision be included in the environmental assessment agreement stating that it will not require any changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The subsidiary agreement should also specify that the objectives and requirements of the environmental assessment should meet the strictest standards and should meet or exceed the prescribed objectives and requirements.

This recommendation was contrary to the principles of the general agreement, which states that governments may change their respective legislation as required.

Finally, the Bloc Québécois believed that only the Quebec environmental assessment process should be applied in Quebec. The federal government's willingness to achieve harmonization was supposed to be reflected in the legislation, and we considered that Bill C-14, an act respecting the safety and effectiveness of materials that come into contact with or are used to treat water destined for human consumption, did not reflect this spirit of legislative harmonization between the federal government and the provinces. On the contrary, we thought it was another intrusion by the federal government in an area under provincial jurisdiction.

Therefore, the Bloc Québécois was of the opinion that several recommendations in the Liberal majority report were contrary to Quebec's historic positions in the area of federal-provincial harmonization and that recent interference by the federal government did not respect the spirit of the accord.

What the Bloc Québécois deplores is that the federal government refuses to transpose in the legislation its good intentions with regard to environmental harmonization and chooses instead to hide behind the centralizing screen of our own leaning tower of Pisa, namely the Supreme Court of Canada.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois, although very concerned with environmental issues, cannot support this bill.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member for Portneuf makes the point that the primary jurisdiction in matters of the environment should rest with the provinces. He made this point several times in several ways.

Hamilton is near my riding. Some months past there was a disastrous fire at a company called Plastimet. Thousands of tonnes of recycled plastic in bales went up in flames, right in downtown Hamilton, spilling into the atmosphere dioxins, furans, all kinds of toxic smoke. The fire went on for more than 24 hours. Some people were made sick by the fire. The water table was contaminated and so on. It was a disastrous fire.

As the probe into this fire goes on, it becomes clear that the Ontario government failed in its responsibilities to ensure that the recycling firm was obeying proper standards of protection to make sure such a fire did not occur. Perhaps not in Quebec but certainly in Ontario the Ontario government is withdrawing in every direction from environmental protection. It is getting out of the field entirely. It is cutting money from environmental protection. It is laying off staff and so on.

I would suggest to the member for Portneuf, whom I respect greatly indeed, had the Plastimet fire occurred in Ottawa or in some community next to the Ottawa River, and that smoke had spilled over into Quebec and if those dioxins and that contamination had gone into the Ottawa River, that fire would have affected and poisoned regions in Quebec as well as regions in Ontario.

• (1610)

Given that, I wonder how the member can possibly feel that provincial jurisdiction exclusively held in matters of the environment would be a protection to Quebec when Ontario is abandoning its responsibilities. Does he not agree that a strong national law is precisely what all Canadians need in the event that any province does not fulfil its responsibilities to the environment as is the case in Ontario just now?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye:** Madam Speaker, I can well understand the concerns of my hon. colleague. His concerns are healthy and justified. If we use such reasoning, however, are we to conclude that, because acid rain from the United States will affect Quebec's lakes, trees and farms, the Canadian legislation should also look to seeing that the United States does its duty properly? But no, we understand very well that some states will not take their responsibilities seriously enough.

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Then steps will have to be taken to encourage them to do so, as Quebec and Canada have done with our American neighbours, in order to raise their awareness of such things as their acid gas emissions which are carried onto Quebec territory by a combination of winds, clouds and rain. Like it or not, the prevailing winds carry acid rain to Quebec. Our maple syrup producers have had problems, as their trees were affected. Our lakes have suffered, and lime has had to be added to allow fish to live in them.

Quebec and Canada have made representations to the Americans, who have seen to it that corrective measures have been put in place. There is much still to be done, mind you, but at least they have finally taken their duty as a government to heart. I am sure that a province like Ontario, rich and responsible as it is, is in a position to shoulder responsibility, provided it knows that no one else is going to.

You will note that Quebec does not necessarily want exclusive control over environmental issues on its territory. It wants greater power, a priority. It does, however, admit that pooled efforts, a partnership with the rest of Canada, since we must call a spade a spade, would be highly desirable. As a matter of fact, such partnership should eventually apply to every NAFTA country in order to have uniform environmental standards so that all industries and businesses are equally respectful of the environment, and provide for environmental impacts in their production costs, thus enabling them to sell their products at competitive prices while respecting the environment.

In short what we are talking about here is bringing environmental responsibilities closer to the decision making centres that are in the best position to assume them. Ottawa will not be able to tell Mexico how to deal with its environmental problems. Mexicans will be able to do it themselves. We must talk, in a respectful manner, and, in this regard, Quebec with its environment ministry and the necessary infrastructure to protect the environment is in a very good position to play an important role. Essentially, this is what Mr. Bégin, the Quebec minister said, and this is what I have ever so humbly repeated.

• (1615)

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I simply wish to make a short comment following the question put by the hon. member opposite.

He spoke about provincial governments being irresponsible and offloading their responsibilities. I want him to look at the results of his own government in the environmental sector.

Members opposite have been telling us all day long that their government is always concerned about environmental issues. However, they said very little about the objectives that were not reached in Kyoto, after being agreed to in Rio. Not only that, they

also remained silent on the cuts made in recent years in the Department of the Environment.

Is the member opposite aware that the budget of the Department of the Environment was reduced by 40%? These cuts were imposed by his own Minister of Finance and his government. Is the government aware that claiming to be concerned with the environment is not enough, and that such a claim must be supported by concrete measures?

Here is another example. In Quebec alone, 60% of the 1997-98 budget of \$1,329,000 for inspection and investigation activities was used to implement the act and avoid environmental disasters. The other 40% of that \$1.3 million was wasted on all sorts of administrative procedures.

Not only is the government opposite not at all concerned with the environment since it reduces its budget, it also shows that the department is poorly managed and that it is far from meeting Quebecers' environmental needs and concerns.

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye:** Madam Speaker, my colleague's comment is quite relevant. We can pass all the legislation we want. That is quite easy. We can discuss bills, pass them, and say they should be enforced. But if officials are deprived of the financial and material resources and the infrastructure they need, they will not be able to enforce the legislation adequately.

The fact is that the environment has not been a priority for this government, despite all it can say. We have to admit Kyoto has not been the resounding success Canada could have shared in as a full partner. It got involved at the last minute and played a lacklustre role, which comes as no surprise, since we do not meet our environmental goals, particularly concerning greenhouse gas emissions. We are well behind our stated objectives.

I hope that we will someday stop dragging our feet. Quebec wants to go ahead and does not want to be restricted by a federal bureaucracy that has not served its interests too well, generally. Quebec has already all it takes to assume full responsibility in this area.

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to take this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-32 to replace the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

This is an important bill, as my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, pointed out, because it changes the approach to environmental protection in Canada from one of reacting to one of preventing pollution and damage to the environment.

When we look at the overall evolution of the environment, it becomes obvious that we must change our way of looking at things and start with pollution prevention rather than waiting for damage to occur and then reacting.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Canadians throughout the country began demonstrating a growing interest in the environment. They began to become worried about the present, as well as the potential or future, effects of pollution on their environment and their health.

As a result, governments adopted relatively effective and rational strategies for the time, generally in the form of regulations to control pollutants after they had been created, but before they were released into the environment.

● (1620)

In addition, businesses improved their operating methods, based on the technologies then available. Basically, our philosophy of environmental management consisted in allowing pollutants to be created and trying to control them as best we could thereafter.

[*English*]

Therefore, from a historical perspective pollution control has been the main approach to environmental protection. It is true that by limiting the release of pollutants into the environment we have made a significant contribution to environmental protection.

As the Minister of the Environment told us in her speech, we have acted on some of the most dangerous toxins: PCBs, benzene, dioxins and furans.

We now know that more needs to be done. We are now much more aware of the impacts on human health and on the environment caused by every small amount of substances that are toxic, that accumulate in the tissues of plants and animals and persist in the environment for very long periods of time.

For these reasons we have to shift our approach from pollution control to pollution prevention. The Liberal Party's first red book summarized the challenge facing Canada in precise terms. It stated:

In the past, environmental policy has focused on managing and controlling the release of pollutants entering the environment. This approach has had only limited success. Canada needs a new approach that focuses on preventing pollution at source—

A Liberal government will use the upcoming five-year review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to make pollution prevention a national goal—

Bill C-32 does exactly this and incorporates pollution prevention as one of its guiding principles.

[*Translation*]

Naturally, so that all stakeholders are aware of the rules of the game, we must provide a clear and accurate definition of pollution prevention. The bill gives the following definition of prevention, arrived at after a variety of stakeholders were consulted. The proposed definition is as follows:

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The use of processes, practices, materials, products or energy that avoid or minimize the creation of pollutants and waste and reduce the overall risk to the environment or human health.

This could not be clearer.

Therefore, pollution prevention requires a totally different approach from environmental protection. It implies on-site reuse and recycling of materials, changes to existing equipment and employee training. It calls for a complete overhaul of our way of designing and operating our manufacturing plants, our oil refineries, our mines, our farms, our parks, everything.

Planning is at the heart of the pollution prevention approach. Under Bill C-32, a person can be required to prepare a pollution prevention plan concerning toxic substances. Pollution prevention on a voluntary basis in many other areas is also encouraged.

While they are preparing these prevention plans, managers can determine ways to avoid creating pollutants and waste or to reduce them to a minimum. They can also find ways to save energy and water and to use raw materials more efficiently. The preparation of pollution prevention plans provides the businesses with the flexibility they need to develop pollution prevention approaches based both on their needs and on environmental goals.

[*English*]

Bill C-32 supports pollution prevention planning by providing to establish a national pollution prevention information clearing house.

I am pleased that the government has already moved to establish the Internet based Canadian pollution prevention information clearing house to showcase environmental success stories and to demonstrate the economic benefit that can be achieved through the adoption of pollution prevention.

[*Translation*]

We want to increasingly encourage Canadian companies to take the initiative. Bill C-32 creates awards to celebrate achievements toward pollution prevention.

● (1625)

I think we agree that we ought to celebrate all that we achieve throughout the years.

[*English*]

To attract progress on the success of pollution prevention initiatives this bill includes information gathering powers that require industry to report on pollution prevention activities.

[*Translation*]

I support this bill, because it will help all of Canada to implement a pollution prevention plan that will be good for our environment, as well as for our international endeavours and our international trade.

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As Albert Einstein used to say, an intelligent man solves problems, a wise man avoids them. I think that, based on pollution prevention principles, our future Environmental Protection Act, as renewed and revised in this bill, will rank among our wiser pieces of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are: the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—Hepatitis C.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the member's remarks.

Earlier on in an intervention I mentioned that in Hamilton, which is near my riding, there was a disastrous fire in a recycling plant which spilled tonnes upon tonnes of toxic smoke into the air. It caused a great deal of damage to the soil and the neighbouring area. Indeed, there is great contention between the various levels of the government, the municipality and the province, about who is responsible and who should take the blame for this disastrous fire.

I would like to ask the member his opinion on a situation like this. Is this not really an example where a national government, for the benefit of all Canadians, should take matters of the environment as a matter of first priority? In fact, is the protection of the environment not a national issue which should be backed up by very strong legislation and by adequate penalties that override any provincial jurisdiction that fails to fulfil its mandate to look after the environment?

Should we not as a national government get tough with those organizations that deliberately take advantage of lax provincial laws and put the environment at risk? Should we not get after these people?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau:** Madam Speaker, I have had the privilege of sitting on the House Standing Committee on Environment, and have had an opportunity to see some worrisome issues crop up in recent months relating to events in a number of regions of Canada, including the region of Ontario to which my colleague has referred.

I believe that there must be more focus on environmental protection in the years to come. In my opinion, this is a battle that must be fought every day of every year. There must be a constant monitoring of needs, for they are ever-present.

If we look at the means available to us, the position of the federal, and most of the provincial, governments on environmental problems and the need to protect or to repair the environment, the

means available are definitely unequal to the needs we are faced with, in this situation as well as others.

This is our role, both as members of the environment committee, and here in public debate. Very soon, the committee will need to devote a great deal of time to determining needs and rallying public opinion, as well as the support of all of our colleagues in the various parties, in order to come up with the best approaches to be equal to our responsibilities.

Those approaches encompass funding, personnel availability and training. They also include legislation and regulation.

● (1630)

For this reason, our legislation includes a practical provision for re-examination every five years. This commitment has already been made by the Liberal Party. It is what we are doing at the present time, and we shall have the opportunity to re-examine all the issues and to enhance our understanding of ones such as my colleague has raised.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Bryden:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks which were very helpful.

Is this not a situation that follows on from what was said by members opposite in the Bloc Quebecois? Is the environment not a situation where we do great disservice and put Canadians at risk if we leave it to the municipalities and the provinces to pass the appropriate legislation and provide the appropriate scrutiny to avoid disastrous fires like the one that occurred at Plastimet in Hamilton? Is this not a situation where the national government has to bring in strong legislation with strong penalties to make sure that this kind of abuse of the environment does not occur, as was the case with the Plastimet fire in Hamilton?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau:** Madam Speaker, I think future generations would not forgive those of us who are involved in national politics if we failed to deal with situations such as those that arose or with issues of jurisdiction or if we quibbled over matters of precedence at this or that level.

Work has to be done to define environmental responsibilities at the municipal level—because there are responsibilities there—and at the provincial level and come up with measures to protect our environment and our resources for future generations regardless of where fault may lie. If the municipal governments fail to assume their responsibilities, the provincial governments should be there as watch dogs. If the provincial governments also fail, then there should be measures that enable us to intervene in very specific cases. That is what we are working for.



*Government Orders*

A harmonization agreement has been proposed. I support it. Work has barely begun. Three chapters of ten have been written, but the work should continue and should lead us to better define our responsibilities, level by level, but not for the purpose of quibbling over final responsibility for our environment in the coming years and for future generations.

[English]

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The recorded division on the motion stands deferred until Tuesday, April 28 at the end of Government Orders.

\* \* \*

#### DEPOSITORY BILLS AND NOTES ACT

**Hon. Anne McLellan (for Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.)** moved that Bill S-9, an act respecting depository notes and to amend the Financial Administration Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

• (1635)

**Mr. Tony Valeri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I certainly welcome the opportunity to speak today in support of Bill S-9, the depository bills and notes act.

Basically this is technical legislation. It is non-controversial in that it updates federal legislation to provide a legal framework for well-established market practices.

Specifically the proposed legislation supports the secure and efficient processing of trades in financial instruments. It does this by allowing instruments to be held in central depositories. The legislation also allows for the transfer of ownership of these financial instruments on the books of the depositories.

Before discussing Bill S-9 let me first describe some of the changes taking place in the Canadian financial industry in general and the environment in which this legislation will function.

As hon. members are aware, Canada's financial sector in the past few years has dramatically changed the way it does business. International competition which itself is fuelled by ongoing technological changes has been a major contributing factor. In actual fact, few parts of business life in Canada have been more affected by evolving information technology than the financial sector.

This sector is one of Canada's most important industries. It contributes 5% to gross domestic product. It creates almost 500,000 jobs and generates \$5 billion annually in export revenues. In addition it delivers essential services and products in today's modern economy, services such as financial intermediation, protection against risks and the provision of financial security.

Globalization, new technologies and deregulation are key forces of change that have been at work making our financial industry more modern and more efficient. The government has also responded to the changing environment.

International trade and investment for example have required wholesale financial services to be available on a global basis. Canadian financial firms, whose presence outside Canada is significant I might add, are strong participants in this global reality.

New technologies are also propelling change. An institution that does not or cannot adapt to technological changes is not likely to fair well in today's economy. Internationally the removal of regulatory barriers is fostering greater competition among different types of financial institutions and among institutions around the world.

Currently we are awaiting the report of the task force on the future of the Canadian financial services sector which will be reporting in September and which will certainly trigger further debate and change. In the meantime other changes are under way.

All major banks, as hon. members know, now have individual ombudsmen. We also have the Canadian banking ombudsman who deals with retail and commercial disputes as well as complaints regarding securities and insurance subsidiaries of banks. Members of this House and in particular the Standing Committee on Industry have played a critical role in establishing this new Canadian banking ombudsman. As the financial sector continues to change, some have indicated that it might be useful to conduct a review on

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the effectiveness of this important office within the financial services sector.

We are also expecting draft legislation on foreign bank entry later on this year.

We also have Bill C-82 which gives the government the authority to make regulations in the area of privacy and also amends the Bank Act to prohibit coercive tied selling. Tied selling has become an important consumer issue and one that is presently being examined by the Standing Committee on Finance. The outcome of this review will guide the government's decision on whether or not to proclaim into law C-82 provisions that deal with tied selling activities.

Another example of change is the successful conclusion of the World Trade Organization financial services negotiations under the general agreement on trade in services. The end result of these successful negotiations will mean greater international opportunities for our financial companies, new jobs for Canadians and benefits for consumers.

• (1640)

These are just some of the changes that have been taking place to ensure the competitiveness and currency of Canada's financial sector.

The bill we are debating today, the depository bills and notes act, represents yet another measure designed by the government to help in the modernization of our financial sector. The depository bills and notes act updates and modernizes federal legislation regarding the transfer of ownership of certain types of negotiable financial instruments, primarily bankers' acceptance and commercial papers.

In terms of value and volume, bankers' acceptances and commercial paper are second only to federal bonds and treasury bills in the Canadian securities market. For example in November 1996 there was a total of \$36.8 billion in bankers' acceptances and \$33.7 billion in commercial paper in Canada.

According to the Canadian Depository for Securities, in January 1996 the average daily gross settlements of bankers' acceptances and commercial paper were \$5.6 billion and \$5.7 billion respectively, comprising approximately 400 daily trades in each security. As I just said, these two instruments rank second only to federal bonds and treasury bills in value and volume in our domestic securities market.

As hon. members are probably aware, federal government securities are held in the Canadian Depository for Securities debt clearing system. Today banks and other players are increasingly holding financial instruments like bonds, treasury bills and other negotiable instruments in a depository institution.

For financial instruments held in a depository when ownership of the instrument changes, instead of physically exchanging the security, the name of the new owner is simply entered into the records of the depository and it is called a book entry transfer. These practices are more efficient and more secure than settling individual trades by moving financial instruments across town.

While book entry transfers are now an established part of the clearing and settlement system, Canadian financial legislation unfortunately does not fully recognize the practice for all types of financial instruments. Specifically the Bills of Exchange Act still does not acknowledge the use of depositories nor the holding and book entry delivery of financial instruments that fall under its rules.

The Bills of Exchange Act still refers to being in physical possession of negotiable instruments like bankers' acceptances and commercial paper when describing the rights of the parties involved in the transaction. For financial instruments held in a depository, these rules are clearly impractical.

Under the current Bills of Exchange Act for example the term "bearer" means the person in possession of a bill or note that is payable to the bearer. This means that the rights as described in the Bills of Exchange Act are impossible to interpret in the context of a negotiable instrument that is held in a depository and the transfer of ownership is done by the book entry because the instrument itself remains in the depository.

The depository bills and notes act makes the rights and responsibilities of buyers, sellers and holders of negotiable instruments compatible with the use of depositories and book entry transfer of ownership.

Bill S-9 does this by creating two new financial instruments for classes of securities: depository bills and depository notes. Both will be eligible to be held in a securities depository.

Someone buying a depository bill or note will generally have the same legal rights as someone buying a bill or note under the Bills of Exchange Act without actually taking delivery of the instrument. Because the depository notes and bills are intended for relatively wide circulation in trading, the rights and responsibilities will be defined with specific reference to the function of the clearing house and book entry transfer. In addition, to distinguish these new instruments from similar securities, they will be marked with wording that indicates they are depository bills and notes subject to the depository bills and notes act.

In no way will these new financial instruments preclude individuals or institutions from buying and holding other negotiable bills and notes which will still be governed by the Bills of Exchange Act.

As I said at the beginning of this debate, this is certainly very technical in nature and sometimes dry. But there is one other part of this bill that deserves to be mentioned.

• (1645)

Bill S-9 also amends section 70 of the Financial Administration Act to provide added certainty that transfers of Government of Canada securities from one person to another are legally sound under a book based system.

I would like to note that the bill is supported by all elements of Canada's financial community. The Depository Bills and Notes Act is also consistent with the recommendations made by the private sector group concerned with the workings of the international financial system commonly known as the G-30.

The G-30 has been calling for widespread introduction of securities depository systems and book entry transactions records as they will improve the efficiency of money markets.

As well, the Canadian Depository for Securities has been pushing to be able to hold negotiable money market instruments in its depository and to be able to make book entry ownership transfers as soon as possible, a far more efficient process, it believes, than having to take physical possession of the instrument. Bill S-9 will allow it to do just that.

I should point out that the federal government is not alone in providing a statutory basis for these activities. The Ontario business corporations act, the Quebec securities act and other provincial legislation govern the holding and book entry delivery of government bonds and corporate securities that are not subject to the Bills of Exchange Act.

Like so many other changes in the financial sector, Bill S-9 is simply keeping up with the times. Its passage will allow trades in securities like bankers' acceptances and commercial paper to be processed in a more secure and efficient manner.

Essentially what Bill C-9 does is put into law an already established and accepted practice and therefore deserves speedy passage. I urge all my hon. colleagues to support the legislation.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I noted the request for urgent passage and support of the bill. Perhaps we could do a trade-off. If we are to support the bill, perhaps they could support our motion on hepatitis C. It is a wonderful opportunity for the government to do the right thing. Then it would have speedy passage of Bill S-9 which, by its very title, originated in the other place.

As members know, we have talked long and loud about the affront to the House of the fact that we are receiving legislation here after it has been cleared in the Senate. We are quite incensed that we who represent the public at large, we who have been

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democratically elected, we who stood on platforms and said "This is what we will deliver to you if you vote for us", have to play second fiddle to the Senate which sent us a bill that it passed.

I wonder when the government will listen to the wishes of the people, to the demands made by the Reform Party that it is time we realize that anachronistic organization at the other end of the hall needs to be replaced by something more modern, which means more representative of Canadian people.

Bill S-9, as my hon. colleague mentioned, is a technical bill and largely will not affect many people. It has to do with more of the efficient workings of our financial systems than our financial industry.

I noted that the member mentioned bankers' acceptances and notes were second only to federal bonds in value and in volume. That in itself spoke volumes. While industry needs to raise funds for investment, for the creation of jobs, for new plants, new factories, and research and development, I have often wondered why the federal government has borrowed all this money and poured it down the drain—

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have one Liberal. I request a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Very well. We will ring the bells.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** We now have a quorum.

[*English*]

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just before the quorum call there was a reference to the presence or absence of members in the House. I wonder if the Chair might remind members that is not allowed under the rules of the House.

• (1655)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The hon. member is certainly right. I remind members not to forget this rule again.

**Mr. John Williams:** Madam Speaker, I would never want to forget that very important rule. As the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance pointed out, we are dealing with a technical bill. Perhaps they nodded off and did not pay much attention on the government side as to what was going on in the House because of the technicalities of the bill.

Before I was interrupted I was pointing out that the bill deals with bankers' acceptances and notes. They are second only in value

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to the value and volume of federal government instruments, bonds and so on which are dealt with by the financial industry. I pointed out how important raising money is for the vitality of our economy to create new jobs, to build new factories, to finance inventory and so on.

The act does not hold true for the federal government which just borrowed the money, spent it, poured it down the drain for little or no value whatsoever. Now we have high taxes. Our economy is being dragged down. We are less competitive than we otherwise would be around the world because the government never learned how to manage its books.

We expect organizations and companies that are borrowing money through bankers' acceptances and so on are able to manage their books properly. They do not have the concept of taxpayers standing behind them. They have only profits standing behind their capacity to pay the interest and repay the principal.

Over the last many years governments including this government have borrowed many billions of dollars. Since the government came to office in 1993 it has borrowed approximately \$100 billion, to be precise.

That is an affront to all Canadians. We are the ones who end up paying the interest on the federal government debt whereas it is investors who earn the interest and corporations that pay the interest on the bankers' acceptances through the profits they have generated through extra economic activity they have been able to create, extra jobs they have been able to create, extra sales they have been able to create, and extra efficiencies, productivity and plants they have been able to build. That is how our financial industry works as a service to the industrial world to raise the money it needs in order for us to maintain a healthy economy.

The parliamentary secretary referred to the fact that rather than the instrument itself having to change hands, as is required under a bill of exchange, they just need a bookkeeping entry signed by both sides in the books of the depository to make the transaction legal. It is a bit of an indictment of the legal industry that has evolved over the past number of generations.

I return to the old definition of a bill of exchange, which I learned by heart as a young fellow when I studied banking in my native Scotland. The definition was brought to my attention again by the Library of Parliament. It jogged my mind about the definition of a bill of exchange which is:

An unconditional order in writing addressed by one person to another, signed by the person giving it, requiring the person to whom it is addressed to pay on demand or at a fixed or a determinable future time a sum certain in money to order or to bearer.

I know that because I had to learn it many years ago. The bill of exchange was a simple piece of paper, one sheet saying that one was owed an amount of money.

Today the instruments of debt are pages thick, sometimes books in length. Sometimes they refer to all the rest of the conditions posted in the head office of the organization. Therefore it becomes a physical impossibility to keep these books moving around. The legal industry has said to the financial industry that it will have to cover off this liability or that liability and ensure the section is covered and that it can collect the money under these circumstances. They keep getting bigger and bigger.

• (1700 )

Now we have to move these books around, so we are going to put them in a depository. They are going to sit there in a depository. We are back to one piece of paper referring to the books in depository. We are now going to pass this piece of paper around for the financial industry.

When originally they passed the piece of paper around they did not need a depository. Now they do. In a few more generations I wonder where we will be putting this piece of paper which has now grown into a book. We will put that into a depository also. We will start off with another sheet of paper that refers to the bookkeeping entry which refers to the underlying agreement, and it goes and on. It is wonderful how the paper war does develop.

I appreciate that the financial industry does need to have some modernization. It does need to have this capacity to be able to work more efficiently, especially now that we are now in the computer age. Lots of these entries are now made by computer.

Let us remember too that today is April 27, 1998. We are less than two years away from the big bash, big blast of the millennium. On January 1, 2000, we are going to find out whose computer works and whose does not. Is the government going to be able to work, not efficiently on January 1, 2000, but at all on January 1, 2000? Or are all these computers going to grind to a stop?

The same applies to this depository we are talking about under Bill S-9, all handled by computers. As the parliamentary secretary said, there are billions of dollars flowing through this each day. What is going to happen on January 1, 2000 if the computer that handles the depository gives up the ghost, the federal government's computers give up the ghost and industry's computers give up the ghost? A half hour ago two people in my office were telling us that there is going to be a major economic catastrophe on January 1, 2000, predictable right to the very day.

It will not be the end of the growth period of the economic cycle that will end in a downturn. It is that the computers are going to grind to a stop on that day. Those people with accounts receivable will not be able to collect their money. Those people who have bills to pay will not be able to write the cheques.

The public accounts committee asked the Treasury Board secretariat last fall, Mr. Rummell, the chief information officer for the Government of Canada, and the assistant deputy minister in charge of information technology, what was the back-up if the computers fail in the year 2000. They said we will have to write the cheques by hand. Imagine such an admission by the Government of Canada. In this day and age when we are totally and absolutely reliant on computers to do virtually everything, the assistant deputy minister says they will have to write the cheques by hand. That is how unprepared the federal government and industry are in meeting this challenge which is right around the corner.

I was reading an article in the *Financial Post* this morning which said that this was one date that we could not play around with. We cannot postpone it. It will be here on January 1, 2000. When everyone is waking up from the hangover of the great celebration on the eve of the millennium, it is going to be a big bust the next day when the computer is turned on. That is the end of it. It dies. The economy could die too according to the people in my office. There are going to be severe ramifications.

While we are talking on Bill S-9, and while we are talking about helping the financial industry improve its effectiveness and its efficiency, let us also send out a clear warning and strongly urge industry and everyone who has a computer to realize that January 2000 is not going to be postponed. If they want their business to survive and to continue making money in the new millennium they had better do a little housekeeping of their own as well as Bill S-9 to ensure their business continues in business on January 1, 2000. The importance of this issue cannot be underestimated.

• (1705)

Last fall when the auditor general tabled his report he said the total cost for the federal government on fixing its computers could be as high as \$1 billion. I was reading an article in the paper the other day that said one contract that the federal government has given to a group of computer consultants alone could go as high as \$1.4 billion, not to mention all the other hardware acquisitions, software acquisitions and all the thousands of other programmers working diligently for the federal government at this point. The cost of \$1 billion has escalated dramatically.

That cost is also going to apply to industry. It will have to address the same issues as the federal government. The federal government has left it far too late. It is still in a situation of denial. It is still running around the problem and it has not come clean with how bad it is. Yet we also know industry is too complacent.

The time will come when there will not be enough programmers around and therefore what is going to happen to their business? What is going to happen to the shareholders? What is going to happen to the bankers' acceptances that are now covered off by Bill S-9?

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I hope that as the government continues to help industry through Bill S-9, through the efficiencies it is allowing by the creation of this new type of investment instrument, it also recognizes that it has an obligation to tell industry that the year 2000 is serious, it cannot be delayed. If shareholders are to maintain their investments the companies have to be able to function. If the computers do not function we know that industry will not function.

Let me reiterate. We do not like the fact that this bill is coming to us via the Senate. We think that bankers' acceptances are good. But he pointed out and seemed to be quite proud of the fact that federal government debt instruments were the largest kind of debt instruments in the country. I took issue with that. We do not like it. We feel that industry has to wake up and realize that the year 2000 is just upon us and we are glad to help it as far as the bankers' acceptances and so on are concerned to improve its efficiency.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, has asked me to speak on his behalf. I hope that I will not set the record for the shortest speech in the House of Commons, because what I have to say will not take very long.

My party will support Bill S-9 because it represents a technical improvement in the management of the federal government's obligations.

The Bloc Québécois will therefore vote in favour of Bill S-9.

• (1710)

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important to recognize that when we are discussing an extremely dry piece of legislation many people in this House are possibly not particularly interested in delving into the intricacies or the details of it.

One of the most important or interesting areas relative to this legislation is that it originated in the Senate. Recently in his speech, ostensibly on Nunavut, the Leader of the Opposition focused his speech on the need for Senate reform. He engaged in an extended series of character assassinations of many people in the other place, many of the Senators, and engaged in what many senators and also many members of this House found to be offensive.

The important thing to recognize is that while we do have a Senate and that while we do have an upper chamber, that Senate is to be and should be utilized to provide service and expertise on this type of technical legislation to the Canadian taxpayer.

Other members have outlined the purpose of this bill and it is effectively to facilitate the settlement of securities for which the

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investor does not actually take physical possession. I will not go into great detail about the substance of the legislation. That has been covered quite thoroughly.

Department officials have said that the Depository Bills and Notes Act is a technical piece of legislation needed to support improvements in the efficiency of capital markets in Canada. I would agree with the Reform member speaking earlier relative to the risk given the millennium or the year 2000 factor.

Earlier today I was reading Edward Yardeni, a leading economist from New York. He suggested the year 2000 problem is far more serious than governments like to admit, partially because governments fear the eventual law suits that could emanate from the year 2000 problem. This legislation has the potential to increase the exposure of Canada's financial marketplace to the year 2000 problem and this government has yet to make a serious credible commitment to address this issue.

That the bill was introduced in the Senate should give some of our colleagues in the Reform Party some evidence of the importance, necessity and value of the contribution made by our upper chamber.

The Senate had meaningful committee meetings on this piece of legislation, as we will hear. It even introduced and passed an amendment to clarify the bill. Frankly, on this type of legislation, on financial services, economics or regulatory issues, the Senate is a bountiful supply of knowledge and expertise. The Senate is a valuable resource we should utilize in this House to benefit all Canadians.

To the chagrin of the Leader of the Opposition even his own caucus members have suggested we use the Senate more. In a recent finance committee meeting, the chair announced he was asked recently in writing by the member from Prince George—Bulkley Valley to strike a joint committee between the House of Commons and the Senate finance committee to study the bank merger issue more thoroughly.

I commend the member from Prince George—Bulkley Valley, a Reform MP, for recognizing the institutional knowledge and expertise we have in the Senate of Canada. Taxpayers are already footing the bill for a bicameral government. Why deny Canadian taxpayers the full benefit of their investment in this system? Why does the Reform Party not suggest utilizing the Senate more at this juncture instead of less? Let us make sure Canadian taxpayers are getting their money's worth.

The Senate has introduced some very meaningful legislation recently, including Senator Kenny's tobacco legislation and Bill S-3, which I have already commented on.

• (1715)

Some people will even argue that while the Senate may not be elected it has offered a more effective opposition to the government in the past five years than the official opposition parties in this House. The Senate has also held important and useful debates on electoral boundary redistribution, the Divorce Act, the Newfoundland school issue and assistance for post-secondary education.

Instead, some of the opposition parties have voiced strong concern over this practice of introducing legislation in the Senate. In fact when I consider the amount of time the Reform Party has taken recently to pontificate on the role of the Senate in a parliamentary democracy I tend to think that we have lost a lot of good opportunities for meaningful debates about the real issues in this House.

It is the same Senate that the Leader of the Opposition's father sat in for a number of years. It seems strange to me that someone would go to such lengths to attack a Canadian institution that one's father was actually a member of. I noticed a particularly interesting statement in the Ottawa *Citizen* made by the Leader of the Opposition's father in defence of the Senate in 1981. In that statement he said:

We constitute more than a chamber of sober second thought. We have been appointed to represent our respective provinces in this House. We have been selected to provide the necessary checks and balances on a parliamentary structure where representation by population results in imbalances that invite the kind of abuse of parliamentary majority power that we are witnessing today.

The Leader of the Opposition contradicts his father's remarks when he speaks as he did last week and said that members of the Senate do not represent provincial or regional interests. I feel it is very important to recognize that our Senate can, should and will, if utilized, provide the necessary leadership, judgment and expertise we need, especially with this type of legislation.

When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking about the Nunavut legislation he engaged in a number of character assassinations. It was unfortunate to hear some of the inaccuracies and the really incredible allegations that he made. After he would attack a member of the Upper Chamber at great length, he would then engage in a bit of a disclaimer and say "Far be it for me to judge that particular member", when he knew that his words were nothing but character assassinations in vitriol.

I had an opportunity recently to visit the official website of the Reform Party where I read inflammatory and factually incorrect statements about members of the Senate. I could only surmise that the Reform Party has compromised its own position in terms of hate literature on the Internet when in fact it is using the Internet to spread factually incorrect, inflammatory and what I consider to be dangerous character assassinations via the Internet.

*Adjournment Debate*

It is unfortunate that more members of this House do not recognize the contribution that the Senate has made and can continue to make to this type of legislation. Our party believes and has laid out certain ideas that can be implemented sooner rather than later, including the provinces putting forward lists of names for the Prime Minister to choose from when he is making the Senate appointments and limiting the term of a senator to 10 years.

Indeed, it was our party and the Conservative government under the leadership of Brian Mulroney that appointed the late Stan Waters to the Senate.

In the interim, until we have Senate reform, all members of this House should continue to work on behalf of the Canadian taxpayers to ensure that we are maximizing the level of expertise that we have in the Upper Chamber to provide the maximum level of benefit to the Canadian taxpayer by providing the types of legislation that will benefit the Canadian taxpayer as we enter the 21st century.

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

• (1720)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you would consider seeing the clock as being 6.30 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I believe that the hon. member for Mississauga South would like the House to proceed to the adjournment debate. Do we have agreement to see the clock as being 6.30 p.m.?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

### HEPATITIS C

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to elaborate on the question that I posed in this Chamber on March 30 pertaining to compensation for all those who have suffered from the results of

contaminated blood, in particular those who are suffering from hepatitis C.

This is a timely opportunity to have a further debate on this issue. It allows all members of this House to think through their positions very carefully before the vote in this House tomorrow evening, a critical vote for all Canadians and in particular the thousands of blood injured Canadians.

On March 30 I posed a question flowing from Justice Krever's report which all members will know resulted from a very long, thorough and in depth review of the tainted blood scandal. In that report Justice Krever said "The compassion of a society can be judged by the measures it takes to reduce the impact of tragedy on its members".

I remind all members of this Chamber of those words on this critical evening, on the eve of a very important vote in this Chamber. I appeal to everyone, in particular the members of the Liberal Party who are in a very difficult position this evening as they think through this issue and make a final determination on how they will vote tomorrow. I appeal to those members to listen to their hearts, to listen to their consciences, to act on the basis of principle, the principle if not of their own party, then of the kind of society we believe this country is all about.

I ask all members not to listen to arguments that have no basis in fact. I urge all members not to listen to the speaking notes being circulated to members of the government side which are nothing more than a partisan rag. I urge all members to listen to the voices of those who deal with this disease day in and day out, who have felt they have received no satisfactory response from this government.

Let me very quickly outline the arguments that have been posed by this government which have to be refuted one by one and then let me conclude by referencing a number of constituents of mine and people from across this country who have spoken out so clearly and so passionately to try to move this government to put in place full compensation for all blood injured Canadians.

Let us put aside the arguments around the period of 1986 to 1990, being the period for which this government is legally liable. Let us not forget that the test to determine hepatitis C in the blood supply was available long before 1986 and was in fact recognized by our scientific community as a meaningful test to determine hepatitis C in the blood supply.

• (1725)

Second, let us remember that what we are talking about is not something that is precedent setting but is in fact dealing with regulatory failure and is not to be confused with medical misadventure.

I have a question for the Liberals. If they take that line of argument how can they in fact acknowledge the compensation for thalidomide victims and for HIV victims? Surely it is time to put

*Adjournment Debate*

our hearts and our heads together and agree with the voices of so many Canadians.

I conclude by indicating that many Canadians are worried and concerned. I have received just in the last day 500 names of constituents in the city of Winnipeg expressing their concern and urging the government to employ compassion—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to reply to the question.

Let me start by saying that the federal government, along with the provincial and territorial governments, offered \$1.1 billion to compensate the patients for whom the disease could have been avoided from 1986 to 1990.

This was a decision arrived at by all provincial governments including the two NDP governments of British Columbia and Saskatchewan. It is not a package that was given without careful and thoughtful consideration for the victims of hepatitis C for whom the disease could have been avoided.

If we extend the package to those in the absence of fault, we ought to extend the compensation as well for all kinds of diseases

as a consequence of injury from blood, not only hepatitis C but even allergies or even shock from blood transfusions.

The hon. member who raised the question has not told the House that she has approached the NDP premiers of Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Neither has she told the House that she has approached the health ministers of British Columbia and Saskatchewan, her own NDP counterparts.

If the federal NDP member has a commitment to change the package announced by the government, why has she not informed the House that she has already spoken to those NDP premiers and NDP governments?

The NDP minister of health in Saskatchewan has said that those who use this issue for the point alone as indicated by the NDP member are using political opportunism.

*[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5.28 p.m.)

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